

## LETTERS

# Decisions that kill jobs, hurt local businesses

The recent campaign to remove the PST from industrial electricity bills is really a scathing condemnation of the BC Liberals energy decisions when it comes to jobs and affordability.

Electricity bills have skyrocketed under the Christy Clark government with a 28 per cent hike during her premiership with another 6.5 percent forecast for the next two years.

With industry this has caused major

headaches to the bottom line, killing jobs and reducing the ability to reinvestment in order to stay competitive. Ever increasing rates under the BC Liberals means less cash to spend elsewhere. BC businesses lag behind the U.S., the OECD, and the rest of Canada when it comes to capital investment per worker. And so we see the campaign by industry, especially mining, to find some relief by eliminating



VIEW FROM THE  
LEGISLATURE

MLA Doug  
Donaldson

the PST on electricity.

The government's own Commission on Tax Competitiveness reported in November that B.C. is the only jurisdiction to put a sales tax on electricity. The Mining Association of BC and unions like the United Steelworkers point out that the B.C. mining sector is the only one in of any province or state in North America to pay a provincial sales tax on electricity to run a mine. With electricity

being one of the higher operating costs, in B.C. it can add up to \$2 million a year for a single mine.

The astronomical rate increases means energy-intensive industries are focusing on the PST. And those rate increases are tied to BC Hydro's huge debt racked up by the BC Liberals when they decided to take unprecedented yearly dividends from the Crown Corporation, even though the profit

margin of the company was slim or non-existent.

The residential consumer is also getting killed by rate increases. Almost no one can deal with a more than 34 percent increase on something as basic as electricity in only six years. Wages don't keep up so there is less in peoples' pockets in Stikine to support local retail businesses, let alone put nutritious food on the table. It's one reason

we introduced the BC Hydro Affordability Act which died in the legislature because BC Liberal MLAs refused to support it.

Decisions have consequences. In this case the Christy Clark government's decisions on electricity result in rate increases that have killed jobs and hurt local businesses.

- Doug Donaldson is the MLA for Stikine and Opposition critic for Mines.

## A new religion of diversity

In regard to Premier Clark's note on the Quebec mosque shooting, we can all agree that such a tragic event should not have taken place nor should it ever happen again in our communities. We couldn't agree more. We are horrified and mourn with those who mourn.

It's the other two center paragraphs in the Premier's note that I wish to address. They come across as religious in tone; whether or not that was her intent in writing those two paragraphs, she does address religion. However, the true meaning behind this new religion or ideology which we are asked to embrace is unclear, even though she uses words like "hope and peace" and "tolerance." What is this new religion that is to unify the country and us? It's "diversity." Here again it is not made real clear what diversity

she is talking about but given the context of this note around the mosque shooting it appears that this "diversity" is very religious in nature. Our new religion of diversity is one (according to Premier Clark) that we need to celebrate and embrace and never allow it to change. Sound good? I believe it is not good and will never work. It's like trying to mix fire and water. If you mix the Muslim faith with the Christian faith you get neither Muslim nor Christian faith but a watering down of the two into this new so called Canadian diversity/multi-cultural religion.

This fits into our liberal thought system that is centered on "tolerance" and "choice" and makes both words meaningless. All the controversial issues of today center around our desire to be able to choose how we want to live; today's "tol-

erance" means "don't tell me I'm wrong because the only thing that is right or wrong is what I choose." Unfortunately, the media and our governments have fully given in to this new worldview, but it's a worldview that is highly selfish and therefore destroys family, community and unity within a country. So many want infinite personal choice for themselves but often care little for the choices of others. The true Christian worldview contains an attitude that stands on the golden rule, to love my neighbor, as I would want my neighbor to treat me. A Christian worldview stands on God's holy word, the Bible, which is the foundation for life that benefits all. It is this Christian foundation that made Canada the great place we still, as of yet, can call home.

Don Tuininga  
Telkwa

## Need to balance industries

A good friend of mine posed a question to a long time resident of Terrace. The Terrace resident enjoys snow skiing, snowmobiles, fishing and river jet boating among other outdoor pleasures. Considering economic concerns for the future of his community, would he support a Banff or Lake Louise approach to tourism? His answer: no way, he wouldn't want to share his special wild places with all the crowds and non residents, etc. My friend then said, "well, you better get ready for the pipelines, more whole log exports and more heavy industry instead."

What kind of land base do you think is needed for outdoor recreation and the many types of tourism experiences that offset heavy industry? After all don't we live here in part because of all the wild values

and open, undeveloped spaces? We love the natural landscape, the views and all the wild values. We love the annual salmon and steelhead runs plus the huge economic benefits therein.

For our own town, remember the ski hill gondola idea. No, perhaps not in our town because that would attract too many visitors. It's an interesting crossroads where we want to enjoy the fishing, hunting, camping, snow sports, mountain trekking, and a truly wild ecosystem world class. But we don't want to share our unique values with too many people like some giant National Park.

I know now that moose, grizzly bears, wolves, and so many other wild ecosystem creatures need large, un-roaded and free flowing high quality watersheds in which to survive and sustain some harvest and enjoyment by

all of us. And a sawmill needs one hell of a large land base to satisfy the appetite of the Chief Forester's Annual Allowable Cut. Is there a balance out there? What kind of Annual Allowable Non-Cut does a wild watershed and mountain range need? Does a one per cent deletion of the Annual Allowable Cut for the Babine River Corridor Park seem like enough to sustain the wild Class A Provincial Park values to you? The other 99 per cent, will that be enough to sustain the mills?

All I am saying is that one industry should not be allowed to cancel out another over time. There should be a balance and both sides of the equation need a significant land and water base. We are far from that now and there are consequences, real ones.

Pierce Clegg, Smithers

### TO: THE EDITOR

#### Letters to the editor policy

Letters are welcomed up to a maximum of 250 words. Letters are subject to editing for clarity, brevity and legality. All letters must include the writer's name, daytime telephone number and hometown for verification purposes. Anonymous, or pen names will not be permitted. Not all submissions will be published. Letters may be e-mailed to: editor@interior-news.com

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