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Religion and the State Locked in Mortal Combat

There is a monumental struggle shaping up in Canada between organized religion and the State. We are now only at the periphery of this struggle, and hear only faint rumbles of thunder in the far distance. However, within a few short years, the thunder will be directly overhead as the storm breaks around us. Much is at stake in this deadly struggle.

This battle will begin officially when the government insists that churches, in their practices and pronouncements, must follow the secular values of the state over the church's own values. If the churches refuse to obey this, they will be punished - not just by lawsuits and fines, but also, one can safely predict, by being denied a tax exempt status that is so necessary for the churches to carry out their many works - not just spiritual, but temporal, such as caring for the sick, the poor and abandoned.

The foundation for this struggle has already been laid over the past few years by homosexual activists who insist that the churches conform to the "equality" rights of homosexuals, as determined by the courts and legislation, and stop allegedly "discriminating" against them because of religious belief. Adoptions, social services, such as nursing homes, religious based schools, marriages, employment conduct etc. carried out by religious organizations will be held to secular standards, not religious ones.

In order to limit the influence of the churches in the public square and at the same time to increase the influence of homosexuals, a number of legal challenges have pitted homosexual equality rights against the freedoms of religion, opinion, and expression in the Charter of Rights. In these cases, religious rights have more often than not, been subordinated to homosexual rights.

The case Marc Hall v. Dufferin School Board 2002 was supposed to be the definitive case to require churches to conform to secular values. In that case, Marc Hall was a student in an Oshawa, Ontario Catholic high school. Assisted by a group of homosexual activist lawyers, he challenged the school board's decision to deny him the right to bring his same-sex partner to the school prom. The court granted Mr. Hall an injunction against the school board, stating that Marc Hall had a "right" to attend the prom with his same-sex partner, even though the prom was organized by the Catholic school and took place on Catholic school property. Mr. Hall received significant support for his legal challenge, not just from the gay rights lobby group EGALE, but also from former federal Minister of Industry, Allan Rock; Buzz Hargrove, President of the Canadian Automobile Workers (CAW); Toronto City Councilor Kyle Rae (openly homosexual); Ontario Liberal leader, Dalton McGuinty; Liberal MPP, George Smitherman and now Ontario Minister of Health, also openly homosexual. These high profile individuals put their weight behind this case because they believed the case would force churches once and for all to conform to secular laws prohibiting "discrimination". They also anticipated that the case would have broader implications than just relating to schools and would affect all institutions, organizations, and agencies, including religious ones that receive government funding. These institutions would then be required to apply, at all times, government non-discrimination policies. Although the injunction was granted in this case, the broader substantial issues still had to be argued in a further court case.

This case was not a completely "clear" one for the homosexual activists to take to the higher court because it was complicated by the fact that S. 93 of the British North America Act (1867) provided that Catholic schools in Ontario could operate without government interference and this provision could well protect Catholic schools from conforming to state laws. Consequently, the activists decided, in June 2005 not to proceed with the case but rather to wait for another, perhaps clearer, case in the future to bring a court challenge on the crucial issue of church conformity to secular values.

Criminal Code - Hate Propaganda Provision

An amendment in 2004 to the hate propaganda provisions (S. 318 and 319 in the Criminal Code) added sexual orientation to those groups specifically protected from hate propaganda. This provision will be used in the future to

silence churches from speaking out against the homosexual agenda. This is due to the fact that in order to constitute the offence of hate propaganda, it must occur in a "public place". Unfortunately, the definition of public place includes churches, in that a public place is defined in that section as "any place to which the public has access as of right or by invitation express or implied". There is an exculpatory (escape) provision (S. 319(3)) in the Criminal Code that provides that no person will be convicted of this offence of promoting hatred if "in good faith he attempted to establish argument or opinion upon a religious subject". On the surface, this provision would appear to protect ministers, rabbis, and priests, as well as all others who wish to argue "on a religious subject". However, same-sex marriage and homosexual rights, abortion etc. are also legal or societal matters, not only religious issues, and we do not know how the courts will interpret this provision. Moreover, unless one discussed the issue from a strictly religious perspective and relied instead upon health, social arguments etc., there would appear to be no protection under the hate propaganda provision.

Resistance to Religious Objections Gains New Weight

This dispute about churches remaining free to carry out their own beliefs acquired new force recently when a respected academic and feminist Janice Gross Stein, Belzberg Professor of Conflict Management and director of the Munk Centre for International Studies in Toronto, wrote an article, published in the September, 2006 issue of the "Literary Review of Canada" in which she raised the issue of churches relying on religious not secular values, despite the fact they receive generous tax exemptions from the state. She wrote:

These religious institutions that systemically discriminate against women are recognized, at least implicitly, by governments. They enjoy special tax privileges given to them by governments. Religious institutions do not pay property tax and most receive charitable status from the federal government. If religious institutions, for example, are able to raise funds more easily because governments give a tax benefit to those who contribute, are religious practices wholly private even when they benefit from the public purse? Are discriminatory religious practices against women a matter only for religious law, as is currently the case under the Canadian law that protects freedom of religion as a charter right? Or should the equality rights of the charter have some application when religious institutions are officially recognized and advantaged in fundraising? Does it matter that the Catholic Church, which has special entitlements given to it by the state and benefits from its charitable tax status, but refuses to ordain women as priests?

How can we in Canada, in the name of religious freedom, continue furtively and silently to sanction discriminatory practices?

Ms. Stein then went on to say that when religious values are in conflict with so called "Canadian" values as set out in the Charter of Rights, the "charter values" should prevail. These so-called "charter values", however, are only the interpretations of the Charter made by the unaccountable, appointed judges who, too frequently, reach conclusions based on their own personal ideology or philosophy rather than on any substantive law. That is, the so-called "values" interpreted by the courts are not necessarily the values and beliefs of most Canadians. Rather, they are the values of the liberal left, whether on feminism, homosexuality or unrestricted sexual activity, as mirrored in the Supreme Court of Canada decision in December 2005 to permit swingers clubs.

The Role of Religion

Religion has an important role in Canadian society because it sets high standards of behaviour and justice. Its role is to bring its goodness and graces of belief to everyone. The Ten Commandments and such admonishments as feeding the hungry and housing the poor etc., serve to civilize society. Religion also puts meaning into life with its inevitable sorrows and joys and provides a reason for hope. The state imposition of political correctness (secularism) in society and on the churches is merely a form of Marxist ideology: posing as tolerance and compassion, it undermines and erodes true democratic freedoms. The oppressive secular ideology infringes on religious liberty and on the freedom of religion to advance itself for the betterment of all members of society.

Surprisingly, the Chinese are well aware of the importance of Christianity in building democracy. There is an estimated 40 million Christians in China but since many attend underground Christian churches, estimates of actual Christians in China usually range between 50 million and 100 million. Chinese scholars have studied western politics, economics and military power and have concluded that the west has been so powerful because of Christianity (Ottawa Citizen, March 3, 2007)

They claim that, because of Christianity, western civilization has corrected itself rather than plunge into decline. That is because Christianity's history is linear not cyclical and holds great hope in this life and the next, especially for those who follow its ethics; its tenets smooth conflicts and help its followers adjust to upheaval with relative calm.

Meanwhile in Canada, we await this coming struggle between the state and the churches with trepidation. Will faith be allowed to flower and grow to protect mankind with charity and hope? Or will we have a society in which faiths will be forced to retreat from the secular power of the state?

Voters Beware - Manipulating the Voting System

For the past several years Canadians have been told that our electoral system, based on the British system of first-past-the-post, which means that the party receiving the most votes forms the government, is supposedly a dud. Invariably, it is pointed out that in the 1997 federal election, Liberal leader Jean Chrétien won a majority of seats with only 37 percent of the popular vote. The present system, it is argued, has led to such horrors as women making up only 21 percent of the elected MPs in the federal Parliament (as though women were idiotic enough to care how many MPs were female, as female voters sensibly look, as do men, to the candidates' policies rather than their gender). In Ontario, Conservative leader Mike Harris's election win in 1995, with 50 percent of the seats, occurred with only 40 percent of the popular vote. It is also argued that our present system is causing a decline in voter turnout at elections. Obviously, in view of these developments, reformers argue that a way has to be found to get around these perceived problems.

To solve these problems, it is being argued that another electoral system, called proportional representation (PR), or some variation of this system, should replace the present first-past-the post electoral system.

Before defining PR, it would perhaps be a good idea to first look at who is behind this new (for Canada) PR voting system. The advocacy group pushing for it is called Fair Vote Canada, which claims to be a non-partisan organization. One of its founders is feminist Doris Anderson, former editor of Chatelaine magazine. There are 32 members on its advisory board, chaired by former left wing Liberal cabinet minister, Lloyd Axworthy, who, when he was in office, was nicknamed "Pink Lloyd" for a very good reason. Other left wing members on the advisory board include:

Dr. Patricia Baird

Former chair of the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technology. The Commission made 293 recommendations including those in favour of the creation of embryos specifically for research (on human embryos of up to 14 days), and of lesbians and single women having the right to new medical technologies paid for by provincial health schemes.

Maude Barlow

Feminist Chairperson of the left wing Council of Canadians.

Dr. Sylvia Bashevkin

Feminist Professor of Political Science, University of Toronto. She has written a number of books dealing with women and party politics.

Patrick Boyer

Former red Tory Toronto MP. He chaired the House of Commons Equality Committee dealing with the implementation of the Charter of Rights. His Committee's report, released in October 1985, made 85

recommendations, including protection for sexual orientation in the Human Rights Act, employment and pay equity, and that appointments to the judiciary should reflect the composition of Canadian society ie. appointments be made on the basis of gender, ethnic, origin, race, etc.

The Hon. Ed Broadbent

NDP MP and party leader from 1975 - 1989.

June Callwood

Feminist author and vice president of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

Nathalie Des Rosiers

Past President of the Law Commission of Canada, who led that Commission's electoral reform project which recommended adoption of PR. While President of the Law Commission, she issued a report that same-sex marriage be legalized and/or marriage be eliminated entirely. Legalization of abortion and euthanasia were also recommendations made by this commission.

Linda Silver Dranoff

Feminist lawyer and legal reformer who has contributed to the expansion of women's rights in family law. She wrote a column in Chatelaine for 25 years, interpreting the law from a feminist perspective.

Dr. Margaret Fulton

Former president of Mount St. Vincent University, which, under her direction, changed from a Catholic women's university to a feminist only university. She is director of the North/South Institute, a left-wing organization working internationally.

Mel Hurtig

Left-wing publisher. He is the founding member of the Committee for an Independent Canada and one of the founding members of the Council of Canadians.

Tom Kent

Former advisor to Prime Minister Lester Pearson who comes from a socialist background in Britain.

Robin Mathews

An active member of the extreme left wing of the NDP called the Waffle Movement.

The Hon. Lorne Nystrom

Former NDP Member of Parliament who ran for the NDP national leadership in 1975 and 1995. He was NDP House leader until defeated in the 2004 election.

Dr. Sylvia Ostry

Left-leaning feminist, former Chief Statistician for the federal Liberal government and Chairperson of the Economic Council of Canada.

William Pitman

NDP MP and Ontario MPP, who also served as Deputy Leader of the Ontario NDP party. Former President of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

Judy Rebick

Former President of the feminist National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and former Ontario provincial NDP candidate.

Rick Salutin

Left-wing columnist for the Globe and Mail. He is editor of the leftist publication, This Magazine.

David Suzuki

Well-known CBC broadcaster on the environment and other similar causes.

The Very Rev. Hon. Lois Wilson

High profile feminist former Moderator of the United Church of Canada. She is a Board member of Amnesty International and currently president of the World Federalist Movement (Canada); Vice President of the World Federalist Movement (International); and Vice President of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

At least 60 percent of the Board is comprised of left wing activists, with a heavy emphasis on NDP supporters and/or feminists. Obviously, there is something in PR that they believe serves their cause.

It should be mentioned, however, there are three known conservative members on the Advisory Board. They are Walter Robinson, former director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, Ted White, former Alliance MP for North Vancouver, between 1993 and 2000, and red Tory Senator Hugh Segal, former Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Mulroney. The political leanings of the remaining members of the Board are not known.

It is significant that Fair Vote Canada has organized a caucus called "Women for Fair Voting" which focuses on promoting PR as a means of increasing the number and percentage of women serving in Parliament and provincial legislatures. Fair Vote Canada notes, on its website, that a number of studies have shown that the lists used in all PR systems help facilitate both the nomination and election of more women than first-past-the-post systems.

What is PR?

PR is a system of voting whereby a party lists its candidates in a certain order and then if 10 percent of the seats in a 100-seat legislature, for example, are won by the party, the top 10 names on the list then sit in the legislature. Note - there are no nomination meetings as the party chooses the candidates whose name will stand for election. Understandably, there will be immense political pressure for parties to create lists that include an equal number of women ie. a female quota, and quotas based on racial and ethnic origin and sexual orientation. Quotas for women are currently included in the election laws of Costa Rica, Belgium, Mexico and France. We know that this type of electoral system is especially important for feminists, based on their international conference on the issue held in Ottawa in June 2004. According to this conference, changing to a new political system on constitutional reform would provide a "golden opportunity to try to tie in gender parity." (See Reality, January/February, 2005, p. 14, "Voting By Proportional Representation: Who Benefits?")

This system also raises other questions, such as the difficulty of balancing regional interests in PR. That is, how would northern or western regions, for example, be certain of getting their fair share of the seats if the names of candidates are selected by the party. These individuals could come from anywhere in Canada. The guarantees of regional representation and that local issues will be raised in an election campaign are a benefit of our first past-the-post system. This is an important consideration. In fact, under PR, just what would be the point of having local candidates anyway? There is, however, a way around this problem of PR in that candidates could run in individual ridings, as they do under the present system, and that only some of the seats would be reserved and awarded to parties accordingly to their lists.

Another problem with PR is that the system rarely leads to majority governments since it gives smaller parties a far greater degree of representation in a national Parliament. That is why the NDP is such an enthusiastic supporter of PR. PR guarantees that the winning party must make a deal with other parties to stay in power. Although it seems more democratic, the system, in fact, gives small parties more power, even if they are supported by only tiny pockets of Canadians, e.g., the Green Party and the NDP, each of which according to a Decima poll in late February, have the support of only 13% of the population. This could lead to the second most popular party in an election having no role

to play at all. We only have to look to the fiasco that occurred in Germany in its federal election in 2005. Deal-making among the fractured parties took weeks to arrange. In the end, an ugly "Grand Coalition" of Germany's two leading parties, hated rivals, was the bizarre outcome. The Chancellor is a Conservative while the finance and foreign ministers are Socialists. Under PR, we could just as easily have Stephen Harper as Prime Minister, Jack Layton as Finance Minister, and Paul Martin as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Policy decisions would not come easily under such a configuration! Under our present system the party with the most votes can draw support from different parties on different issues, but under the PR system, the coalitions are formal, requiring prior compromises before the government is formed, which can result in an incoherent power sharing.

There is little doubt that the PR system leads to political instability. For example,

Israel's mainstream parties have to make deals with radical and religious parties in order to create a coalition government, thus giving these very small parties power they may not deserve.

Italy's 61st government since World War II fell in February because its coalition fell apart. Its deposed socialist Prime Minister Romano Prodi negotiated with members of the other parties to reach a "deal" to return him as head of the government. That is, horse-trading over issues took place in order to form a government. Mr. Prodi was successful in restoring his position, but he paid a stiff price to do so as he had to change direction on almost all the political initiatives undertaken in his first months in office.

On the other hand, it must be said that some social conservatives see considerable value in PR, as it is a way to get issues, such as abortion and same sex marriage, back on the floor of Parliament where there is currently an all-party consensus against revisiting these matters. Since MPs under PR are to be selected according to a party list, the candidates must, of course, agree to the party's position on controversial issues. Thus, there is no guarantee that the issues of abortion, same sex marriage and euthanasia etc. would receive any more support under PR than under the first-past-the-post system. It is, in short, a very tricky call.

Attempts to Bring in PR

Even though the PR electoral system may create difficulties, this does not mean it is not being seriously entertained in Canada. Paul Martin, when Prime Minister, made a half-hearted stab at electoral reform when he asked, in 2005, that his minister Responsible for Democratic Reform, Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa-Vanier) look into the issue. However, there was not much enthusiasm by the Liberals for electoral reform since reform would likely interfere with the accustomed and expected Liberal victory at the polls. As a result, the federal government decided to wait for the provinces to break the ice before deciding whether it wanted to test the waters on an alternative electoral system.

Provincial Reviews of the Electoral System

The provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and P.E.I. are at various stages in considering electoral change. British Columbia advanced the most quickly in establishing a Citizens Assembly, when 160 randomly selected individuals were selected by the government to examine the issue. In late 2004, the assembly came up with a rather exotic form of PR system called the Single Transferable Vote ("STV"). It is so complicated that even such a seasoned politician and newspaper columnist as Norman Spector (former Chief of Staff for Prime Minister Mulroney), now a Globe and Mail columnist, in his column on January 10, 2005 dismissed STV as "nonsense". A referendum was held on the STV in the 2005 British Columbia provincial election, and was supported by a surprising 57 percent of the voters, although this does not necessarily mean the voters understood the system. This, however, was short of the 60 percent required to have the referendum passed. British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell now says there will be another referendum held on STV at the time of the 2009 provincial election.

In November 2004, Ontario randomly selected 103 individuals (one per riding in the province) to deliberate on proposals for electoral reform there. The assembly is advised by a 13-person panel of experts who, with only one or two exceptions, reads like a who's who of advocates for PR. The results of the assembly's deliberations are to be announced on May 15, 2007 and a referendum is to be held on its recommendations, coincident with the October

2007 Ontario provincial election. The Ontario government also requires a super majority 60 percent for the measures to be approved.

A Solution to the Problem

There is no doubt that the present first past-the-post electoral system is flawed. As Britain's Winston Churchill once stated, "the best argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter." A variation of this occurred when the elitist Liberal party leadership candidate Michael Ignatieff (National Post, February 24, 2007) described, as "moments of torture," his inability to watch the World Cup Soccer game, because he had to endure those "... hilarious meetings with people in bars - I mean serious meetings with potential supporters ..." Obviously he doesn't have a very high opinion of ordinary people, or perhaps it's just that he has a very high opinion of himself.

This brings us to the real problem with our electoral system. It's not the process, but rather the arrogance of those in power, i.e., a long series of Prime Ministers and their staff who invariably centralize power into their own hands. Even Cabinet ministers are nothing more than yes-men. Individual MPs have no strong role to play in the development of policies and MPs do not represent their constituents because their vote is most often "whipped" ie., ordered by the leader to vote a certain way, with failure to comply leading to negative consequences for that MP. More free votes, relaxed party discipline and a strong role for caucus in determining policy are all necessary in order to make Canada more democratic. Once we finally have a genuinely democratic government, only then should we consider looking at changes in the electoral system.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Time rolls on by like a steamroller that one cannot stop, and, on the West Coast of Canada at least, spring has sprung. We have snowdrops and crocuses galore! I have just come from an exciting 4-day conference in Vancouver on Autism. Our second child (now almost 22) is autistic. I learned many things that I didn't know before from some very educated and learned people.

I know that you have profited from the information in this newsletter. There is so much to learn. Here in B.C., for example, we have a confusing issue regarding our public education system. Last April, our provincial government (Liberals) signed a secret agreement with two homosexual men giving them unprecedented power:

To recommend homosexual consultants who the Ministry of Education must use in the review and development of curriculum in all subject areas;

To create a new optional Grade 12 Social Justice Course to include homosexuality; and

To confirm that parents may only remove their children from a select few classes if the teaching is morally objectionable according to the family's values and beliefs.

The homosexuals who signed the agreement have said that B.C. public school children are now a captive audience in all but a few subject areas. And although all 76 school boards have been asked to confirm that parents' rights to remove their children will be respected in the local school districts, only a few school boards have responded. None of the responses seem reassuring. In spite of this, government officials in the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Education deny that this contract has undermined the rights of parents to direct the education of their children. Government officials are inviting our input as well. This issue bears further watching, and requires that parents become involved.

The reason I share this information is to encourage each of you to make sure that you know your Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Member of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) as well as you know your MP. These men and women are elected by us to represent us. Your Member of Parliament (MP) needs to know what is important to you, but so does the local representative of your provincial Legislature. Otherwise, you might find, as did Vancouverites in the last local elections, that the strongest Mayoral candidate believed that brothels should be

legalized to protect women!

We live to be salt and light to a confused and dying world around us. It is not our responsibility to win the battle - only to be faithful to the task of speaking the truth in love where we have been called. Speak up with courage, tact and wisdom. Your children and grandchildren will thank you.

Until next time. Laurie

PORNOGRAPHY ADVOCATES EXPERIENCE A SETBACK

Once in a while, the Supreme Court of Canada does something right. It did so in its decision, handed down on January 19, 2007, in which it refused the application by a Vancouver homosexual/lesbian bookstore, called Little Sisters, for advance funding from the government to cover the costs of its court challenge against Canada Customs.

The Little Sisters bookstore case against Canada Customs began in 2001 after border guards seized books and comics destined for the bookstore in which sexual sadism, masochism and bondage were depicted. The bookstore claimed the seizure was discrimination against them since these activities were part of their culture and sexuality. They argued that a previous Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 2000 had ordered Customs to refrain from targeting this homosexual bookstore and that customs had ignored this ruling. In fact, however, after the court ruling, Customs had prepared a new set of guidelines to help its agents to properly identify pornography. These guidelines provided that anal and vaginal fisting was obscene, as well as sexual activities such as sadism, masochism and bondage that were depicted in the seized material.

Little Sisters realized it could not afford to counter the government's deep pockets to continue this fight against Customs. It therefore applied to the British Columbia Supreme Court for financial help in the form of advance costs to pay for its case. Their application for funding was based on a 2003 legal precedent in which an aboriginal group located in Okanagan, British Columbia, was given funding to cover the costs of taking the government to court over its land claims. The British Columbia Supreme Court did initially grant the Little Sisters Bookstore advance costs in this case (see Reality Sept/Oct, 2004, p.11 "Our Courts Mocking Justice"), based on the aboriginal precedent. The British Columbia Court of Appeal, however, overturned this decision and its judgement was supported by the Supreme Court of Canada in January. The Supreme Court of Canada reached this conclusion, despite the fact that the homosexual lobby group EGALE had intervened in the case on behalf of the homosexual community. EGALE's intervention was funded by the now defunct Court Challenges Programme.

The Supreme Court of Canada decided that the bookstore's allegations were too limited in scope to extend government funding to support its legal challenge. Mr. Justice Michel Bastarache and Mr. Justice Louis LeBel wrote the majority decision in this case in which they stated:

Public interest advance costs orders must be granted with caution, as a last resort, in circumstances where their necessity is clearly established. The standard is a high one: only the 'rare and exceptional' case is special enough to warrant an advance costs award, they ruled. In the present case, the issues raised do not transcend the litigant's individual interests.

Madam Justice Beverley McLachlin stated:

If advanced costs are justified here, they will be justified in a host of other cases.

That, in a nutshell, is probably why the court refused the advance funding. If the court had not done so, it would have been besieged from all sides by other hopeful litigants for funding for their cases. Thus, even if the court were sympathetic to the homosexual bookstore's allegations of discrimination by Canada Customs, it could not support its

request for funding for very real practical considerations. This Supreme Court of Canada ruling, coupled with the cancellation by the Conservatives of the Court Challenges Programme, the customary source of left wing legal challenges, means that Little Sisters Bookstore can no longer access taxpayers' money to pursue its claims.

"We have to declare defeat," said one of the co-owners, Jim Deva. Perhaps it did not occur to them to raise the money themselves, as REAL Women and all the other pro-family people have done in their court challenges over the years. Maybe, too, there is little support for the pornographic culture that the homosexuals/lesbians promote.

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STATUS OF WOMEN HEARINGS: A HOAX

The feminist and opposition dominated House of Commons Committee on the Status of Women held hearings on the government's cuts to the Status of Women on December 6 and December 13, 2006. REAL Women was deliberately excluded at that time from testifying before the Committee (See Reality January/February, 2007, p. 14).

In January, under pressure, the Committee was obliged, when the House of Commons resumed sitting after the Christmas recess, to hear our testimony after all. The Committee decided, however, that it would outsmart the Conservative government in this regard by providing not just a single day to hear further witnesses, but would extend the hearings for another two full days to hear other witnesses as well. Naturally, apart from REAL Women, all further witnesses called to testify were opposed to the spending cuts. The score: 27 groups who opposed the cuts, and a total of only 3 groups who supported the cuts, including REAL Women of Canada.

The 27 witnesses opposed to the cuts, with only a couple of exceptions, were all funded by the Status of Women and according to their testimony, regarded these grants as their "entitlements." Having no other source of income but taxpayers' dollars, they described the cuts as being "anti-women", which crippled women's involvement in the public debate in Canada. REAL Women does not receive funds from the Status of Women but has managed to be involved in the public debate solely with the financial support of our members.

This remarkable lack of balance in the number of witnesses appearing before the Committee raises the question as to why a review was held in the first place, since the Committee's conclusions were obviously preordained.

Since the committee proceedings were televised by CPAC (the Parliamentary channel), it is reasonable to conclude that the purpose of these hearings is to provide fodder for the upcoming election to attempt to back the claim that the Conservatives are, in fact, "anti-women." Not only have these special interest groups of women already received many millions of dollars since 1973 from the Status of Women - now this Committee is spending even more taxpayers' money paying all the witnesses' expenses in order to hoodwink the public into thinking that these cuts are offensive to "women". The cuts are only offensive to the special interest group of feminists and their left-wing allies, whose extremist views are not supported by mainstream women.

Please write to Prime Minister Harper, the Minister for the Status of Women and your MP supporting the government's decision to cut the funding to the feminist groups and also object to the gross manipulation by the feminists on the House of Commons Status of Women Committee, to use the committee to support their cause. Please write to:

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper Office of the Prime Minister 80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Fax: 613 941-6900 The Honourable Bev Oda Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Fax: 613 992-2794

House of Commons

Your local MP **House of Commons** Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

SO LONG AND GOOD BYE - CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Jean-Pierre Kingsley, a former hospital administrator, was appointed Canada's Chief Electoral Officer in 1990. He held that position for 17 years, resigning on February 16, 2007. During his time in office, he cut a wide swath through our electoral system, happily charging many with infractions to his hallowed Canada Elections Act. For example, Paul Bryan, a software engineer in Vancouver, committed a dastardly deed in the 2000 federal election by posting the election results on the internet before the polls closed in British Columbia. A contemptible act, according to Mr. Kingsley, who quickly had the individual charged.

Mr. Kingsley was noted for his over-centralizing and bureaucratizing of the federal electoral process, and for his court challenges to third-party advertising, such as the charges laid against the National Citizens Coalition in 2000, which was headed then by Stephen Harper. At that time, Mr. Harper called Mr. Kingsley "dangerous". He may have been right.

Mr. Kingsley, as Chief Electoral Officer, was appointed by a resolution of the House of Commons. He held the rank of a Deputy Minister and was paid the salary of a Federal Court Judge, \$216,600 annually.

Under S. 18 of the Canada Elections Act, the Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to "... implement public education and information programs to make the electoral process better known and to use any media or other means ..." relating to Canada's electoral process.

Mr. Kingsley regarded S.18 of the Act as empowering him to do whatever he liked, whenever he liked. The Chief Electoral Officer is required to report directly to Parliament, but, under the Liberals, he was given a free hand to do exactly what he wanted to promote his own liberal agenda. Two examples:

1. Manipulating School Children

In 1999, Mr. Kingsley, working with UNICEF Canada, requested 15,000 schools in Canada to conduct an organized "vote" by school children in regard to their "rights" set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A very liberal interpretation of this Convention was included in his package of information, which not only treated children as miniature adults, but also portrayed parents as causing undue restrictions on a child's right to privacy, freedom of expression, religion, association (which would include a cult) and having access to pornography, etc.

In sending out the educational package, Mr. Kingsley had gone over the heads of both the provincial governments and parents, directly approaching the children to vote for their favourite "right" on so-called election day, November 19, 1999, in special "polling stations" set up in their schools. The results were to be broadcast nationally and presented to the federal government as a "Children's Rights Mandate."

The provincial Ministers of Education, schools, and parents were enraged by Mr. Kingsley's high-handed tactics, and his failure to seek approval before involving the schools. As a result, many school boards across Canada passed resolutions rejecting the plan.

REAL Women was so concerned about this phony vote by children that we wrote, not only to every provincial and territorial Minister of Education, but also to over 400 school boards across Canada advising them of this plan, and requesting that they reject it. Many did so and had not even been aware of the vote prior to receiving our letter.

2. Supporting the Feminist Agenda

The federal Status of Women gave a Quebec Women's group called Women's Political Equality (Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie), which was founded in 1998, a \$19,000 grant in 2000-01, and in 2001-02 a \$27,800 grant to prepare a pamphlet, grandly called "The Project of the Century." The "project" was to push for more female candidates in the electoral process, especially by way of female quotas. This biased pamphlet stated it was supported

by Elections Canada and the pamphlet was posted in its entirety on the Elections Canada website during the December 2005 - January 2006 federal election campaign. Its message was clear: Vote for and promote female candidates. The document included the usual feminist myths that women did not earn the same pay as men. The pamphlet did not disclose that because of family responsibilities, women customarily work shorter hours in lower paying occupations than men, and as a result, have a lower average income, based not on discrimination, but rather on women's life and work choices.

The pamphlet also complained that governments generally balk at establishing rules and regulations that promote "women's access to power". The pamphlet, in short, was a feminist diatribe aimed at promoting feminism and feminists to power through the electoral process. This unbalanced pamphlet was sheer propaganda and could in no way be characterized as "education". This pamphlet still remains as a link on Election Canada's website: www.elections.ca

Kingsley Resigns

Mr. Kingsley abruptly resigned from his position as Chief Electoral Officer on February 16, 2007. He fervently denied his resignation had anything to do with his recent disagreement with the Conservatives over whether that party broke the law by failing to disclose \$500,000 in political donations. The Conservatives' controversy with Mr. Kingsley was settled in December. Mr. Kingsley definitely did not like the fact that, for the first time, someone (the Conservative government) was apparently looking over his shoulder, and, as a result, he was no longer the absolute monarch of his domain, as he had been under the Liberals.

In any case, Mr. Kingsley, a public servant, left his position in February with a fist full of taxpayers' money, as has become the norm for departing civil servants in recent years. For example, Mr. Kingsley and four of his senior managers spent \$39,000 on a seven-day trip to England and Scotland to study electoral systems in December. This occurred three weeks after his resignation was submitted. Mr. Kingsley also claimed hospitality expenses for an \$822 wrap-up dinner at the exclusive Rideau Club in Ottawa with six of his senior managers, just two days before the final day on the job.

New Electoral Officer Appointed

A new Chief Electoral Officer has now been appointed. He is Marc Mayrand, a former law professor who taught insolvency and corporate law at the University of Ottawa and who, since 1997, has served as Superintendent of Bankruptcy with the federal government. If there is an election any time soon, Mr. Mayrand will not have an easy time getting up to speed on the complexities of running that election. He'll need a lot of luck just to survive!

In the meantime, please write to Mr. Mayrand and request that the offending feminist propaganda pamphlet, "The Project of the Century," be removed from Election Canada's website.

Please write to:

Mr. Marc Mayrand Chief Electoral Officer 257 Slater Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0M6 Tel: 1800 463-6868

Fax: 613 954-8584 1 888 524 1444