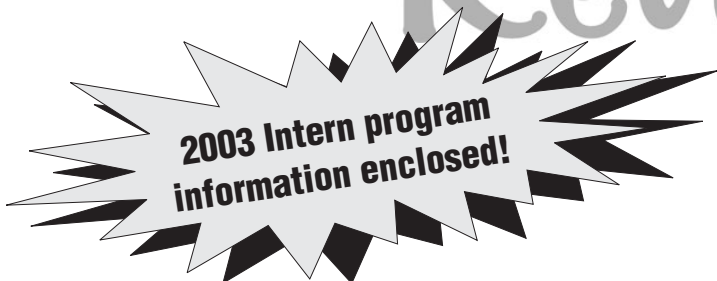




Canadian Student Review

Vol. 11, No. 4
December 2002



Medical Waste Disposal: A New Approach

by *Natalie Beange*

As Canada continues to develop and change, many issues previously overlooked or ignored are being uncovered. To maintain its position in the global economy, Canada must identify these issues and solve them quickly and efficiently. Recently, Environment Canada stated that the use by hospitals of incinerators to dispose of hazardous waste “has physical, chemical, or biological characteristics that can place human

health at risk or adversely affect the natural environment.”

Hospital incinerator emissions contribute significantly to pollution. They account for approximately 9 percent of the total mercury emissions in Canada, and incinerators are the leading source of dioxin emissions in Canada (Sibbald, 2000). The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment have proposed a new standard that lowers the level of in-

cinerator dioxin and mercury emissions permitted. The dated incinerators used in Ontario hospitals could not achieve the new standards because they were not capable of handling the composition of hazardous biomedical waste produced today.

Since Ontario generates 48.9 percent of the total volume of hazardous waste in Canada (1999-2000 data), it potentially has a major influence on Canada’s pollution level (Environment Canada). Ontario releases one-eighth

continued on page 3

Welcome!

This December issue of *CSR* contains thought-provoking articles written by students, including the high school category winner of the 2002 Student Essay Contest.

We are also pleased to announce the 2003 Student Intern Program details. Fraser Institute interns spend four months working under the supervision of a senior policy analyst, on a specific policy project. If this sounds like your dream summer job, apply today!

Thanks to the Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation for sponsoring this newsletter. Each issue is distributed free of charge to campuses across the country.

–*Vanessa Schneider, Editor*

Inside...

Towards a Customs Union	5
Letters	6
Ottawa’s Parliament: A Case for Reform	8
Things Folks Know That Just Ain’t So...	11

Canadian Student Review is published by The Fraser Institute. The views contained within are strictly those of the authors.

Editor Vanessa Schneider

Contributing Editors

Brian April
Jason Clemens
John R. Graham
Fred McMahon

Production Kristin McCahon

Canadian Student Review is offered free of charge to students across Canada. To receive a subscription, or to write to us about articles you read in this publication, contact us at

CANADIAN STUDENT REVIEW
1770 Burrard Street, 4th Floor
Vancouver, B.C., V6J 3G7
Tel.: (604) 688-0221, ext. 571 or
(416) 363-6575, ext. 571
Fax: (604) 688-8539 or
(416) 601-7322

Web site: www.fraserinstitute.ca

E-mail address: info@fraserinstitute.ca

Copyright © 2002;
The Fraser Institute.

Date of Issue: December 2002.

Printed in Canada. ISSN 1192-490X

The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian economic and social research and educational organization. It has as its objective the redirection of public attention to the role of competitive markets in providing for the well-being of Canadians. Where markets work, the Institute's interest lies in trying to discover prospects for improvement. Where markets do not work, its interest lies in finding the reasons. Where competitive markets have been replaced by government control, the interest of the Institute lies in documenting objectively the nature of the improvement or deterioration resulting from government intervention. The Fraser Institute is a national, federally chartered non-profit organization financed by the sale of its publications and the contributions of its members, foundations, and other supporters.

About the authors

Mathieu Leduc is a Bachelor of Engineering student at McGill University in Montreal, majoring in Electrical Engineering. He has a lively interest in econometrics.

Natalie Beange is a Grade 12 Homeschooled student in Markham, Ontario. Her essay, "Medical Waste Disposal: A New Approach," was the high school category winner in the Fraser Institute's 2002 Student Essay Contest.



Jon Wong is a third-year Bachelor of Arts student at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, studying a combined major of Political Science and History.

Mark your calendar for these 2003 Student Seminars on Public Policy Issues

EDMONTON, AB

February 1, 2003

Sheraton Centre Grande Hotel,
10235 – 101 Street

Canada's military profile, property rights, global warming, health care reform.

Luncheon presentation by Dr. Lorne Taylor, Minister of Environment, Province of Alberta.

SASKATOON, SK

March 7, 2003

Radisson Hotel,
405 Twentieth Street East

Statistics in the media, welfare reform.

MONTREAL, QC

February 8, 2003

Delta Centre-Ville,
777 University Street

Globalization, welfare reform, health care policy, free trade.

Luncheon presentation by Joel-Denis Bellavance, Parliamentary reporter, *La Presse*.

WINNIPEG, MB

March 8, 2003

Holiday Inn Winnipeg South,
1330 Pembina Highway
Statistics in the media, health care reform, education policy.

For program details or to register on-line, visit
www.fraserinstitute.ca/studentcentre/

of Canada's national emissions by incinerating 20 percent of its hazardous waste (Environment Canada). Rich Whate of the Toronto Environmental Alliance claimed, "The standards are strong enough to close down old incinerators in Ontario" (Sibbald, 2000). Since it appeared that Ontario hospital incinerators were unable to pass the proposed standards, the Ontario government passed new legislation eliminating the use of all existing hospital incinerators by January 1, 2003. Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer stated: "Tougher hazardous waste laws will increase public accountability and protect human health. When fully implemented, these initiatives will place Ontario among the world leaders in the reduction and management of hazardous waste" (Ontario Ministry of the Environment). However, the legislation does not explain how hospitals will handle the extra hazardous waste that had formerly been incinerated. Hospitals will have to use a new method or methods of disposing of their hazardous waste.

"Taxpayers should not have to pay for managing hazardous wastes in this province," Environment Minister Witmer stated, "Generators must assume their share of responsibility for the waste they produce and handle" (Findlay, 2001). Subsequently, the Ontario government de-

veloped a new program that would relieve it of costs related to the disposal of hospital hazardous waste and ensure the safe disposal of that waste. Hospitals would pay the Ontario government a \$50 annual "waste" registration fee due by February 15 of each year, as well as a \$10 charge per tonnage of hazardous waste generated (McMeekin, 2002). However, the tonnage fee would not apply to hospitals that disposed of

*... the \$12 million,
which the government
expects to gain from
hospitals, is still being
taken from taxpayers.
... there is no net tax
saving for taxpayers.*

their waste at certain recycling facilities designated by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE). The Ontario government projects this program will "net" \$12 million from hospitals annually. The MOE will use the \$12 million to monitor and supervise hospital waste production and disposal. There will be an administrative monetary penalty (AMP) applied to facilities that fail to

comply with MOE criteria. The MOE will send the charged facility a notice of the pending AMP, a maximum \$10,000 penalty. The facility can appeal the AMP within 15 days to reduce the penalty and the MOE will reduce the fine if the offender shows improvement.

However, there is a dilemma with this approach. Since Ontario tax revenues support both the Ontario government and hospital expenditures, then the \$12 million, which the government expects to gain from hospitals, is still being taken from taxpayers. Thus, there is no net tax saving for Ontario taxpayers. In addition, this "solution" disregards the potential opportunity for individual hospitals to solve the problem by choosing the most cost-effective method for waste disposal from their facility. There are alternative, and potentially better, more efficient ways for hospitals to manage hazardous waste.

Many citizens were concerned when the World Health Organization reported, "developed countries generate as much as 6 kilograms of hazardous waste per person in hospital per year" (Sibbald, 2000). Conversely, others were skeptical of this figure and wanted to know exactly how much of the waste labeled "hazardous" was indeed hazardous. Their skepticism proved to be well founded when a 1993 study by the MOE discovered that of the 10 percent of waste labeled hazardous by hospitals, 39 percent of it was actually ordinary, non-hazardous waste (Sibbald, 2000). According to other sources, this figure could be as high

Is Your Address Up To Date?

If you are moving, don't forget to send us your new address!
Send an email to student@fraserinstitute.ca
or complete the on-line form at www.fraserinstitute.ca/studentcentre/

as 40 to 65 percent (Walsh Environmental Systems).

Most importantly, there must be better management of waste in hospital facilities, to reduce potential pollution caused by unnecessary disposal of improperly labeled waste. By reducing the amount of improperly labeled waste, cost for waste disposal would be lowered. Hospitals would then choose and implement a waste management system from a number of Canadian waste management companies that have proven that their systems are effective in reducing the amount of hazardous waste produced. Through implementation, hospitals would know the exact amount of hazardous waste their facility generated in the past year. This would hold the hospitals accountable and would encourage waste reduction. The Toronto Hospital for Sick Children is one example of how effective waste management programs can be in reducing waste production. Since 1992, the hospital has reduced waste by 58% (Sibbald, 2000). Hospitals using these types of management systems would generate less hazardous waste and therefore less pollution.

After hospitals had implemented waste management programs, then the facilities would choose one of the several options for hazardous waste disposal. The MOE would continue to ensure that hospitals disposed of their hazardous waste using safe, non-polluting methods, which met emissions limits and environmental standards. However, hospitals would make the decision as to how or

where their hazardous waste would be disposed of. Many hospitals have recognized cost savings from closing their incinerators, so this could be an option for hospitals. Hospitals could, however, choose to update their current incinerator to comply with government emissions standards, or could purchase a modern hazardous waste incinerator for their facility, if this option were cost-effective. Alternatively, hospitals could ship their hazardous waste to one or more of several Ontario incineration and non-incineration hazardous waste treatment facilities.

After hospitals have chosen and applied their method of disposal, the government would annually reward the hospitals that had either reduced their waste production by a certain percentage or had the lowest amount of hazardous waste for the size of their facility. This reward program would potentially further entice hospitals to lower their amount of hazardous waste.

By using this market approach to reduce and manage hazardous waste, Ontario and Canada would maintain and possibly strengthen their influence among world leaders in pollution reduction, while ensuring the cost-effectiveness of the relevant facilities.

Bibliography

- Environment Canada. March 2002. Available digitally at www.ec.gc.ca.
- Findlay, Alan (2001). "Ontario Waste Registry in Works." *Toronto Sun* (July 5). 1 page. Available digitally at www.canoec.ca/AllAboutCanoesNewsJul01/5_waste-sun.html. (Checked Dec. 9, 2002).

McMeekin, Bruce (2002). "Ontario Makes Significant Changes to Hazardous Waste Management Regulation." Miller Thomson *EnviroNotes!* (Feb. 13). 5 pages. Available digitally at www.millerthomson.com/pdf/environotes/february13,2002.pdf. (Checked Dec. 9, 2002).

Ontario Ministry of the Environment (2001). "Managing Hazardous Waste in Ontario." Media Backgrounder (December). 1 page. Available digitally at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/news/121801mb.htm. (Checked Dec. 9, 2002).

Ontario Ministry of Environment (2001). "Ontario Announces Comprehensive Hazardous Waste Plan." News Release (Dec. 18). 1 page. Available digitally at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/news/121801.htm. (Checked Dec. 9, 2002).

Sibbald, Barbara (2000). "Crackdown on Hospital Incinerator Emissions Coming Soon." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (Nov. 10). 1 page. Available digitally at www.cma.ca/cmaj/cmaj_today/2000/11_10.htm. (Checked Dec. 9, 2002).

University of Manitoba (n.d.). "Hazardous Waste Program." 5 pages. Available digitally at www.umanitoba.ca/campus/health_and_safety/haz-waste/index.shtml. (Checked Dec. 9, 2002).

Walsh Integrated Environmental Systems Inc. Available digitally at www.walshenvironmental.com.

Willms and Shier (2001). "Cashing in on Red Tape for Hazardous Waste Generators." *Environmental Law Flash* (July). 2 pages. Available digitally at www.willmsshier.com. Search on "Publications" (Checked Dec. 9, 2002). ☞

Note: Natalie Beange's essay was the 2002 Student Essay Contest high school category winner.

Towards a Customs Union

by *Mathieu Leduc*

While NAFTA was a great step forward, it remains merely a free trade agreement and lacks many of the necessary ingredients to bring Canada and its two partners to the next level. There is a need to build institutions that will enable more cooperation on diverse issues and permit a trilateral approach to solving many North American problems. As discussed in a previous article, a North American central bank would be a very efficient way to support a common currency system in which each country would have a voice. Mexico, although a relatively low-income country, has experienced rapid economic growth in recent years. It has also showed encouraging signs of development and, given its large population as well as opportunities for economic integration with its wealthier neighbours, could become one of the most important markets in the twenty-first century. Canada and the United States now have the largest bilateral trade relationship in the world. To extend it to Mexico and participate in a potential market of 400 million people, other institutions must be created, including those that address customs issues.

The primary objective in harmonizing trade policies and extending

NAFTA to the next level is to gradually create a North American customs union. This implies gradually harmonizing tariffs on foreign goods entering North America. The main advantage of this harmonization would be the elimination of complicated and inefficient rules of origin. Indeed, it is very complicated to verify if a good imported from the United States was actually made in the United States, where in many cases there is no tariff, or if it was made in another country, with which Canada may maintain high tariffs. If the good was made in such a country, it is likely that it was shipped to the United States in order to be “re-exported” to Canada and take advantage of NAFTA to bypass tariffs. In a customs union, external tariffs are the same for all member countries and there is no advantage to this practice. Lawrence M. Friedman writes:

The NAFTA rules are complex and cumbersome. Without great care and proper training, it is likely that certifiers will make mistakes completing NAFTA Certificates of Origin. These mistakes may result in the incorrect certification of non-originating goods or the

loss of duty reduction opportunities for originating goods that were not certified. In addition, a lack of a thorough knowledge of the requirements will greatly increase the difficulty in responding to a verification request from the Canadian, U.S. or Mexican customs authorities. (1998)

As a result, free trade agreements like NAFTA create a burden of paperwork that can be a significant obstacle to trade. A customs union can avoid that.

... free trade agreements ... create a burden of paperwork.

With a customs union, all three countries would have to surrender some of their authority on tariff policies. Some might see this as allowing the United States to dictate trade policy to its neighbours. In reality, by adopting the standard rule of harmonizing tariff levels to the lowest level imposed by one of the three countries, a proper balance of power would undoubtedly be achieved. This customs union could be implemented even before a common currency system, and would consist of the first concrete step in the creation of a North American union.

Reference

Lawrence M. Friedman (1998). “NAFTA Rules of Origin.” *North American Customs Guide*. Primedia Inc. ☺

Letters to the Editor

Send your feedback on this issue of *Canadian Student Review* to the Editor at:
4th Floor, 1770 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6J 3G7
We will print the best letters in future editions of *CSR*.

Letters

Just Who Is This Guy?

Dear Editor,

I am writing to object to the article by Jason Hayes entitled, "Just Who Are These Guys Anyway?" in the May 2002 *Canadian Student Review*. Despite what The Fraser Institute would like us to believe, there are many very well-informed individuals who are in the anti-globalization camp and whose ethical and economic arguments deserve much more attention than your organization, or Jason Hayes' article, gives them. This debate is about more than economic growth and quantifiable indicators. It is also a debate about culture, community, lifestyle, and values. Those are things The Fraser Institute's studies rarely consider and which cannot be proven by economic analysis. The debate over free trade and globalization is a complex debate and it does your organization a great disservice to publish articles that are so full of propaganda and rhetoric.

I think The Fraser Institute would do well to apologize to its readers for its over-generalizations about anti-free-trade activists and for its failure to appreciate the validity of their arguments. Otherwise, I fear The Fraser Institute itself may become an organization that is "loud, proud, and in your face," but who will ultimately appear to be too partisan and too disrespectful of the other side to be taken seriously.

Yours,
Brendan Wilson
Waterloo, ON

Jason Hayes responds:

Mr. Wilson's comments imply that we are in danger of harming the cultures, communities, lifestyles, and values of others by embracing globalization. Environmentalists and anti-capitalists regularly level this alleged threat at globalization advocates; it was a continuing theme in Johannesburg, at the 2002 Summit on Sustainable Development. Most notably, Gar Smith of San Francisco's Earth Island Institute instructed the world that, "There is a lot of quality to be had in poverty... I don't think a lot of electricity is a good thing." Smith asserts that bringing electricity to developing nations can "wreak havoc" on cultures. "I have seen villages in Africa that had vibrant culture and great communities that were disrupted and destroyed by the introduction of electricity," he said (Morano, 2002).

However, this view of "culture" as expressed by many in the anti-capitalist movement has been criticized as a new form of "cultural imperialism" by commentators in both developed and developing nations (Morano, 2002).

We can loosely define "community" and "culture" as an identifiable group that possesses common beliefs, a common geographical origin, a common heritage (as in generational links), and often common political or economic goals. Authentic culture or community requires that those making up the group have an understanding of the history of the community or culture, interact with others in the community or culture, and have some role to play in the

community's or culture's development.

Central to this concept is the notion that both community and culture must be dynamic (i.e. experience change). As members of the community grow, mature, or change, their culture will also necessarily grow, mature, and change. Preserving a stagnant culture is necessarily antithetical to the entire concept of culture.

This dynamism will strike many as offensive. They will argue that preserving customs, languages, and the history of a people is essential to the recognition of a culture. The essential questions that must be answered in deciding whether new beliefs or traditional values will be embraced are these: whose values are they? and who decides their worth? Will some amorphous "public" or "society" make the decision, or will it be up to the individual?

Culture and community function properly when people have the ability to self-determine, to interact freely with and to influence the development of their community and culture. Such freedom to interact requires a basis of non-violent, co-operative effort and the recognition of economic and individual freedom. The big-government, tax-heavy regulatory and redistributive fixes that many anti-capitalists support crudely interfere with both economic and individual freedoms.

Many people in developing countries are crying out for freedom from the enforced poverty caused by the policies of (even well-meaning) anti-capitalists. For example, Indian

scholars Ramachandra Guha and Deepak Lal have criticized the end results of policies recommended by western environmentalists and anti-capitalists. They note that western lobbyists railing against the evils of global capitalism effectively force citizens of developing nations to exist in the abject poverty that is routinely romanticized as “traditional” or “eco-logical.”

Guha refers to this situation as the “full stomach phenomenon,” where well-fed and well-funded western lobbyists have the time to meddle in the lives and socio-economic development of developing nations while people living in those nations must struggle to feed themselves. The term Lal uses for this western freedom to plan and design the lives of third world citizens is “New Cultural Imperialism,” implying that the attitude of westerners toward the Third World has changed little since the time when allegedly civilized countries imposed their beliefs and cultures on what they felt were backward savages. The primary difference between the old and new imperialisms is that instead of forcing new ways on them, civilized peoples today are trying to those in the Third World to keep their old ways and abstain from “destroying” their allegedly high quality of life by using such western contrivances as flush toilets, refrigerators, and electricity.

The new western imperialists glorify poverty as a morally superior condition and, in their rush to force “morality” on the Third World, advocate that the Third World remain locked in unsustainable bioregional lifestyles, with simplistic or natural medicines, and no way to improve their own health or welfare. Under this framework, the Third World is

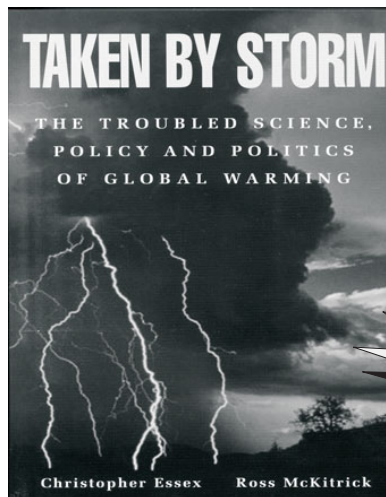
perpetually beholden to the wealthy, western do-gooders who dole out their food and medicine as they see fit.

Groups such as the Sustainable Development Network have now formed in developing countries to battle the environmental and anti-capitalist lobbies. They welcome scholars like Guha and Lal who advocate the recognition of economic

and political freedom for citizens of the Third World, and who push for the use of bio and other technology to improve the quality of their life and the quantity of their food.

Reference

Marc Morano (2002). “Environmentalists Lament Introduction of Electricity.” CNSNews.com (August 26). ☞



Taken By Storm: The Troubled Science, Policy and Politics of Global Warming

by Christopher Essex and Ross McKittrick, ©2002

Published by Key Porter Books; \$26.95 paperback

ISBN #1-55263-212-1

“**Taken By Storm** is required reading. Any politician who has failed to read this book and yet is willing to commit society’s resources to avert global warming has been derelict in his or her duty to the public. Professors Essex and McKittrick present a powerful case.”

—G. Cornelius Van Kooten, *Professor of Economics and Canada Research Chair in Environmental Studies and Climate Change, Department of Economics, University of Victoria*

“In **Taken by Storm**, Essex and McKittrick offer a scientifically sound argument that is against the mainstream. Let’s open up a debate and see who is willing to participate.”

—Anastasios Tsonis, *Professor, Department of Mathematical Sciences, Atmospheric Sciences Group, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

The physical phenomena in climate and weather are among the most complex in nature, and science can say very little about what they will do in the future. Yet a large international policy framework has been built precisely on the assumption that we know what is happening and how to control it. In **Taken By Storm**, Christopher Essex and Ross McKittrick prove this assumption false, carefully explaining the science of climate change and deconstructing the widespread myth of global warming. They argue that the connection between science and society is disintegrating, and they propose a vital first step toward repairing this relationship.

Ottawa's Parliament: A Case for Reform

by Jon Wong

In contemporary Canadian politics, parliamentary reform is the subject of intense debate. Michael S. Whittington, a critic of parliamentary reform, writes that, "Canadian democracy works precisely because the power of the people and the power of Parliament are given expression through the executive function and not directly" (2000, p. 53). Although opponents of reform do bring up valid points in regards to legislative efficiency, in this essay, I will explore the following thesis: the existing system of government functions to promote intense partisanship and operates to neglect regional and constituent concerns; therefore, intra-state reforms are necessary to rectify these glaring problems. In pursuing this thesis, I will focus on two proposals for reform: that the "confidence convention" must be relaxed, and along with it, party discipline; and that the Triple-E senate must be adopted to combat decentralization.

In Canada's democracy, a restraint on the prime minister's (PM) authority is what is known as the confidence convention. On the surface, the confidence convention appears to be a democratic necessity. It makes sense that the PM must have the confidence of the elected House of Commons, and ultimately the electorate. However, in reality, the confidence convention is the source

of party discipline;¹ thus, ironically, it functions to contradict the tenets of democracy.

The confidence convention must be relaxed in order to loosen the rigid party discipline that exists in today's House of Commons. Unlike parliamentary systems in countries such as Australia, the vast majority of votes in the Canadian House of Commons can potentially be of non-confidence. In the article "Discipline Versus Democracy," David Kilgour and John Kirsner suggest two proposals for reform. First, more free votes could occur if it was made mandatory to explicitly include a provision of non-confidence in any opposition motion aimed at bringing down the government (Kilgour and Kirsner, 1991, p. 202).

The second method of reform proposed by Kilgour and Kirsner is the "positive non-confidence rule" (1991, p. 202). Used in the West German Bundestag, "it prescribes that an administration is defeated only if a successful opposition non-confidence motion also names a new chancellor" (Kilgour and Kirsner, 1991, p. 203). In the Canadian context, in 1979, the opposition Liberals, New Democrats, and Social Credit would have had to have agreed upon a new PM in order to successfully bring down Joe Clark's government (Kilgour and Kirsner, 1991, p. 203).

The implementation of Kilgour and Kirsner's recommendations regarding possible restrictions on the confidence convention would relax party discipline in the House of Commons. More importantly, by permitting more free votes, individual MPs can "take positions on government bills and other matters based on pleasing constituents instead of their respective party hierarchies" (Kilgour and Kirsner, 1991, p. 202).

Of course, many have criticized this point of view. In the article "Strong, Disciplined Parties are Vital to Canada," Robert Jackson states that, "Canada's form of government relies on cohesive political parties... [and] the prime minister must have the means of achieving his objectives" (1991, p. 205). In addition, Jackson contends that an MP is elected to serve as a member of a particular political party instead of as a delegate of his or her constituents (1991, p. 205). I disagree with Jackson's position. I believe that the purpose of MP nominations in particular ridings is to determine who may run for office on behalf of that party, while the purpose of an election is to enable constituents to elect a representative for their riding.

Proponents of party discipline often cite the United States as an example of constant political deadlock. They argue that the lack of party dis-

1 Party discipline is when MPs vote in accordance with party positions, often referred to as "toeing the party line."

cipline in the US Congress operates to hinder the president's ability to pursue his agenda. Of course, that is only one side of the story. The fact that an American president cannot force through legislation allows for regional concerns to be voiced and bi-partisan compromises to be made. Kilgour and Kirsner make an important point: "Canadian bloc voting makes bi- or tri-partisan agreement on anything in our legislatures exceedingly rare." Therefore, the relaxation of party discipline is necessary to promote constituent concerns and to create a less partisan atmosphere within the House of Commons (Kilgour and Kirsner, 1991, p. 203).

A glaring deficiency in the present federal government is its lack of effective regional representation. The present senate lacks legitimacy because members are appointed by the PM through patronage. Paul Barker and Mark Charlton put it best: "the undemocratic quality of the senate makes it impossible for it to play a truly important role in the legislative process" (1991, p. 209). The replacement of the current senate with a Triple-E (effective, elected, and equal representation) senate would be effective in addressing this problem of senate legitimacy. By achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the Canadian public, the senate can become an effective regional counter to a lower house that is dominated by the two large central provinces (McConnell, 1991, p. 211).

An important aspect of the Triple-E senate is that it provides for equal representation for all provinces. In contrast, in the existing senate, Ontario and Quebec each have 24 members, the western provinces have 6 members each, the Maritime provinces each have 8 members, and



Newfoundland has 6 members (Atkinson and Docherty, 2000, p. 12). Thus, because the House of Commons is also heavily dominated by the two central provinces, the existing system functions to enforce a tyranny of the majority with no regard for regional concerns. I agree with Howard McConnell when he states that, "the reason for equal representation is to forestall undue domination of the lesser-populated peripheries by the centre" (1991, p. 214). Illustrated by such traditions as western alienation, it is apparent that many Canadians are frustrated with Quebec's and Ontario's hegemony over the present parliamentary system. Thus, adopting a system of equal representation to counter this dominance would no doubt ease this frustration.

In the debate over senate reform, many have criticized the Triple-E senate. For example, C.E.S. Franks writes that a reformed senate could become "an enhanced forum for confrontation and impasse" (quoted in Barker and Charlton, p. 210). I disagree. Is it so unreasonable that enacted legislation that affects all provinces should also have the support of the majority of provinces? Moreover, Franks questions the assumption that a reformed senate would alleviate federal-provincial conflict (Franks, 1991, p. 234). Although Franks may be correct that a reformed senate might infringe on a provincial government's clout in national affairs, this is exactly the purpose of intra-state reforms. By strengthening the federal government by making it more regionally

responsive, the federal government would have increased legitimacy to counteract de-centralization.

In this essay, I have argued that Canada's Parliament is currently characterized by partisan confrontation, and that it neglects regional and constituent concerns. As a result, the forces of de-centralization are rapidly gaining momentum. Many Canadians are increasingly relying on provincial governments as they have lost confidence in the effectiveness of the federal government. I believe that for the federal government to be an effective institution, it must have the confidence of the Canadian public. Thus, the overriding goal of the intra-state reforms is to re-instill public confidence in Canada's central political institution.

References

- Atkinson, Michael M., and David C. Docherty (2000). "Parliament and Political Success in Canada." *Canadian Politics in the 21st Century*. Ed. Michael Whittington and Glen Williams. Scarborough: Nelson Thompson Learning, pp. 5-12.
- Barker, Paul, and Mark Charlton, ed. (1991). *Crosscurrents 1: Contemporary Political Issues*. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, pp. 209.
- Dobell, Peter C. (1985). "Some Comments on Parliamentary Reform." *Institutional Reforms for Representative Government*. Ed. Peter Aucoin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 52-70.
- Franks, C.E.S. (1991). "The Canadian Senate in the Age of Reform." *Crosscurrents 1: Contemporary Political Issues*. Ed. Paul Barker and Mark Charlton. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, pp. 224-236.
- Jackson, Robert (1991). "Strong, Disciplined Parties are Vital to Canada." *Crosscurrents 1: Contemporary Political Issues*. Ed. Paul Barker and Mark Charlton. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, pp. 205-207.

- Kilgour, David, and John Kirsner (1991). "Discipline Versus Democracy." *Crosscurrents 1: Contemporary Political Issues*. Ed. Paul Barker and Mark Charlton. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, pp. 202-204.
- McConnel, Howard (1991). "The Case for a Triple E Senate." *Crosscurrents 1: Contemporary Political Issues*. Ed. Paul

- Barker and Mark Charlton. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, pp. 211-222.
- Whittington, Michael S. (2000). "The Prime Minister, Cabinet, and the Executive Power in Canada." *Canadian Politics in the 21st Century*. Ed. Michael Whittington and Glen Williams. Scarborough: Nelson Thompson Learning, pp. 31-53. ☞

Fraser Institute New Releases

Saskatchewan Prosperity: Taking the Next Step by Jason Clemens, Joel Emes, and Nadeem Esmail. Foreword by Barry Cooper. Public Policy Sources #57: \$7.49

Individual Property Rights on Canadian Indian Reserves by Tom Flanagan and Christopher Alcantara. Public Policy Sources #60: \$7.49

The Governance of the Ontario Securities Commission: Lessons from International Comparisons by Neil Mohindra. Public Policy Sources #61: \$7.49

Canada's Immigration Policy: The Need for Major Reform by Martin Collacott. Public Policy Sources #64: \$7.49

Welfare Reform in British Columbia: A Report Card by Chris Schafer and Jason Clemens. Public Policy Sources #63: \$7.49

The Fantasy of Reference Pricing and the Promise of Choice in BC's Pharmacare by John R. Graham. Public Policy Sources #66: \$7.49

Environmental Indicators (5th edition) by Laura Jones, Liv Fredricksen and Tracy Wates. Critical Issues Bulletin: \$16.00

Securities Market Regulation in Canada by Neil Mohindra. Critical Issues Bulletin: \$16.00

Waiting Your Turn: Hospital Waiting Lists in Canada (12th edition) by Nadeem Esmail and Michael Walker. Critical Issues Bulletin: \$16.00

Unholy Terror: The Origin and Significance of Contemporary, Religion-based Terrorism by Barry Cooper. Studies in Defence and Foreign Policy #1: \$7.49

A Report Card on Alberta's Elementary Schools, 2002 edition by Peter Cowley and Stephen Easton. Studies in Education Policy: \$23.54

A Report Card on Alberta's High Schools, 2002 edition by Peter Cowley and Stephen Easton. Studies in Education Policy: \$23.54

Report Card on Quebec's Secondary Schools, 2002 edition (French and English) by Richard Marceau and Peter Cowley with Sylvain Bernier. Studies in Education Policy: \$23.54

Report Card on British Columbia's Secondary Schools, 2002 edition by Peter Cowley and Stephen Easton. Studies in Education Policy: \$23.54

To Order

Toll-free order line:
1-800-665-3558, ext. 580,
or e-mail sales@fraserinstitute.ca.

Students, teachers, and libraries receive 40 percent off prices listed above. All prices include GST, and shipping and handling charges. Fraser Institute publications are also available free of charge on our website at www.fraserinstitute.ca.

Things Folks Know That Just Ain't So...

What they know ...

The Kyoto Protocol will solve problems of smog and air pollution.

Why it ain't so ...

Parliament has now ratified the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change (Kyoto). We've all heard about Kyoto, but do people really know what Kyoto will do?

The early results of a survey conducted at The Fraser Institute's student seminars held in British Columbia and Ontario this past fall indicate that a substantial number do not. While 54 percent of students surveyed do have a basic idea about the objectives of Kyoto, 15 percent answered incorrectly, and 31 percent did not know.

Let's start with what Kyoto is *not*. Contrary to popular belief, the Kyoto Accord does not address air quality, pollution, or smog. If Kyoto is ratified, adhered to, and successful, these basic environmental problems will still need to be addressed.

If it's not about pollution, then what is it? The Kyoto Protocol was negotiated in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, and is an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The countries that signed on in principle in 1997 still must ratify, or formally confirm, their agreement before the Protocol becomes binding.

But if reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions isn't going to reduce air pollution and smog, why do it? GHGs are believed by some scientists to be at least partly responsi-

... developing countries, even large ones with high levels of industry and GHG emissions such as China and India, have been intentionally exempted [from the Kyoto Accord] so as not to hinder their economic growth.

ble for the global warming that some scientists believe to be happening. Some scientists believe that human activities such as industrial production and vehicle exhaust are causing that warming to increase. Yet, as the debate over Kyoto has showed, the scientific community is divided about all of these concerns. Kyoto

supporters say that the most important GHG is carbon dioxide; however, carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. Basic biology teaches us that all plants require carbon dioxide to sustain themselves and grow. It is *not* a contributor to smog.

But if everyone else has ratified the Accord, why not Canada? Actually, not all countries have. The United States and Australia have opted out of the agreement, and developing countries, even large ones with high levels of industry and GHG emissions such as China and India, have been intentionally exempted so as not to hinder their economic growth. So would an agreement like Kyoto have an economic impact? Yes. A big one.

There are only a few options by which the federal government could compel Canadians to reduce their GHG emissions. The government could make energy (from the electricity that lights your house to the gas that powers your car) more expensive, or it could ration its availability. Either option will have an impact on Canadian lifestyles, and make goods and services more expensive. But couldn't we develop new technology that produces fewer emissions? Yes, we could, and probably will. Car engines are much cleaner and more efficient today than they were 50 years ago, or even 10 years ago. But Canada's Kyoto target is huge, and in the near term, experts say that technologies don't exist that would defray the high costs of cutting GHG emissions by 2012. ☹

Call for Submissions

We are looking for well-written, interesting articles on Canadian public policy, written by students like you! Send your 500 to 700 word article to the editor at the address on page 2.

STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

- ☰ *1st Prize: \$1,000*
- ☰ *2nd Prize: \$500*
- ☰ *High School Category: \$250*

Topic: How Can the Market Improve Health Care in Canada?

Students may analyze a specific health care issue and suggest ways that market principles could be employed in providing a solution; or compare the effectiveness of health care systems that have accepted market principles with those that rely more heavily on government regulation and control.

To get full contest details and for submission or other information, call: 1-800-665-3558, ext. 571, e-mail: student@fraserinstitute.ca, or visit our web site: www.fraserinstitute.ca/studentcentre

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 2, 2003

THE FRASER INSTITUTE
4th Floor, 1770 Burrard Street,
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V6J 3G7

*Canadian Publication Mail Sales
Product Agreement Number 0087246*