

# letters to the editor

## Green Shift wasn't tax-and-spend scheme

Dear Editor:

The Conservative Party of Canada is a very clever group. Immediately after Stéphane Dion won the Liberal leadership, the Conservatives sought to brand him with an image of their own choosing. They said he was ineffective, weak and indecisive.

Remember how the commercials featuring a shrugging Dion began long before the federal election?

All new leaders make mistakes along the learning curve and Dion was no exception. While the Conservatives kept up the heat in this political chess match, Dion stumbled, struggling to develop a solid platform and a unified party front.

The Green Shift was ambitious, but was immediately labelled by the Conservatives as crazy and a carbon tax. Do you see a pattern here?

With Dion's lack of charisma and general Liberal discord/confusion providing the counterweight to the Conservative branding, the Green Shift didn't sway many voters and died on the vine. It is interesting to note that despite Stephen Harper's brilliant political chess playing, Canadians still hesitated enough to deny him the majority that pulled the trigger on this election in the first place.

So here we are with another minority government and another vacuum atop the Liberal party.

Dion will step down when the Liberals select a new leader. The Conservatives will seek to define the image of that new leader and the whole chess match begins anew, culminating in the calculated collapse of Parliament due to its inability to effectively govern, and another election.

Now you may not like Dion or his Green Shift and that is your privilege.

But do you really think it was just some Liberal scheme to fulfil a tax-and-spend agenda?

The march of climate change is undeniable and while progressive nations move forward to meet

these challenges, we are falling further behind.

The Conservative plan of intensity targets is basically a do-nothing plan. It does little to address the issue and it is telling that it's the favoured plan of big industry, especially Big Oil and the tarsands projects. When push comes to shove and environmental complacency is no longer a global option, we will be playing catch up, purchasing clean technology that a more proactive plan would have positioned us to be the sellers of, not the buyers.

Energy production cannot drive the world economy indefinitely. Energy reduction and clean air technology will soon become big economic drivers. Will we be in a position to face these challenges and embrace the opportunities, or will we be like the Big Three North American automakers, trying to sell SUVs to a world more interested in compacts and hybrids?

Dion's motives were far-sighted and sincere. Right message, wrong guy.

Harper and the Conservatives outmanoeuvred the Liberals and let's be honest, that's all part of the game. So while I congratulate the Conservatives on their fine chess playing, I don't think it will serve our children well in the global chess tournament.

I can't help but think the next few years are going to play out like the last few.

This is the greatest country in the world and we deserve better.

— *Dan Petrie, Guelph*

## Valeriote took brave stand on seal hunt

Dear Editor:

As a candidate in the Oct. 14 federal election for the Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, I am especially pleased that Frank Valeriote has been elected Guelph's new member of Parliament.

I was fortunate to get to know him during the election, and I have found him to be a man of integrity, generosity and compassion.

For instance, he was willing to

take time out from canvassing prior to the election to learn about Canada's commercial seal hunt, the largest and most brutal marine mammal slaughter in the world.

It's a slaughter that close to 70 per cent of Canadians oppose — according to a 2005 Environics Poll — a slaughter that is done specifically to supply the fashion fur industry with trinkets and trash, a slaughter that is subsidized by our federal government and cannot exist without millions of taxpayers' dollars.

After receiving many emails from concerned residents of Guelph and numerous documents from the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Valeriote was willing to take a very courageous public stand. He committed himself to opposing the commercial slaughter. This is something the Liberal party as a whole has yet to do.

I applaud Valeriote's intrepidity. We need independent, critical thinkers who can speak out for the majority of Canadians. We need politicians who are willing to help create policies for animals that are among the best in the world. We need politicians who are willing to "do the right thing" for the citizens of Guelph, for the citizens of Canada, for the environment upon which we depend and for the animals who depend on us.

We are short of heroes in this country, especially among our politicians. Dare I say it: perhaps we have one in our midst.

My blessings to Frank Valeriote.  
— *Karen Lévenson, Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada*



## letters welcome

We welcome your feedback. All letters will be edited for clarity, style, length and legal concerns. Letters should be no more than 250 words. Letters will be verified. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number. E-mail: editor@guelphmercury.com; write: Box 3604, 8-14 Macdonell St., Guelph, ON, N1H 6P7; fax: 519-767-1681.