

Reprint **Island Tides**

Visit www.islandtides.com for more interesting articles on other BC, national & international topics

Reprint from Volume 19 Number 7

April 5, 2007

Editorial: For the people...

We may appear to complain much about government. It is time that we remind ourselves what government is for.

Democratic government, no matter how imperfectly realized, is at heart a humanitarian concept, for the benefit of people.

But we have seen the election of governments which deny their responsibility for the welfare of citizens and communities, and seek to entrench their power in order to favour 'the economy.' Policies and actions are evaluated through the single soulless lens of 'economics;' their implementation is pursued through the crude instruments of tax measures and deregulation.

This narrow ideology is used to rationalize patterns of political deception and moral blindness, amplified by complicit media. The eventual result is a toxic combination of public complacency and despair.

A 'healthy economy' is just one of government's objectives, measured by just one 'bottom line'. Its apparent simplicity is deceiving and seductive but it is only one concern among many.

In Canada, our expectations of government tend to concentrate on our human safety net: the assurance of basic levels of food, shelter, health, education, and, more recently, the

quality of our water and our air. Government is mainly responsible for providing some of these; for others, government sets expectations and regulates to a greater or lesser degree.

But any advanced society expects government to move beyond the basics. We seek quality in our lives: environmental sustainability; care and maintenance of the commons; trusteeship of the nation's resources; cultural expression; the creation and dissemination of knowledge; freedom from fear; social, civil, and criminal justice; kindness, tolerance, faith, beauty, and joy.

We seek truth.

We seek the opportunity and satisfaction of doing good in the world; we seek pride in community and nation; and finally, we seek to nurture our own democracy.

These are complex and sophisticated objectives, full of hope and promise. Unfortunately, they are sometimes regarded as obstacles to economic growth. They are not; they are more important than economic growth.

And they depend on a fundamental task of government: the protection of the weak and powerless from exploitation by the strong and powerful.

So we ask: do our political leaders measure up? ✍

© Island Tides Publishing Ltd. This article may be reproduced with this attribution, in its entirety, with notification to Island Tides Publishing Ltd.

'This article was published (April 5, 2007) in 'Gulf Islands, Island Tides'. 'Island Tides' is an independent, regional newspaper distributing 15,000-20,000 copies in the Southern Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Victoria, BC.'

Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada. Phone: 250-629-3660. Fax: 250-629-3838.
Email: islandtides@islandtides.com. Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>
