

Canada's Demographic Auction

The public voice is unheard in the great rush to grow

BY TIM MURRAY

[Editor's note: This article was published on November 7, 2010 on the website candobetter.net]

In growth we prosper

There is an unrelenting media campaign to tell Canadians that we must grow our population. We need more babies and more immigrants or very bad things will happen. But there are voices that question this assumption. They are heard on the streets, in the pubs, and at the dining room table. But they are seldom heard in the media. Especially not on the airways of the CBC, that vehicle of growthist PC propaganda which all taxpayers are forced to endow.

It has been quite the year

First the host of CBC Radio's "The Sunday Edition," Michael Enright, declared on his June 7 program that Canada needs immigration-driven population growth in order to "prosper." Many of us, like Brishen Hoff, wanted to know what Enright meant by "prosper." As Hoff then asked, "Does Enright think that prospering means converting hundreds of thousands of hectares of Canadian land from biodiverse ecosystems into new roads, subdivisions, clearcuts, malls, parking lots, and open-pit mines to accommodate about 250,000 additional immigrants every year? Does that make life better for the average Canadian? Has real wealth per Canadian increased?"

Then a week later the print media gave the University of Toronto's Irvin Studin, editor-in-chief of "Global Brief," a platform to promote his vision of a Canada of 100 million people—the Superpower of the century. No submissions for op-eds of equivalent space that would contest his arguments were permitted. Not one. Not in any major media outlet. Nor were any one of several known letters-to-the editor critical of his stance published.

How the CBC talks about demography without questioning population growth

Then in September, CBC Radio announced that the

flagship morning show, "The Current," would be featuring a series of programs about the "seismic" demographic shifts that are occurring in Canada that will "change our work, our health, our families and our politics." The series would not ask if we could resist these changes, or how we might do so. And most conspicuously, not once would they interview a guest who challenged the assumed need to grow our population.

Demographer David Foot set the tone on the September 7 program by arguing that we seek the counsel of demographers so that we may "plan" for a future, which as we are constantly told about growth, is inevitable. Population growth and change is not something we can do anything about. We just have to make the right adjustments. On September 8, the next day, the CBC then declared that the growing ranks of centenarians was something "worth celebrating"—something re-affirmed on the September 21 segment of the series about "super-centenarians," when listeners were told of the "exciting," albeit costly research that will help us live beyond 110 years of age. On the 16, The Current informed CBC listeners that the government of Quebec had spent some \$25 million this year to cover the cost of several fertility treatments in an effort to hike the province's birth rate, which they said—without challenge—is "crucial" to the province's future. The Quebec College of Physicians made the argument that money would be better spent on fixing what is already an overburdened system—but that was an argument about priorities and not about the underlying assumption that Quebec needed to boost its population. The October 4 show dealt with the old ogre of an aging population, and two days later the burdens of caregiving to elders was discussed. On October 7, crocodile tears were shed about how changes to the Citizenship Act were impeding the ability of overseas Canadians to pass on their citizenship to children they had outside the country. Another program was devoted to the issue of when—not if—couples should have their children. No one spoke of the alternative of adopting one of the 36,000 Canadian children still without a permanent home. The "Shift"—as the series was called—was all about promoting more births, extending the lives of very old people, and encouraging immigration. The phrase "carrying capacity" was never heard.

Tim Murray is a writer and researcher who focuses on environment, population and research issues.

Resistance is futile. We are the CBC

Meanwhile, “The Sunday Edition,” hosted by Michael Enright—remember, the host who asserted that immigration was necessary for Canada’s “prosperity”—gave Irvin Studin 23 minutes of air time to re-iterate what he said in the print media four months before. Only this time Studin was congratulated for doing his bit to grow the population after proudly announcing the birth of his child. I then twice challenged the executive producer of Sunday Edition, Marjorie Nichol—in the interests of balance—to offer equivalent time to a contrarian view, even supplying her with the contact numbers, biographies and posted arguments of three capable and articulate people in the population stabilization movement. But even that was not enough to spark their interest or wake up a journalistic conscience for fair play. But then, what should one expect. I was dealing with CBC Pravda, after all. I might as well talk to my plants.

Now, if this five-month propaganda barrage was not enough, Global TV is announced that beginning Monday evening, November 9, they will be running a two-part segment about “Making Babies”—designed to offer help and advice to couples who want to produce more unnecessary Canadians by artificial means.

At what point will the media question growth?

The obvious question is, “At what point in history will the mainstream Canadian media consider the possibility that Canada already has enough people on its hands?” That there is no law nor reason why any country should feel obligated to “replace” its unsustainable population level? That a “youth quake” of immigrants or newborns will not arrest the aging of our population nor pay for their pension or medical benefits? That the infrastructure costs of servicing a growing population exceeds their economic contributions? That the great majority of immigrants will lack the skills to pay the kind of taxes it takes to subsidize the provision of the government services they demand? That a country without a population plan that is not properly debated with all options on the table is like a blindfolded man walking toward a cliff?

At what point will the CBC honour its mandate to

offer a microphone to all strands of Canadian public opinion, a public that pays taxes to this “peoples” broadcasting corporation for that right? Will that point be when oil is at \$200/barrel and we are at 44 million, or when it is at \$300/barrel and we are at 54 million? What is your bid—64 million? 64 million, is there anyone who will say 74 million? 64 once, 64 two times, 64—wait, Mr. Gordon Nixon of the Royal Bank says 74 million. Do I hear 84? Yes, Elizabeth May of the Green Party raises her hand for 84 million consumers whose ecological impact can be “de-coupled” from the environment. It’s 84 million now—Ms. May has raised the bar so that Canada can persist with what she calls its “Great Multicultural Project.” It doesn’t matter if we trash the environment and reduce Canadians’ per capita share of resources as long as we are more diverse in our poverty! Wait—Mr. Studin says 94 million! Now Mr. Gordon Nixon of the Royal Bank counters with 99 million potential bank clients! Now Irvin Studin shouts “100 million!” Whoop-ee, the sky is the limit! We are going to the mountain top! Mr. Studin may not get there with you kids but, you’ll get there! Its 100 million, going once, going twice—SOLD!

Studin’s mad dream prevails

Congratulations Mr. Studin, your mad vision of a Canada in ridiculous overshoot wins the day! As you argued on CBC Radio, at 100 million we will have the political leverage to promote our progressive environmental policies to the rest of the world! We can show the rest of the world how it’s done! Just look how we are doing that now! We’ve covered 20 percent of our Class 1 farmland with subdivisions and put 500 species at risk in the process! Thanks to post-1990 hyper-immigration we have developed more square kilometres in farmland than the Alberta Tar Sands project has despoiled boreal forest! This is only the beginning—think now of our potential! Not only will we live like Ghandi, as Elizabeth May prescribes, we’ll do better than that! We’ll live like cavemen! Consume less and less, squeeze tighter and tighter and move over for more and more migrants! By tripling our population by century’s end, we can absorb 46 percent of the number of people the planet adds to its burden in just one year! It all makes so much sense—no wonder the media doesn’t want anyone to challenge Irvin’s dream. ■