

Consent is a journal of
ideas and opinions
on
individual freedom.

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Consent

STATE EDUCATION FAILS THE TEST

-William Trench

*(Born and educated in South Africa, William Trench spent his early years travelling both in Africa and Europe, working at a variety of occupations including freight-checker, bank clerk, parking attendant, bartender, and factory hand. After qualifying as a Chartered Corporate Secretary he moved to Canada in 1966, where, over the years, he has held various managerial positions in the corporate world. The following essay appears as a chapter in his forthcoming book, **Only You Can Save Canada - Restoring Freedom and Prosperity** published by the author in January, 1992. With a cover price of \$8.95, his book is now available through Freedom Party. Inquiries and orders are welcome.)*

"There are only two places in the world where time takes precedence over the job to be done. School and prison."
- William Glasser.

Remember school? Of course you do. That's the place which the adults told you were the happiest days of your life, and you said, "Ohmigod, Is the rest of my life *really* going to be even worse than this?"

Children naturally love to learn. They want to know everything. "Daddy, why is the sky blue?" "Why can't I see my back?" "Why are those dogs doing that?" "Are we there yet?" And so on and so on.

Then we send them to school. And all desire to learn is methodically destroyed.

In Canada today we have a situation where too many children are leaving school after twelve or thirteen years without being able to read, write, or compose an intelligible sentence. It is possible to spend twelve years sitting in classrooms and yet learn virtually nothing of the subjects being taught there.

In addition to the lack of language skills in many children, almost no one of school-leaving age is familiar with the basic skills necessary to function as an adult in modern North American society. I have had experience of school-leavers applying for clerical positions being totally unfamiliar with such basic tools of modern society as a cheque, a bank deposit slip, or a receipt. Few seem to be aware of the difference between an invoice and a statement; I even had one who did not know the alphabet applying for a position as a filing clerk!

The most important and complex thing that children learn to do is to speak, and virtually everyone can do it

very well, better in most cases than they can read or write. And yet children learn to speak from their parents, siblings and friends, while reading and writing is taught by "education experts." In fact it has been shown that about 50% of everything a person learns in life is learned before age five. Doesn't this fact alone make you question the efficacy of our education system?

Most teachers are well-meaning, dedicated, hard-working people, but they work in a massive bureaucracy which, like the one in *Canada Post*, stifles creativity and initiative and makes "following the rules" more important than the education of children. In addition, they have to spend an inordinate amount of time attending to the antisocial behaviour of "students" who know all about their "rights" and nothing about responsibility.

The basic problem with our system of education is that it is run by the government. Do you really want the education of your children entrusted to the same type of system that runs *Canada Post*? The *Unemployment Insurance Fund*? The *Canada Pension Plan*? Well, that's who you have doing it, a government bureaucracy. What makes you think they can do a better job at education than they've done at any of their other endeavours?

If you want a better education for your children, and can afford to pay the costs of a private school, you may decide to send them to one. But you will get no tax rebate if you don't use the government system, and so most people send their children to a government school, unsatisfactory as it may be.

Think of your experience with government, be it sending a parcel at the post office, obtaining a permit to add an extension to your house, or trying to get the tax

To those who consent, no injustice is done

department on the phone. You know as well as I do that most private businesses deal with you a hundred times more efficiently, more politely and more pleasantly than any government department ever does. Don't

"The basic problem with our system of education is that it is run by the government."

you think an independent, free-enterprise system would give your child a far better education, at a far better price? And even if it wouldn't, don't you think you have a right to make that choice for yourself?

Most people think that there is no alternative to a public education system. That if the state doesn't supply schools their children will never learn anything. Fact is, children learn in spite of the system.

Most independent experiments have conclusively proven that children educated at home learn up to six times faster than those attending government schools. Do you realize what this means? It means it is possible for children to cover the grades 1 to 12 curriculum in about two nine-month school years or in twelve six-week school "years."

Well, you may ask, if that is so, what are the kids doing at school the rest of the time? I can make a good guess. They're changing classes, settling down, not paying attention, going to the washroom, discussing extracurricular activities, doing things not related to the curriculum, arguing, being the class clown, taking drugs, having food fights in the cafeteria, making out, stabbing the teacher; in short, doing things other than learning --- things that they have no opportunity to do when they are at home.

But most of all, they are having their natural desire to learn totally

eliminated.

Government schools are the outgrowth of the child labour laws of the last century. Once it became illegal for children to be employed, something had to be done with them to keep them from becoming unruly and getting into mischief during those long days with nothing to

do. So they were put into schools, purportedly to learn, but in reality to keep them off the streets and the labour market until such time as they were virtually adults.

The quotation at the beginning of this essay exposes the lie behind the idea that schools are primarily for learning. If that were indeed the case, students could either (a) leave when they had completed the curriculum, or, (b) continue learning far beyond the curriculum in the same time if they had that ability. As the situation is now, school serves only the median intelligence level; slow learners get left behind and fast learners lose interest through boredom.

Education only takes place when there is a desire to learn. As I'm sure you can remember from your own experience, the subjects you enjoyed most at school were the ones you shone at. Any teacher will tell you he or she prefers to teach night school where all the students are present by their own choice and at their own expense. These students want to acquire knowledge and they do. Day school students in most cases would rather be somewhere --- anywhere --- else, and that's where their minds drift to.

More proof, if it were needed, that

school's purpose is to keep children out of circulation, in effect to "baby-sit" them, is that while attendance is compulsory, appropriate behaviour while at school is not! Logically, students should either be forced to attend and to behave, or they should be free not to go at all. And of course it is the second alternative which is the only one that would exist in a free society.

The average Ontario public school class of 25 children costs (1987 figures) \$5,200 per student, or \$130,000 per year. How is this money spent?

Let's say \$40,000 for the teacher. The classroom, \$20,000. (You can rent a house for that.) \$5,000 for books and materials, \$10,000 for miscellaneous expense --- that gives a total of \$75,000. So where does the other \$55,000 go? Where else? To the massive government bureaucracy that has nothing whatsoever to do with educating children but everything to do with perpetuating a hopelessly outmoded system.

"If parents want to choose the courses and education best suited to their children's needs, they must take responsibility for the results."

In his excellent article, *How you can profit from the school hoax*, (*World Market Perspective*, Nov. '87), Richard J. Maybury lists the six characteristics that an "illiteracy mill" would have to have. I summarize them as follows:

(1) Curiosity is spontaneous and must be suppressed. Prohibit spontaneity and regiment learning so that children are taught things when the system decides, not when they want to learn them.

"It is indisputable that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low, has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and a highly endowed being will always feel that any happiness which he can look for as the world is constituted, is imperfect."

---John Stuart Mill (1861)

(2) Remove children from the adult world so that they are deprived of role models, and cannot learn by copying adults.

(3) Enact child labour laws so that anyone trying to escape from the illiteracy mill has nowhere else to go.

vants, they should be independent professionals like architects or dentists. There should be a wide variety of choices so that a parent can pick and choose in accordance with the child's specific needs.

Already there are alternative edu-

schools have continued to dominate the scene is that parents have abdicated responsibility for their children's education. If it's unsatisfactory they can just blame the government. Freedom goes hand in hand with the acceptance of responsibility, and I very much doubt that most Canadians are ready to assume that responsibility.

"Alternative schools in the U.S. advertise that they can do in a few days what government schools take months to do."

No apprenticeship system means they won't be able to learn a trade by copying adults.

(4) Force children by law to attend, thereby making learning a job, a chore, an obligation; definitely not fun. Supplant curiosity by drudgery. Prison dulls the mind.

(5) Coercing the children also helps wipe out the teacher's desire to teach. It creates massive problems of motivation and discipline. Teachers commonly quit after a few years of attempting to combine the roles of entertainer and enforcer in an effort to get something done.

(6) Last but not least, everyone should be forced to pay for the mill no matter what their mill does to children's minds. And there are no refunds. If a child comes out of the system with his brain turned to mush, the parents should still be forced to pay, every year for the rest of their lives.

The public school system is perfectly designed to make children hate to learn, teachers hate to teach, and the public be forced to pay twice the real cost of a product that is not only of no use but downright destructive.

Maybury, who was a public school teacher himself for several years, says that the solution to the education crisis is clear: free markets. Educators should not be civil ser-

cational establishments springing up around the U.S. These learning centres advertise that they can do in a few days what government schools take months to do.

Of course, the established system does not like this trend. Both the government itself and the teachers' unions fear the threat of competition. No monopoly wants to abdicate its power.

There is another side to this question. If parents seriously want to have the opportunity to choose the courses and education best suited to their children's needs, they have to be prepared to take responsibility for the results. The reason the government

The reason is simple. Many of today's citizens are products of the schools of the last twenty years, during which time the trend has been to adopt a more and more socialistic posture. Most teachers have never spent their lives anywhere except in classrooms, and their vision of the world is so much at odds with the real world of business and industry as to be virtually a different society.

There is a trend among far too many moulders of our children's minds, to equate business as something evil being carried on by rich men whose only consideration is more and more profits at the expense of the workers. The least capable and non-productive members of our society are looked upon as down-trodden heroes, while the entrepreneurs and winners are sneered at.

(STATE EDUCATION...cont'd back cover)



"It is better to know nothing than to know what ain't so."
---Proverb (1874)

FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY!

-David Pengelly

(David Pengelly is president of Freedom Party's *Don Mills* constituency association in Toronto. A candidate for the party during the last two general provincial elections, his following essay, originally published in the October 1990 issue of *Scarborough West Perspectives*, once again stresses the need for us to distinguish between freedom and democracy --- and why the two, when objectively defined, go hand-in-hand.)

Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* tells us our rights are "subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." Why our rights should be limited is questionable, but what is also interesting is that the words "free and democratic" were

pulsion includes having such rights as freedom of speech, religion, association, the right to peaceful use of private property and equality before the law. If we are to be a free society, then you --- or a government --- cannot force me to act in the way you wish and I cannot force you to act in the way I wish. By limiting democracy

of people. Democracy needs to be tethered by freedom.

Right now, Canadians are facing threats to their freedom. Bogus rights are being popularised. Consider the "right to affordable housing." If you find someone who is willing to rent accommodation to you at a price you can afford, you should be allowed to accept it. Unfortunately, if this accommodation is in the wrong part of town or doesn't meet certain standards, the law will prevent you from taking advantage of it, even if it suits your needs. This interferes with your freedom of association and the owner's property rights. The "right to affordable accommodation" usually means that you will be forced to pay so that someone else can have a place to live. Your wishes do not come into it.

A second bogus right is "the right to a job." I agree that if you find someone to hire you at a wage you agree to, that you should be allowed to take the job. Unfortunately, if the wage were below the government

"Democracy needs positive limits. That's why it was linked with freedom in the Charter."

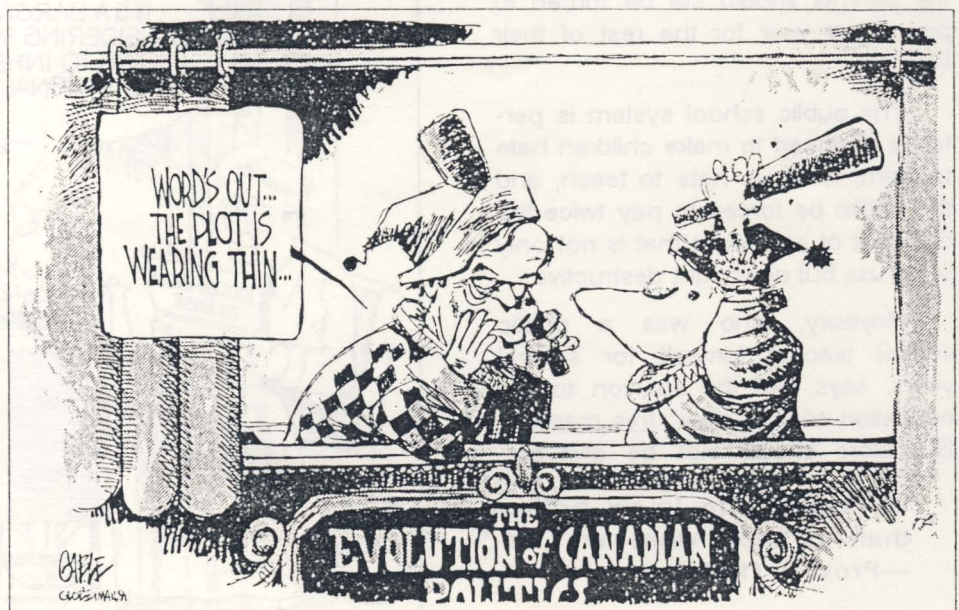
used --- not just "democratic." This is because freedom and democracy are not synonyms. They do not mean the same thing.

Democracy is government by the people, or government by majority vote. In Canada we exercise this by electing our governments, who then can do pretty much what they want until the next election. As an example, the federal *Progressive Conservatives* support the Goods and Services Tax (GST) which is opposed by a majority of the adult population. Of course, we can throw them out of office at the next election, but there is no guarantee that the new government will cut spending and get rid of the tax. This is a negative limit to democracy.

At the same time, democracy needs positive limits. This, I believe, is the reason that democracy was linked with freedom in the Charter. Freedom consists of not existing or acting under compulsion. This lack of com-

As an example, suppose a party ran on a platform and received sixty per cent of the votes and got sixty per cent of the seats. That is a democratically-elected government and it can pass the laws that implement its platform. But suppose that those laws called for putting all Jews in concentration camps and confiscating their property. That would certainly not be a free society and therefore the law would be illegal, even if it was supported by a majority

"The public... demands certainties. But there are no certainties." ---H.L. Mencken (1917)



legislated minimum wage, you would be prevented from taking it. Without job experience you may never get work and may never advance to a better paying job. What the "right to a job" usually means is that someone is to be forced to hire people or prevented from firing them. This negates freedom of association.

Both of these "rights" are being

"Enemies of freedom use the words 'freedom' and 'democracy' to mean the same thing: majority rule."

heavily publicized, yet to apply them as they are meant would destroy our freedom. That is why enemies of freedom use the words "freedom" and "democracy" to mean the same thing: majority rule. Whenever our rights are threatened they say, "...but it's democratic;" it's "the will of the majority." It may be, but does it preserve freedom?

Why freedom?

Some people may ask what is so important about freedom. They would be willing to give it up if they could get security and prosperity. This is a fatal delusion since it is freedom that creates prosperity and prosperity which allows people to be secure. People work best when they are aiming for a goal that they value. To do this, they must be assured that if they reach their goal they will be allowed to keep it, and not have it taken from them. This requires individual freedom. It is better to have

millions of citizens working for their individual prosperity than to have thousands of government employees working for theirs.

Why then, democracy?

Democracy has proven to be the system that protects freedom the longest. In other systems, freedom is very insecure. If an oligopoly rules, for example a small number of rich families, there is little to prevent them from

using the government to enrich the controlling members. In a monarchy, the ruler could protect freedom, but rulers die and the heir may be a tyrant.

In a democracy, however, you must delude the people to legislate away their freedom. It can take generations to completely destroy it. In the meantime, it may be possible to educate voters to realize the threats and vote for freedom instead of big government, thus turning back the tide.

Readers will realize that I think that freedom is under seige in Canada. To gain security, people have voted away much of their freedom. Trying to provide this security, governments are heavily in debt. The currency is being destroyed by inflation. High taxes and government regulation are having their effects and business is having trouble competing. Unemployment is high. Despite massive government "welfare" programs, there are more poor than ever. This is a result of the loss of our freedom.

We must use democracy to get it back.

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'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN' --- AND THE REST OF US!

-Robert Metz

(Robert Metz is president, leader, and a founding member of Ontario's Freedom Party.)

Many Ontarians have sensed something sinister about the Rae government's recent dropping of the allegiance to the Queen by police officers. Unfortunately, few have been able to identify the source of their fears --- fears which are well-founded since the issue at stake is far more significant than we have been led to believe, or perhaps, dare to believe. Indeed, the change of allegiance is yet another tragic reminder that the Rae government is intent on *ruling*, and not on governing.

Though I'm not one myself, I find myself supporting

"monarchists" on the oath issue. However, I have found it tragic that they have defended their monarchist views on shallow arguments of "tradition" and "heritage" without adequately and aggressively stressing the positive principles upon which these traditions were built. Their failure to do so has resulted in an increasing number of people coming to the belief that the monarchy is unnecessary and meaningless. After all, "tradition" and "heritage" *are meaningless terms unless it is clearly understood by all what principles and history underly the tradition.*

It is easily forgotten --- and therefore bears reminding --- that the British-style monarchy is an entirely different institution than a statist monarchy where a king or queen is

"The quest for certainty is an illusion rooted in fear; the quest for objectivity is rooted in reality and capable of being cultivated by disciplined experience."

---John MacMurray (1957)

absolute ruler. Indeed, since the *Magna Carta*, the British monarchy has evolved into an institution that has done a remarkable job at defining individual rights and protecting individuals from the concentration of too much power in too few hands.

prosperity further in the past few hundred years than was possible in the thousands of state-suppressed years before. To deny or disregard this historical role of the monarchy in the haphazard manner adopted by the NDP is both an insult and an

undefined. Gone are the phrases "without favour or affection, malice or ill-will" and "against the persons and property of Her Majesty's subjects."

It is particularly significant, therefore, that a socialist government should implement such a change. It is, after all, central to the ideology of socialism that governments *should* rule with "favour and affection" and it is central and necessary to the principles of egalitarianism that governments violate our private property rights and restrict our personal choices.

"The British monarchy has proven itself to be far more functional than Canada's current socialist constitution."

A monarchy would, of course, be the last institution one would set up as a means of protecting individual rights --- if one had the magical ability to begin from scratch, with no consideration to any political history or past social development (an impossibility), and if constitutional drafters had a full understanding of --- and respect for --- the principles necessary to the preservation of a free society. Many of these principles have, as a consequence of historical development, come to be enshrined within the institution of the monarchy, something that most of us tend to forget. For this reason, we must take serious measures to preserve these principles before abandoning the institutions in which they are enshrined.

What has made the British-style monarchy so different from any statist concept of a monarchy is that in many ways, it has evolved into an (admittedly awkwardly constructed) "people's constitution" that has proven itself to be far more functional than Canada's current socialist constitution, which explicitly protects the state's authority to override the rights of its citizens. Despite its past history and current shortcomings and imperfections, it was the British-style monarchy, which, combined with the parliamentary system of government, had directly or indirectly made it possible for the world to advance individual freedom, free trade, technology, and

affront to the people of Ontario.

When the Rae government dropped police officers' allegiances to the Queen, it also dropped their allegiance to the people they are supposed to serve and protect. Under the old oath, police officers were sworn to protect Her Majesty's *subjects*; under the new oath, they must swear allegiance to the *state*, and to a constitution that (through its "notwithstanding" clause) openly allows the state to violate the rights of her majesty's subjects.

Lest there be any doubt about my interpretation of these facts, let's compare some of the finer details of the old police officers' oath with the new. Under the old oath, in addition to

The evidence of this is right under our noses: The policies of Rae's NDP government are all confrontational and demand that the government pick sides when it should be a neutral arbiter at all times. He has pitted business against labour, tenants against landlords, visible minorities against invisible majorities, French against English, consumers against retailers, Canadians against Americans, and the list goes on and on. The spirit of cooperation that is only possible through a free market (i.e., through the voluntary interactions of free citizens) is completely alien to the socialist mentality.

Socialist philosophy believes in

"When the Rae government dropped police officers' allegiances to the Queen, it also dropped their allegiance to the people they are supposed to serve and protect."

swearing allegiance to the Queen, officers also swore to act "without favour or affection, malice or ill-will" and promised to "prevent all offences against the *persons or property* of Her Majesty's subjects." Under the abbreviated new oath, officers must swear to be "loyal to *Canada*," to "uphold the constitution of Canada" and to "prevent offence," which now remain

force, not freedom. Hence, socialists advocate forced pay equity, forced bilingualism, forced Sunday closings, forced affirmative action, forced state education, forced insurance plans, forced welfare, forced labour unions, forced daycare, forced quotas, forced culture, and forced social programs of every type imaginable. With every new law and tax, our freedom of choice,

"By what conceivable standard can the policy of price-fixing be a crime, when practiced by businessmen, but a public benefit when practiced by the government?" ---Ayn Rand (1962)

prosperity, and security are each diminished.

It has been my experience that most individuals do not like being told what to do, and in particular, do not like being forced to support things they strongly disagree with. Recently, more and more of us have been reaching the breaking point of tolerance and an unprecedented number of groups have been forming to fight state intrusion into their personal and business lives. Many of us have declared ourselves, consciously or not, to be enemies of the state by protesting against high taxes, shopping outside the country, ignoring domestic trade restrictions (i.e., Sunday shopping) or by engaging in a host of activities or lifestyles not approved of by the state.



So don't be surprised when, at some not-too-distant point in the future, a police officer may come to your home or place of business, *not* to protect you from offences "against person or property," but to act as a loyal officer of the state --- a state that is increasing its legal claim on our person and property each and every

day, and a state under which our *defence* of person and property is rapidly being regarded as an *offence* which must be dealt with in the discharge of an officer's duty --- to the state and to the socialist philosophy of force.

Ontario, who stands on guard for thee?
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SILENT CENSORS

-Kenneth McDonald.

(Born and educated in England, Kenneth McDonald has been a freelance writer since 1969 and has contributed regularly to journals in Canada and the United States, including the Freeman, Chronicles, and newsletters of the National Citizens' Coalition from 1976 to 1987. Author of Red Maple, Green Maple, and Keeping Canada Together, his following essay touches on some of the sinister forces at work in Canada which keep 'free-market' writers and authors out of the mainstream of Canadian literature and publications.)

PC MP Chuck Cook is in hot water with Canada's cultural establishment. He's the member of the Commons communications and culture committee who says that not enough Canadians read books to justify the \$18 million that Ottawa hands each year to Canadian book publishers.

Canadian Press reported him as saying to *McClelland & Stewart's* president Avie Bennett: "Even by your own figures, there's an awful lot of people out there who are paying taxes which subsidize that very small percentage of Canadians who buy and read books. And if you think that's right, then we have a different view."

Roy MacSkimming, speaking for the publishers, said that 25% of books purchased in Canada are written by Canadians, and that the government subsidy of \$18 million should be tripled.

Well, I'm with Chuck Cook. He might have under-

estimated when he said that only about ten per cent of Canadians read books, but he was dead on about subsidies. The old adage survives: He who pays the piper calls the tune, and if the government pays, the tunes aren't going to vary much from the government's score.

I believe that a free press is crucial to the preservation of liberty. I also recognize that a fully free press is an ideal that's very hard to attain.

In Canada there is no overt censorship other than that of the standards of taste and morality that editors and publishers impose on themselves. Press councils are imperfect but they do serve as safety valves for the public to protest appearances of bias.

But there is censorship of a different kind: the silent kind that keeps newspapers hewing to one political line to the exclusion of other views, and obliges people to buy

"Present-day writers --- especially those of the socialist school of thought --- base their various theories upon one common hypothesis: They divide mankind into two parts. People in general --- with the exception of the writer himself --- form the first group. The writer, all alone, forms the second and most important group."
---Frederic Bastiat (1850)

several papers if they want to strike a balance. (The government doesn't subsidize newspapers directly; it does it through advertising. Government is Canada's biggest advertiser and however harsh a newspaper's criticism of the government of the day,

economy and illustrated Pierre Trudeau's dedication to socialism by excerpts from his writings and speeches.

And we couldn't get it published. None of the subsidized publishers we showed the MS to would look at it.

"We criticized all three political parties for their commitment to State intervention ...and we couldn't get it published."

you're unlikely to hear the advertising budget condemned.)

But Mr. Cook was talking about books.

Seventeen years ago, Winnett Boyd and I co-authored a book, *The National Dilemma and The Way Out*, in which we advocated widespread capital ownership through the adoption of a variation of employee share ownership plans (ESOPs) that would enable all Canadians to become individual owners of shares in the productive enterprises that generate the major part of the country's wealth, and thus to enjoy two incomes, one from working and one from their own capital investment. We criticized all three political parties for their commitment to State intervention in the

"Too radical." "Our young readers didn't like it."

What they weren't honest enough to say was that publishing the book might be seen as biting the hand that fed them.

Winn and I and Orville Ganes (who illustrated the book) formed *BMG Publishing Ltd.*, and between 1975 and 1979 we published eight titles, including my own *Red Maple*, and *Green Maple*, and David Somerville's *Trudeau Revealed*. All of them were critical of tenets of Canada's political establishment: official bilingualism, official multiculturalism, official (and radically changed) immigration, and the whole shooting match of government grants and subsidies to the multitude of groups whose

government-funded full-time staffs fill the press and air waves with protests at the least criticism of their activities --- or their funding.

Every one of those eight titles sold more than the 10,000 copies that rank as Canadian best-sellers, and every author who brought material to us (we turned some down too) had had the same experience as we did; the subsidized publishers wouldn't look at them.

Winn handled the money, I did the editing, and B, M and G and their wives packed and mailed or delivered the books. We were a small business, and we weren't equipped to tackle fiction. But we found a niche, we made money, and we proved that there was a market in Canada for views that were contrary to the prevailing socialism; views that were in effect being suppressed because subsidized publisher wouldn't air them.

We closed the company down in 1982 but for years afterwards we got appeals from frustrated authors who couldn't find a home for their work --- and still can't, because the system hasn't changed. The silent censors are there to preserve it, and will be until the subsidies are removed.

<END>

SALLY FORTH



"The least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later by a thousandfold."
(354 BC)

---Aristotle

RECONCILIATION

Economics and the Environment

-Dr. Walter Block

(Following is the third installment of Dr. Block's presentation on environmental issues to Freedom Party attendees at a Sunday morning brunch in Toronto on Oct. 29, 1989. Speaking as senior economist with the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute, Dr. Block's speech has been reprinted verbatim from taped transcripts. The entire presentation is available on video and/or audio tapes through Freedom Party. Inquiries welcome.)

Part 1 - The Tragedy of the Commons (the principle of private property vs the principle of the commons) and **Part 2 - Common Ownership, Common Problems** (Pollution and Acid Rain) appeared in **Consent #13** and **#14** respectively. Back-issues are available through Freedom Party.)

Part 3 - Privatize Everything!

Species Extinction:

Let's begin our analysis of **species extinction** with the buffalo and the cow. Why is it that the buffalo was on the verge of extinction and the cow never was? If you look at it biologically you can't find an answer because these two animals are indistinguishable. They both dig and stab. They both smell. They both have horns. They both have a tail. They both 'moo'. They both give milk. If you crash into one you're in trouble.

So if you just look at these two animals standing side by side, you'd find no inkling of why one almost was on the verge of extinction and the other never was. The idea (of) the cow as extinct is ludicrous. Well, the reason for it --- the explanation of it --- is the **tragedy of the commons**.

The cow was always owned privately. The buffalo was always unowned.

You have these 'communist' songs like *Home Home On the Range* and *Don't Fence Me In*. When I was a kid I used to watch these western movies and you could always tell (who) the good guys (were) because they had the white hat and the white horse and they wore two guns (while)

the bad guys had black horses, black hats, and a mustache and only one gun. So things were simple --- only it was the wrong way around because the 'bad' guys were always trying to fence in the range. But those were the good guys, it turns out (from the environmental point of view), because they were engaged in trying to privatize the commons.

But when we had the open range and the buffalo ran around like nuts, with no control --- you know, just irresponsible buffalo running around, how could you establish ownership of it? How could you get one?

"Why is it that the buffalo was on the verge of extinction and the cow never was? The cow was always owned privately. The buffalo was always unowned."

The only way is to kill it. You couldn't fence it in. So people would kill the buffalo even if all they wanted from the buffalo was the tongue, which was a delicacy. And as a result, you'd go out into the range and you'd take your helicopter and you look

down into the 1850s or something and you see just thousands of buffalo just lying there dead, similar to the way the elephants are now in Africa.

I mean, who goes into their lower forty pasture with a machine gun and goes 'rat-tat-tat' killing all their cows? No, it's ludicrous. Because if you *own* the cow and you don't want to use the cow today, it'll be there tomorrow. But the only way to get the *buffalo* is to kill it.

So obviously what we have to do is to privatize the range, and once we privatize the range, there's no problem. Now buffalo aren't extinct; there are buffalo farms. If anyone shoots

those buffalo, they'd call the cops and they'd stop you from doing it. There are no economic incentives to act in a nonsensical way.

Now, it's the same with hippopotamuses and elephants.

"Fundamentally, there are only two ways of coordinating the economic activities of millions. One is central direction involving the use of coercion --- the technique of the army and of the modern totalitarian state. The other is voluntary cooperation of individuals --- the technique of the marketplace."

---Milton Friedman (1962)

Ignorant people, like the editors of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *the Economist* (economic illiterates!) --- say that the reason for the extinction of these animals is because of their tusks or their horns. The elephant's tusk, I think 16 pounds of it at \$400 an ounce is worth about \$102,000. So they say that the reason people are shooting at these (animals) is because of these valuable commodities. It's (as if) the horns and the ivory were a curse --- and this is *true* under the regime of non-ownership where the only way you can get (tusks) is to *shoot* (the elephants).

So what the gangs of poachers do is go out and shoot these elephants and they take a hacksaw and they cut off the tusks or the horn and then they race off leaving very valuable meat and very valuable hide just wasted because they can't get away that easily with the whole elephant. It's sort of hard to do. But with the tusks, you can get away. With a horn you can get away.

Then there are these people who say that we have to have a ban on *trade* in ivory.

I was on the *CBC Journal* debating a supposed conservative MLA who was saying 'yes they have to have this ban' and there was this (political leader) from Kenya or somewhere (Mozambique?) who burned \$3.6 million worth of ivory in order to

privatize them. I made statements like "Elephants are just cows with big ears." I was seen as biologically illiterate or something. But I wasn't making a biological point; I was making an *economic* point --- that if they were just privatized there would be no problem.

You see, the reason poachers are doing so well is because the *villagers* are the poachers. The villagers hide them and protect them because the way they consider (elephants) is just 'rats-with-big-ears'. Here they've got some crops and all of a sudden an elephant comes clumping along and that's the end of your crop.

Now if they *owned* the elephants *and* if they owned the crops, they could keep one from the other with big fences. Then they would see the elephant as a resource and they would protect the elephant. But now they're not allowed to keep that ivory legally --- or the meat or the elephant skin.

It's the same as with crocodiles. (I always get crocodiles and alligators confused. They seem pretty similar to me.) But crocodiles too were on the verge of extinction. And nowadays we have in Florida and Louisiana crocodile farms. The leather there (for a four-foot long farm-fed alligator) is worth around \$39 a linear foot and the meat is worth \$20.

Now I'm not into this, but some people *like* alligator meat and what (alligators) eat is *nutria*, which is ground-up swamp grass, and *croaker*, which is a cheap fish and vitamin-

fortified dried food. And they have alligator farms. While the alligator, or crocodile or whatever it is, was on the verge of extinction, now there are 75,000 (of them) in 1989. This is triple what there was in 1987. I guess the buggers breed pretty well when under the tender mercy and care of farmers who have an economic incentive to

"If it moves, privatize it. If it doesn't move, privatize it. Privatize everything. That's our motto here."

make sure that they breed and that they're not slaughtered.

Unfortunately, many consumers still think that the alligator or the crocodile or whatever it is, is on the verge of extinction, so they're not buying handbags as quickly as they might. But you see, the alligator's skin for handbags and shoes *was* a curse for this animal when it was unowned. Now that it's owned, it's *not* a curse. It's the reason that farmers preserve them.

I mean, the reason we preserve cows is that they have economic value. If you take the economic value away, then they'd be in trouble.

Which leads me to the next breed of animal...

I guess I would divide animals into three kinds: first, the animals that have some value for us. Well, if they're privatized, we have no problem. Second are the animals that we really don't like too much --- like anopheles, mosquitoes and causes of death and stuff. It would be very hard to see how free enterprise could keep *them* alive, but even in the case of those species we would because they might conceivably have some value for us in the future.

Now who would be so forward looking as to keep alive pneumonic

"Remember *Star Trek IV*? This leads to the question of how the free market would handle whales and other sea-life mammals now on the verge of extinction."

publicize the danger to the elephants, and I was saying that it's just a waste of 3.6 million dollars. Although it was good publicity, still, the (solution) is to

"There is no such thing as 'the Third World.' This term has been invented by a collection of nations that have only one thing in common --- the receipt of large doses of free aid from the productive West."

---William Gairdner (1990)

plague rats and stuff like that? Well, there are *two* groups that I can think of. One is pharmaceutical companies who might, in fifty years or in a hundred years, find some use for them. The other is universities --- private universities --- biology departments and chemistry departments who also have an economic advantage in having these breeds not be extinct so that their students can learn from them.

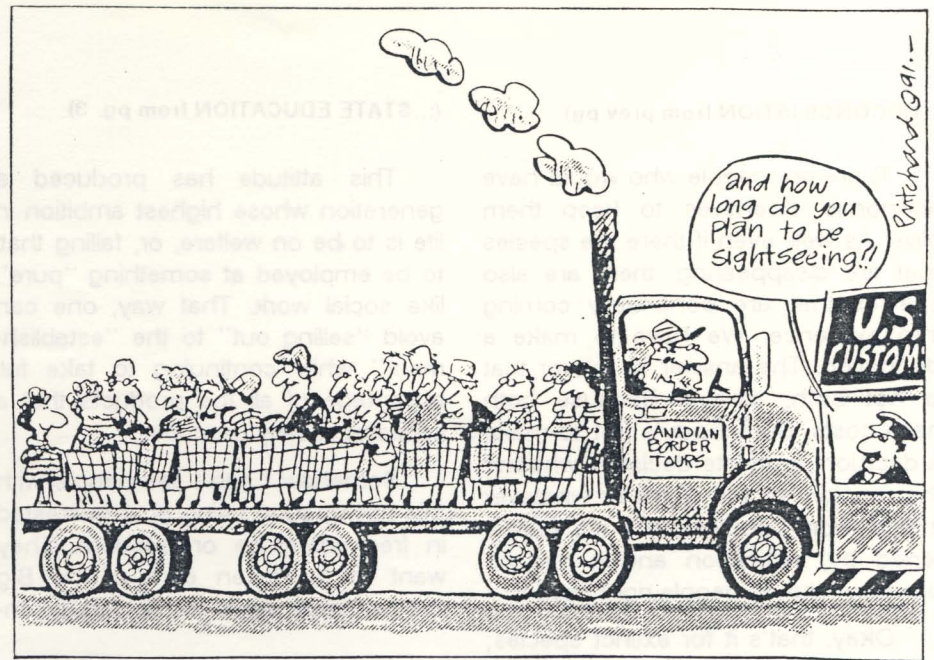
Remember that *Star Trek* movie where there were no whales in (their) century? *Star Trek IV*. There were these superpowerful beings --- martians or whoever --- who were friends of whales and they discovered that there were no whales so they were just going to kill the earth and our Trekkies had to go to a different century back to the present to get them and bring them back to the future. (You had to be there to appreciate this.) Well, this leads to the question of whales and seals and other sea-life mammals that are now on the verge of extinction. How would the free market handle them?

"Right now with regard to the oceans, we are as if we were on the land a hundred thousand years ago. Mainly, we're just hunters and gatherers."

Well, the answer to me seems to be to privatize the ocean. If it moves, privatize it. If it doesn't move, privatize it. Privatize everything. That's our motto here.

When I address this to most audiences, their jaws drop. They say "That's imbecilic. How can you privatize the oceans? It's *water*! It moves. You can't *privatize* it!"

Well I don't know. A species that can get up to the moon, that can cure



polio, that can do all these other great things could surely make sure that a bunch of fish stay put where we tell them to. We probably have the technology even now and if we don't, surely in fifty or a hundred years we'd have the electronic devices to make invisible electronic walls in the oceans so that the whales stay where we tell them to. We engage in the farming of whales, or porpoises, or whoever else is out there in the briny deep.

Maybe you'd need big areas for them to roam around. You don't have to have a private property holding of one acre of ocean.

You could have maybe a thousand square miles plots. You know, farmer Jones owns this, farmer Smith owns that, or what have you.

In principle, I don't see any reason why we couldn't privatize these things and I see *great* reasons for us to do this.

I happen to be a human being. I *like* human beings. I wish them well. I may be prejudiced. I happen to be one. My hope is that eventually (I'm

anticipating some of the zero population growth stuff) instead of six billion people, we'll have sixty trillion people on this earth and I think that we've got plenty of room for them. But if we're going to do it we're going to have to expand from the one-quarter of the earth's surface that is now land to the three-quarters that is ocean.

The point that I would put forth for consideration is that when we were hunters and gatherers on the earth, we could only support a couple of hundred thousand people. When we became *farmers* on the earth, we could support a few million people, or a few billion. But right now with regard to the oceans, we are as if we were on the land a hundred thousand years ago. Mainly, we're just hunters and gatherers. We're not farming the oceans. We're not using (them) rationally. Until we can do for the oceans what we now do for the land, namely farm it and rationalize it, our prospects are very limited.

The third group of animals with regard to extinction are groups like snail darters and other animals that are neither very good or very bad but sort of we're indifferent to them. Again, the same principles would apply.

"Ask a man to define the public interest and he will give you a pretty good definition of his own."
---Richard Needham (1977)

(...RECONCILIATION from prev pg)

There are people who would have economic incentives to keep them alive. As well, even if there are species that are disappearing, there are also species that are continually coming into existence. We have to make a distinction. The answer to this or that is not both, always. Because both have costs. Somebody's got to make a decision, a private decision, whether the monkey or the worm or whatever it is is worth preserving if it's (threatened by) extinction and it has no obvious value to people right now.

Okay, that's it for extinct species; we move on now to oil spills...

<END>

Next Issue: *Humans as the "Mistake-Making Animal"; How "optimize" means "minimize". Dr. Block continues his reconciliation between economics and the environment.*

(...STATE EDUCATION from pg. 3)

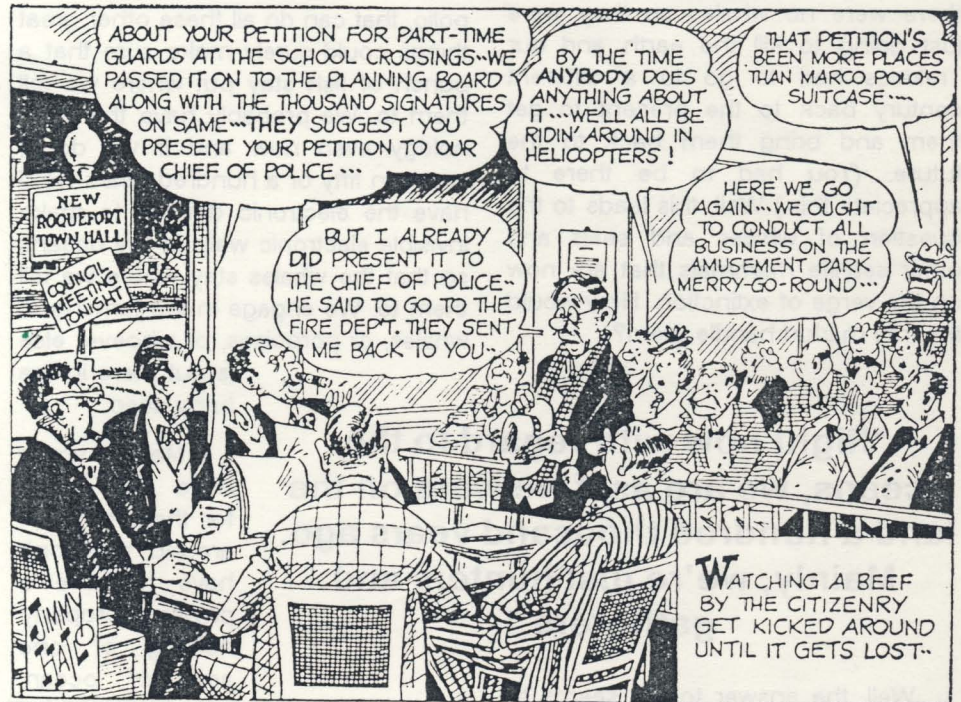
This attitude has produced a generation whose highest ambition in life is to be on welfare, or, failing that, to be employed at something "pure" like social work. That way, one can avoid "selling out" to the "establishment" while continuing to take full advantage of all the products that a capitalist society produces.

Somehow I can't see people with this background being at all interested in free enterprise or freedom. They want to be taken care of by Big Brother, and would be dreadfully un-

comfortable in any situation in which they and they alone were responsible for their own actions.

I hope I'm wrong. I fear I'm not. I think too many Canadians have already sold out the old initiative and resourcefulness with which they carved a country out of the wilderness. Only a massive social disruption would force them to take the measures necessary to improve their conditions.

Unfortunately, such disruption may already be upon us. <END>



CONSENT

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