

Flaherty 281106: An Open Letter

November 28, 2006

Hon. Jim Flaherty  
Minister of Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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Dear Sir:

*“They create a desert and call it stability.”*  
(A universal epitaph for all Neo-conservatives.)

Reports highlight your plans to use any surpluses that accrue to the federal treasury to pay down the national debt, and, in your words, be a *minimalist government*.

Your words suggest that you and the Harper government are guided by perverse 19<sup>th</sup> century ideological commitments that are making your government *bush league* and out of step with Canada and the needs of Canadians

The words *minimalist government* are not just mean minded they mean that your government has no intention of proceeding to govern in any way that would extend those programs that progressive policies of other Canadian governments have put in place.

In other words – yours is a blatant attempt to avoid new social programs, and to avoid extending and improving those already in existence. Indeed it seems any governance that you intend to do will be devoted to destruction rather than creation.

My friend and a true conservative Dalton Camp put it clearly in his lecture *Neo-Conservatism: How to Wreck a Country Without a Hammer* that neo-Conservatism leads to destruction of Canadian institutions, the castration of the proper functioning of Government, and to the installation of the American market values of that *failed state*.

I suggest that you re-think your policies and use the Bank of Canada so as to affect your cherished debt reduction. This can be accomplished, as you well know, at near zero cost to Canadians.

At the same time you could use the surpluses to accomplish those advances that Canadians want and need—some desperately. Most importantly you could focus on poverty reduction as the major systemically generated social cost.

People in poverty are not free! Face it!

Putting in place an unconditional basic income (UBI) for all—or a LIVEABLE INCOME FOR EVERYONE—would constitute a direct attack on the existence of poverty as the

most vicious inconsistency with the notion of *equality rights of citizenship*, that is built into the Canadian constitution. A UBI is, of course, also consistent with Canada's support and acceptance of the UN UDHR and related covenants.

Rather than shirk social responsibilities I suggest you embrace them and introduce an UBI for every man woman and child in Canada.

Generally, on this and other matters, I am suggesting that you and other members of your party step back from perversity and practice policies of citizenship in the good sense of Adam Smith:

“... he is certainly not a good citizen who does not wish to promote, by every means in his power, the welfare of the whole society of his fellow-citizens.”

Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*

Yours sincerely

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