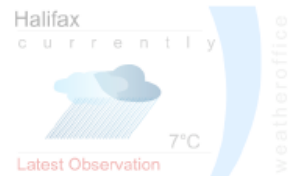


Halifax, NS | Tue, December 16th, 2008

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Voice of the people

Tue, Dec 16 - 4:46 AM

Disgraceful record

In a report released last week, Canada ranked 56th on a list of 57 developed countries (only Saudia Arabia ranked lower) in terms of efforts to control climate change. Environment Minister Jim Prentice, representing Canada at the UN climate conference in Poznan, Poland, has argued this assessment is wrong and that Canada plans to reduce carbon emissions 20 per cent by 2020.

This is baloney. Stephen Harper's Conservative government continues to disingenuously use a different baseline year (2006) from every other nation, which all employ the 1990 baseline of the Kyoto agreement. By this yardstick, Canada's reduction targets are three per cent, compared to the 25 to 40 per cent reduction levels that scientists say needs to be achieved in order to avoid potentially catastrophic environmental consequences.

Is it any wonder Canada has earned eight of the not-very-coveted "fossil of the day" awards at the conference, putting it in the No. 1 place amongst nations that have tried to block meaningful progress on climate change? It is a disgraceful record for a country once looked upon as a potential leader on environmental issues, a sad reflection on the Conservative government's lack of meaningful policy, and a source of shame to progressive Canadians concerned with this vital issue.

Christopher Majka, Halifax

Speaking of helpful

In "The critical shortage on Parliament Hill: Truth" (Dec. 8), Dan Leger says he would "offer some facts the reader might find helpful."

He writes that "separatists are not part of the coalition. The agreement was signed by Stephane Dion and Jack Layton only." In the next paragraph, he says "the agreement actually binds the Bloc to vote with the coalition on all matters of confidence."

To me, this makes the Bloc part of the coalition and, in my view, concessions were given.

To say the Bloc has supported the Tories on past confidence votes is irrelevant. To say Stephen Harper tried to forge a coalition with the NDP and Bloc is irrelevant. The Liberals and NDP DID form a coalition, complete with a signing ceremony on TV.

If they follow through, the Bloc will have achieved something impossible until now: actual influence from INSIDE the government to achieve their goal of Quebec separation and ammunition in the next federal election to increase support. Wouldn't that be a truth readers might find helpful?

Saen MacDonald, Dartmouth

High price paid

In a recent story, a retired naval officer implied the RCAF/CAF (Europe) had for 30 years enjoyed a beer fest at the Canadian bases in France and West Germany – and we did occasionally. But, without diminishing the present-day risk to the people serving in

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