

LETTERS PAGE

to the editor

Young people the biggest victims

To the Editor:

Canada cannot allow the recession to rob young people of their futures.

Job figures this summer are alarming. They show that younger people are bearing the biggest brunt of the recession right now, and that burden may be long-lasting.

According to Statistics Canada, it's presumptuous for the Harper government to be proclaiming "the recession is over." Another 45,000 jobs disappeared in July (including 5,000 in Saskatchewan), bringing total losses since last October to just under half-a-million.

The number of people falling back on self-employment has jumped by 75,000. The number who've simply given-up and dropped out of the

job market altogether has gone up by 50,000. Losses in the construction industry, totaling 120,000, show the government's "infrastructure stimulus" is falling

summer, but their ability to finance their education in the fall is also being compromised.

This is a double whammy - because one key component of Canada's

Canada's post-recession future will be different from what we've been used. More than ever, we'll have to learn how to win in a highly competitive, skills-intensive, global economy.

That means increasing our brainpower, and that will require higher levels of education for everybody.

Anything that bars young people from higher learning and more advanced skills is a big threat.

Governments need to ensure that no young Canadian is prevented from pursuing his/her legitimate educational plans this fall just because they couldn't get a decent summer job.

Ralph Goodale, MP,
Wascana, SK.

"Governments need to ensure that no young Canadian is prevented from pursuing his/her legitimate educational plans this fall just because they couldn't get a decent summer job."

way short.

But perhaps most troubling, more than 205,000 of all the jobs lost - close to half - are among young Canadians under 24 years of age. This means they're not only having a tough

recovery from recession will have to be more emphasis (not less) on the knowledge-based economy of the future.

We will not maintain our prosperity by simply trying to re-create the past.

Better to be honest than to be silent

To the Editor:

(Editor's Note: The following letter is in response to a recent editorial written by Janet Keeping.)

Janet Keeping writes that it's unethical for me to call Jennifer Lynch, the head of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, a "damned liar."

But Keeping left out something pretty important: that I have in fact caught Lynch in a damnable lie. On July 11, Lynch told the National Post that her staff have never published hateful comments on neo-Nazi websites. But that's not true and Lynch knows it.

In a hearing on March 25, 2008 and other dates, her staff confessed under oath to praising

white supremacist groups, calling Jews "scum," calling gays a "cancer" on society, calling for white police to discriminate against blacks and be loyal to "their race," and countless other hateful remarks.

Dean Steacy, who works for Lynch, even testified that he and six other CHRC employees have memberships in neo-Nazi organizations like Stormfront.

Just to be clear here: these are people who are supposed to be fighting against Nazis - but they're joining the Nazis, and writing hundreds of Nazi-like comments. All on the taxpayers, dime.

It might be unethical to call her a damned liar if she hadn't lied. But Lynch lied to the Post about her Nazi staff. It might be unethical to call her "execrable," if she

were lying about a trifle, instead of covering up a systemic corruption of human rights.

Keeping also writes that it was unethical of me to note that, when I bumped into Lynch on Parliament Hill, she looked haggard.

If I had seven Nazi members working for me, and if I had been investigated by the RCMP, the Privacy Commissioner and Parliament all in the last year - like Lynch has - I think I'd be pretty haggard, too.

For me, exposing bigotry within our government is a higher ethical calling than staying silent so I don't hurt some politician's feelings.

Ezra Levant,
Calgary, AB.

Bike lanes are for childish politicians

To the Editor:

When I was a kid on an Abbotsford farm, my day started and ended with "chores". If I was lucky - and if I had been good - and if it wasn't labour day (when dad said we had to labour) ... I could get Saturday off to do whatever I wanted.

So - Friday night - there I was - lying in bed - staring at the ceiling at 2 a.m. ... couldn't sleep for anticipation of my friend and I getting on our bikes and "traveling".

Those were the days between childhood and manhood, the time when the bikes were a "fore-runner" of a drivers licence. Our bikes were loaded with accessories that had something to do with cars. They sounded like a car with our cardboard and clothes pin spoke flap-per. Our horns sounded like cars, we had mud flaps and steering knobs and all the adult things we were not old enough for.

One of these years we would get our licence and travel "by car" ...

but for now ... here I was at midnight, thinking about the "open road" ... my Saturday, to go "anywhere that I wanted", on my bike.

Times have changed, and here I am, an old man. I should be retired ... life should be easy ... MY CHORES ARE DONE!! What am I doing lying in bed at 2 a.m. ... can't sleep in anticipation of Saturday. Where am I going on "Saturday"? Why, of course - I have to work overtime - get in my car like everyone else and "pollute the planet" one

"extra day" a week, to pay for my taxes, to pay for those new BIKE LANES, which the cock-amamie politicians are putting in.

If I live to be 140, my taxes will never pay for those millions. I demand that the municipality puts up signs like they do on highways ... telling us how much this strip of pavement costs ... or - maybe I don't want to know - I'll still be awake at thirteen o'clock!

Don Warkentin
Mission, BC.

Wall's end-run on consultation process

To the Editor:

It was interesting to watch Premier Wall by-pass the so-called "public consultations" process on the uranium issue last week and announce his proposal to Harper's government to produce medical isotopes at the University of Saskatchewan using a nuclear reactor.

Not to mention the fact that

Dan Perrins, the Chair of those consultations, has until the end of August to make his recommendations on how the Sask Party should proceed in its frenzied quest of a value-added uranium industry for the province.

It's also interesting to note that Manitoba has taken its nose out of the government subsidy feed-bag long enough to come up with plans to produce those same med-

ical isotopes with an electron accelerator - without the use of a nuclear reactor.

Sad to say, looks like those folks who said that the UDP public consultations were a sham - were right!

Elaine Hughes
Archerwill, SK.

Your letter of the Week

Harmonization revisited

To the Editor:

As Canada's premiers met in Regina for the annual Council of the Federation, Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was at it again. He took another opportunity to urge the provinces to harmonize their own sales tax with the GST. Now that Ontario and B.C. have chosen that direction, there is fresh reason for Saskatchewan to consider the same.

Harmonization has some clear benefits. First, it simplifies taxes for businesses and consumers. No longer will there be some items that are charged GST but not PST, or vice versa. This simplicity means less paperwork and more efficiency for businesses and government. Businesses could remit sales taxes with one form, under one set of rules, to only one tax collector. The Canada Revenue Agency could do it all through its existing resources and eliminate the need for provincial sales tax collectors. This efficiency is an economic benefit in itself, as the World Bank estimates that 5 per cent of the value of sales taxes is lost to administrative and compliance costs.

Businesses would also benefit in a much bigger way, since harmonization would eliminate PST on most business inputs. Any PST paid for input costs would be returned to the business in tax credits, as is already done with the GST. For example, a furniture manufacturer currently can claim a GST tax credit for the GST paid on wood used to build the furniture, but not the PST on the wood. Under a Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), both taxes could be claimed as a tax credit.

Business purchases currently account for 54 per cent of the province's PST revenue, a figure that would drop to 14 per cent under harmonization. This represents a \$460 million annual tax break for businesses that would help improve competitiveness. It also ends ridiculous PST quirks, such as the \$13 million the province charges new business owners each year for the used equipment they acquire when buying an existing business.

The problem is that consumers would pick up the slack. Harmonization means an expansion of the PST where it previously did not apply. This means added costs for utilities, restaurant meals, residential home construction, gasoline, children's clothing and personal care services. Yes, businesses paying less tax should mean more investment, job creation and lower prices in the long term. However, in the short-term, it's painful for consumers, especially those who have children or lower incomes. An HST would cost most consumers an additional \$250 to \$750 per year.

These consequences are a significant obstacle from a political and policy perspective. Fortunately, the province is not without options. Saskatchewan could lower its portion of the sales tax as Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick did when they harmonized with the GST in 1997. The government could also increase the basic personal exemption on income taxes, boost PST tax credits or lower gasoline taxes. This would do wonders to help those most adversely affected.

Although the province must be careful in the implementation, the time to harmonize may have come. Manitoba's NDP government recently announced they're taking a hard look at the idea. Should they follow through, Saskatchewan and PEI would be the only provinces with an independent sales tax. This transformed landscape has changed harmonization from a question of "if" to one of "when and how."

Lee Harding,
CTF Saskatchewan Director.

Letters welcomed

The News Review accepts Letters to the Editor. Any information or ideas discussed in the articles do not reflect the opinion or policies of our paper in any way. Authors of Letters to the Editor must be identified by including their full name, address and phone number where they can be reached during business hours. Letters to the Editor should be brief (under 350 words) and may be edited for length, grammar and spelling. The News Review reserves the right not to publish Letters to the Editor.