



Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty. Power is ever stealing from the many to the few.

IGNATIEFF AND ASBESTOS

Liberals Need to Make Anti-asbestos Stand Official Policy — By Murray Dobbin

“Despite all the talk and position-taking, it is still not clear that the Liberal Party has taken a formal position on asbestos by making an export ban part of official party policy.”

With the federal Liberals now semi-officially supporting the banning of Canadian exports of asbestos exports, a political debate that has been suppressed for more than twenty years is truly beginning. So long as the bloc and the Conservatives and the Liberals supported this lethal industry, it was as if there was no issue. The Liberals have broken the silence. Good for them and on Michael Ignatieff.

It has been a remarkable month for the activists and the medical experts fighting asbestos. Just over a few weeks ago, Ignatieff declared, in an off-the-cuff response to a question at a Victoria public meeting, that asbestos exports should be halted. Then he learned the hard way about the powerful Quebec asbestos lobby. He reversed himself, denied his declaration, and hoped it would go away

It didn't. His statement galvanized the asbestos opposition, and the fight was on. Coincidentally, two key reports came out - one by Health Canada (suppressed for eight months until a CanWest FOI (Freedom of Information ferreted it out) and an even more prestigious study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) — the most respected cancer organization in the world. **Both confirmed chrysotile asbestos (the only**

kind still mined) as a Class 1 carcinogen. As a human rights advocate facing irrefutable science, Ignatieff had nowhere to hide.

But opponents of asbestos aren't counting their chickens just yet. Just two days before Ignatieff told *Le Devoir* that he supported banning asbestos, all three Liberal of the Commons Natural Resources Committee voted against an NDP motion to deny \$250,000 in funding to the asbestos lobby group, the **Chrysotile Institute**. Which means that at this point all we have is a statement by Ignatieff: “First, we must clearly commit to not exporting products that cause health problems anywhere in the world. That is where I am at.”

But is that where the Liberal Party “is at”? Certainly some Liberal MP's —including two B.C. medical doctors, Hedy Fry and Keith Martin, are publicly calling for a ban, and Liberal MP Joyce Murray, chair of the Liberal members of the Commons Health Committee, says: “I do see [Ignatieff's statement] as a clear commitment.” But despite of all the talk and position-taking, it is still not clear that the Liberal Party has taken a formal position on asbestos by making an export ban part of official party policy.

Contd. ➤ 2

“The price that good people pay, for their indifference to public affairs, is to be ruled by evil men.” — Plato

Whatever is decided, the anti-asbestos movement will not go away, and in fact is more determined than ever. **As more Canadians find out about what the federal government has been doing**, and with chrysotile as a class carcinogen, the writing is on the wall for this lethal industry. For the asbestos lobbyists —almost silent during the recent months of stories and editorials across the country — the jig is up.

The asbestos issue has been allowed to fester for so long that cleaning up its effects on the country will take some serious, multi-faceted efforts. The perverse promotion of this deadly substance abroad, when it is effectively banned at home, has infected a myriad of policies — from how Workers Compensation treats affected workers, to our fighting a WTO case against France for banning it and intervening in numerous international agencies trying to control asbestos.

The Liberals could show that they are serious by simply adopting the **Canadian Cancer Society's five point plan**, presented recently to both the Harper government and the Natural Resources Committee of the House of Commons.

1. **“a timetable for phasing out the use and exporting of asbestos;**
2. **a national surveillance system to track health outcomes of people who have been exposed to asbestos;**
3. **the creation of public registry of buildings that contain asbestos;**
4. **the provision of transition support for affected communities; and**
5. **the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos on the Rotterdam Convention's Prior Informed Consent list..”**

In addition, the Liberal Party should announce that it will end government funding for the Chrysotile Institute – an organization ridiculed around the world for its pseudo-science and shameless promotion of this killer substance. Lastly, the Liberals should commit to addressing Canada's international pariah status on the

asbestos issue — a status achieved by aggressive intervention in every form involving asbestos to block the progress on its control. The Liberals need to make this their issue and pledge to make Canada a world leader in banning asbestos and dealing with its global health effects. ■

(Murray Dobbin is the author of several best-selling books, a freelance writer, and a member of the CCPA's Board of Directors)

Nationalities

“I have to spend so much time explaining to Americans that I am not English and to Englishmen that I am not American that I have little time left to be a Canadian.”

— *Laurence J. Peter*

“Britain and the United States are two countries divided by a common language.”

— *George Bernard Shaw*

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Women Suffering Most:

When Women's Incomes Fall, Everything Unravels — By Ruth Sunderland

Here, in two short quotations, is the female face of the credit crunch in the developing world:

“Factories are closing everywhere and now the women are being approached by sex traffickers asking if they would like to go to work in the West.”
— *Jitra Kotchadet, Union Leader, Thailand.*

“I lost my job, I have been evicted from my house, and my belongings have been confiscated by my landlord. Now I rent a small room with my husband and two children. We've had to cut our spending on food.”
— *Kim SunHeap, Cambodia.*

The comments come from a report by OXFAM International, and they highlight the devastating effect of the global economic crisis on women and children in poorer countries..

Research has also been published by the World Bank pointing to the severe vulnerability of women and girls, by the International Labour Organization (ILO), predicting a bigger rise in female unemployment than males in many regions.

These largely unpublished reports are reminders that behind the political squabbling, grandstanding, incomplete and incomprehensible acronyms and banker-baiting, women in poor countries are paying a ruinously heavy price for the follies and mistakes of the Western financial system. For them, the impact is not a matter of debate in the blogosphere; it is literally a matter of life and death.

Millions are losing their jobs without any safety net. OXFAM cites cases of women being forced to sign resignation letters so their employers can avoid giving them severance pay. Families go hungry. There will be lower levels of schooling for girls. And most horrific of all, the World Bank predicts the crunch will cause a large increase in infant mortality, with up to 2.8 million more babies dying between now and 2015 if the crisis persists. The Bank points out that falls in GDP lead to much greater increases in female infant

mortality than male. No explanation is offered for this discrepancy; the likely causes scarcely bear thinking about.

The unwillingness to concede that the crunch is affecting women more than men because of pre-existing inequalities threatens to cause long-lasting damage to developing economies. As OXFAM director Barbara Stocking puts it: “If you hurt women's incomes, everything unravels.”

Numerous studies have shown that educating women is a key driver of prosperity, because when girls become mothers they have better-planned families and their children are better nourished and educated. When poor women gain an income, they have a much higher propensity than men to re-invest in family and community. Instead of denying or ignoring the harm being done to women, there should be a recognition of the positive role we can play in countering the crisis, particularly in the developing world.

It's a point so obvious, but it seems it still has to be said: ***if you hurt women, you hurt men and children too.*** Yet women need not be defined as victims of the crisis. If our economic role is fully recognized and respected, we can be powerful players in rebuilding. ■

{Ruth Sunderland writes for the {UK} Observer, where this essay was first published.}

Ontario Passes Groundbreaking Green Energy Law

The Green Energy Act is good news for Ontario's environment and economy. — Kristen Ostling

Ontario's groundbreaking Green Energy Act passed a final hurdle in the legislature and became law on May 14. "With this initiative, Ontario is on track to become a leader in the global shift to clean energy and to preventing dangerous climate change," says Morag Carter, director of the David Suzuki Foundation's Climate Change and Energy Program.

Ontario is committed to phase out coal use by 2014 and to replace its greenhouse gas emissions. The province's outdated and polluting electricity system is due for an overhaul, and the government is preparing to invest more than 60 billion in new generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure.

A recent report released by the Green Energy Act Alliance estimates that Ontario could generate up to 90,000 jobs under the Green Energy Act.

The David Suzuki Foundation has long been calling for Ontario to pass legislation that would

help the province develop renewable energy technologies, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, and enable a shift away from dangerous and environmentally destructive energy sources such as coal and nuclear energy.

The Green Energy Act is good news for Ontario's environment and economy. "Given current global environmental and economic challenges, economic benefits and job creation will go to jurisdictions that are leaders, that create the right conditions to attract research and development and manufacturing in the green-energy sector, and that can supply goods and services beyond their own province or state to the rest of North America, and the world," Ms. Carter adds.

"Passing a robust Green Energy Act is a big part of the solution and can help usher Ontario into a low carbon future, but much more needs to be done to make the best of the opportunity the new law creates. Ontario needs to follow through with the right regulations and pricing," Ms. Carter says. ■

The World's Arms Trade Grows Another Twenty Percent

— The UK Guardian

The arms trade has expanded by more than 20% worldwide in the past five years, with the Middle East and Asian countries accounting for most of the increase, according to figures recently released by the authoritative Stockholm International Peace Institute.

The United States was by far the largest arms supplier, accounting for 31% of global weapons exports over the last five years, with over a third going to the Middle East. The U.S. also supplied 40% of Pakistan's major conventional weapons systems.

The five biggest suppliers of conventional arms were the U.S., Russia, Germany, France, and the U.K. China was the biggest recipient, followed by India.

"At a time when the world needs constructive and cooperative solutions to global problems," said the institute's Paul Holton, "the thriving arms market points to a squandering of resources which the international community can ill afford." ■

Nuclear Economics, Homer Style

By – PAUL HANLEY Environment

It sounds like a corny plotline for a sitcom. Homer Simpson does such a good job as a nuclear technician he's put in charge of industry finances. His first idea: Invest \$750 million dollars in a nuclear research reactor, with annual operating costs of \$70 million, and prospects of generating a whopping \$10 million from sales.

Saskatchewan's proposal for a new taxpayer-financed reactor that is literally guaranteed to lose millions in perpetuity might make for an entertaining episode of The Simpsons but it's hardly a rational approach to providing medical isotopes or developing the provincial economy-- especially when Manitoba is backing an alternative plan to make isotopes at a cost of \$35 million, with a potential to franchise its safe, waste-free accelerator technology around the world.

There is something truly puzzling about the attraction nuclear technology has for normally rational people in government circles. Whether for medical purposes or power production, nuclear boils down to one thing: A very convoluted way to transfer public wealth into private hands. I suppose you can't blame the industry for trying to foist "nuclear solutions" on us, if they can find government allies gullible enough to buy into them. But for a government elected to protect the public trust, it is scandalous.

Another thing that puzzles me about the voodoo economics of nuclear is why the same people willing to put billions of tax dollars into a controversial and disastrously expensive option like nuclear power become cautious and conservative when it comes to a proven and affordable energy option like efficiency.

The latest confirmation of the massive economic opportunity of energy efficiency comes in a major study by McKinsey & Company, one of the world's leading consultants.

Unlocking Energy Efficiency in the US Economy (free at www.mckinsey.com) echoes what respected energy experts have been saying for decades. The cheapest and best way to "produce" energy is to use what we have more efficiently. While the study is focused on the US, we can assume it is even more applicable to Canada because of our climate.

McKinsey's research shows the US economy has the potential to reduce non-transportation energy consumption by roughly 23% by 2020, eliminating more than \$1.2 trillion in waste. This would be double the \$520-billion upfront investment

(not including program costs) that would be required to realize the efficiencies.

The reduction in energy use would also result in the abatement of 1.1 gigatons of greenhouse gas annually, the equivalent of taking the entire U.S. fleet of passenger vehicles off the roads.

According to the study, such energy savings will be possible only if a significant set of barriers to achieving efficiency can be overcome. These barriers are widespread and persistent and will require an integrated set of solutions to overcome them, in areas that include information and education, incentives and financing, codes and standards and deployment of resources well beyond current levels.

McKinsey says an overarching strategy to achieve the massive potential of efficiency would need to:

- **Recognize energy efficiency as an important energy resource that can help meet future energy needs while currently developing new no- and- low carbon energy sources;**
- **Formulate and launch an integrated portfolio of proven, piloted and emerging approaches to unlock the full potential of energy efficiency;**
- **Identify methods to provide the significant upfront funding required by any plan to capture energy efficiency;**
- **Forge greater alignment between utilities, regulators, government agencies, manufacturers and energy consumers; and**
- **Foster innovation in the development and deployment of next-generation energy efficiency technologies to ensure ongoing productivity gains.**

Efficiency is a process that helps business and households by eliminating waste and creating a huge economic stimulus. Realizing its potential will take major investments, the kind that we have recently seen in response to the recession.

Investing in efficiency has essentially no downside, no opposition and no environmental impacts. However, a major obstacle to this solution is the mindset that would support dubious options like nuclear (or even clean coal) which benefit those involved in the industry at the expense of the public and the environment. ■

Seniors' Chat

Protect Yourself – West Nile Virus

Now that it's summer, you're likely spending more time outdoors. Along with being outside comes an increased risk of contracting mosquito-borne viruses such as West Nile Virus (WNV). Be aware of the potential health risks and take preventive steps to protect yourself and those around you.

Most people who become infected experience no symptoms or have very mild illness (fever, headaches, body aches). However, the virus can result in serious neurological illness such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) which can have long-term complications and even cause death.

How is the virus spread? - West Nile Virus is transmitted to people through bites from infected mosquitoes. There are many types of mosquitoes, most of which are only nuisance mosquitoes. The main carriers of WNV in Saskatchewan are *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes, most abundant during July and August.

Who is at risk? - The risk of WNV varies from year to year, depending on the mosquito population and the weather. The risk is higher if you are active and outside on the farm, at the cottage, camping, hiking, gardening or golfing. If you are exposed to infected mosquitoes, you are at risk.

What can I do? - Personal protection and reducing mosquito habitats will help reduce the



Hon. Don McMorris

risk of West Nile Virus to you and your family. A few tips:

- *Cover Up* – Most mosquitoes are active at dusk and dawn. If you need to be outside when mosquitoes are active, wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing with long sleeves, long pants and socks.

- *Apply repellent* – Anytime you are outdoors, you should wear repellent. Products with DEET are recommended. DEET is

safe and doesn't require a heavy application, especially if you are outside for only a few hours. For any repellent, be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.

- *Clean up around the house and yard.* Get rid of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs.
- *Check window and door screens for holes.*
- *Clear eaves troughs* throughout the summer.
- *Maintain your yard and lawn* to reduce resting sites for adult mosquitoes.

If you'd like more WNV information, please visit our website at www.health.gov.sk.ca.

If you have any ideas or concerns about issues relating to seniors, please write to me at Room 302, Legislative Building, 2405 Legislative Drive, Regina, S4S 0B3, or phone my office (306) 787-7345.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don McMorris".

Don McMorris
Minister of Health



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Health



MEMMO

Leave a “Memo” to your Family and Friends

Many of us are pretty good about looking after the “big picture” in estate planning: who gets the house, the cottage, the term deposits, etc. But we’re often not so good at looking after the “small picture”: who gets the pictures, the china, the silverware, etc. And an experienced estate lawyer or planner can tell you that when it comes to estate administration, “the devil is in the details”. It is often disagreement over who gets the smaller, sentimental personal effects that cause the greatest strife among our heirs.

The reason these issues are often overlooked is simply because the “details” are so extensive. It is not unusual for us to accumulate hundreds of items over a lifetime that need to be distributed at death and the prospect of putting hundreds of little bequests in one’s Will just seems ridiculous. Of course, you could tape a little “sticky note” to each item to note who you want to receive it (your son, daughter, niece, friend, etc.) but this would not be legally binding and would not guarantee that your wishes would be carried out.

There is a simple alternative: a *Memorandum*. A memorandum is simply a list of your assets (usually just personal items like china, silverware, furniture, artworks, etc.) with the name of the intended recipient noted beside each item. The Memorandum instructs your executor, and lets your heirs know, about your wishes with regard to your personal effects.

A Memorandum that is referred to in the Will and was executed prior to, or at the same

time as the will is called a *legal* Memorandum and is binding on the executor and the heirs of the estate. It has the same status as if it had been written into the will itself.

A Memorandum that is not referred to in the Will is not legally binding upon the executor or the heirs of the estate. It is merely an expression of the wishes of the author as to how items referred to in the Memorandum are to be distributed after death. In law such a document is called a *precatory* Memorandum. If practical, of course, the executor usually tries to carry out the wishes of the testator, but this may not be possible if the terms of the Memorandum are at odds with the terms of the will; in which case the Will must be followed. Or if one or more of the heirs do not agree to the distribution set out in a precatory Memorandum the executor may be forced to sell the items in question and distribute the cash according to the terms of the will, instead.

So don’t leave it up to chance to see that your most precious personal effects are distributed properly among friends and family, leave your heirs a Memorandum.

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Submitted compliments of Donna St. Onge, Certified Senior Advisor, Conexus Credit Union, 780-1584.

Beating the high cost of funerals – the co-operative way.

by Jeannette Miller, president Prairie Lily Funeral Co-operative

Not much needs to be said about the high cost of funerals. Without asking too many people, one quickly learns that a family, to honor and lay a loved one to rest using a traditional funeral home, easily spends \$10,000. Some families don't mind spending this amount of money; others would rather pay less and leave more of their savings to benefit family or favorite charity than to plump up the bottom line of a corporation and benefit its shareholders.

For decades, the funeral industry has been the subject of much consumer scrutiny and legislative control. Despite this prices continue to rise and corporate profits of multinationals like SCI (which owns three funeral homes that serve the Regina area), are in the billions. Prairie Lily Funeral Co-operative was formed to offer price options free of corporate profit.

By using the co-operative model of pooled resources and member control, a funeral co-operative can promise to provide a full range of funeral services and options at the lowest possible price. Can this be true? Well, yes. The evidence begins with the price list published in the May 2009 Senior's Voice.

A traditional burial service that would cost \$4400 dollars at another Regina facility would cost \$2500 at the funeral co-operative, likewise a cremation service that would cost \$3000 at the same Regina facility would cost \$1300 for the Prairie Lily co-op member. The success of the funeral co-ops is based in their ability to operate a full service funeral home, offering what the public wants, and guaranteeing a

not-for-profit business model. Co-operative funeral home facilities are modern, dignified and esthetically pleasing.

The vision of a co-operative funeral home in the Regina area is on the verge of becoming a reality. Your membership is required.

The initial offering of membership in Prairie Lily Funeral Co-operative is now underway. The key to success is the ability of this community to join forces and create the pool of capital resources that is required to make the dream come true. The purchase of a \$200 membership will be applied to the building fund established to open and operate a full service licensed funeral home serving Regina and surrounding communities. The strength of the community response will determine the rate of progress towards opening day. Our current target date is before the end of 2009.

The membership fee will provide each member with access to the best funeral prices possible; the return of the fee at the time of the member's funeral and a guarantee of freedom from sales pressure. Promises of assistance with pre-planning will be just that, not opportunities for marketing and contract sales.

When faced with the decision to write that cheque for \$200 what would you rather be sure of, that your contribution will help build a not-for-profit business, or that high prices remain the only option in Regina? Please call us with your questions at 779-4007 or visit the website at www.plfc.ca for more information or

membership applications.

