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Supportin' Morton ain't so bad



GRAHAM
LETTNER

The most harmful reality in Alberta today is our provincial political complacency. In the political arena, strong ideologies and fiery rhetoric aren't anywhere near as dangerous as this Albertan ambivalence. Ideally, political lethargy is viewed as akin to the plague. Unfortunately, it's what Ralph Klein's been serving up with every caucus-meeting sandwich for over a decade.

If you totalled the democratic deficit for the years Ralph's been in office, every last petro-dollar in the Fort Mac tar sands wouldn't buy our province out of debt. This anti-democracy, more than an overheated economy or an under-funded education system, is far and away the worst part of the Klein legacy. It's left Albertans and Alberta's politics listless, content with mediocrity and disillusioned with the capabilities of good government.

Good government is built on good process. So I don't much care about "tax cut promise this" or "spending announcement that" if fundamentally all that changes is that an old populist premier is being replaced by a slightly-less-old populist premier. The process of our government won't change, which means Alberta won't change.

Here's where Ted Morton comes

in. The ultra-conservative Mr Morton makes many Tories look red, the Liberals look pink and the provincial NDP appear a fluorescent rainbow hyper-colour. If all you do is blanche at Morton's social conservatism and dismiss him, however, you're missing the bigger picture.

The key point here is that a Morton government would foment discussion, debate and downright disagreement in the political processes of this province. He's clear on his positions, and, in many cases, clearly outspoken. But his ideas and rhetoric spark thought and difference of opinion.

If all you do is blanche at Morton's social conservatism and dismiss him, however, you're missing the bigger picture.

He's also the only candidate supporting a number of direct, democratic reforms. In a province where the party in power changes roughly half as frequently as Halley's Comet visits, this is a good thing.

"But Ted Morton will turn Alberta into bumpkin country," you quiver. Not likely. Considering the number of MLAs that are lined up behind Jim Dinning (38) or Ed Stelmach (15) as compared to Ted Morton (one: Paul Hinman of the Alberta Alliance), there's bound to be a fair amount of

internal party opposition.

Many MLAs don't share Morton's social perspective, either. "If I wanted to live in Alabama instead of Alberta, I would move to Alabama," quipped Edmonton MLA Thomas Lukaszuk's when asked about a possible Ted Morton government. Speaking for not only himself, Lukaszuk, who is a PC, went on to say, "Ted's stances on issues are not palatable for most Albertans, particularly urban Albertans."

It's easy to think that a change of premier is all-important. But stop and consider that the MLAs aren't going anywhere—only Ralph is resigning. Yes, Ralph's word has been tantamount to public policy during his term. It's been truly disgusting to hear him crow off-colour diatribes and then witness his MLAs trip over themselves to explain away Klein's obvious flaws and mistakes. But if this isn't how you feel a functioning democracy should work, simply swapping premiers isn't going to fix things.

Ted Morton as premier will make Alberta a better province, because it will foster greater democratic involvement. Don't expect him to have carte blanche to institute his entire agenda, because his own MLAs won't give it to him. There's another provincial election not too far over the horizon where every eligible Albertan will size up the PC party under its new leadership. And if Albertans judge the PCs as having swung too far to the right, then, by historical standards, it might just be time for a newly minted party to oust the whole lot.

LETTERS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

First of all, it is rife with misogynistic and dehumanizing stereotypes, such as the stereotype that lesbians are sexually promiscuous, the stereotype that women are less able to hold positions of power because their reasoning abilities aren't good enough and the stereotype that feminists hate men.

Secondly, Knoechel's knowledge of feminism seems to come from nothing more than his casual study of internet pornography and second-hand accounts from a woman that he only sees as a sexual object. Thirdly, he suggests that the word "radical" in this context refers to "craziness and partying," whereas the term is derived from the Latin word for "root," and is used to indicate that "radical lesbian feminists" seek to challenge the root of our common understanding of gender. Incidentally, it is clear that Knoechel feels that his heterosexuality is threatened by radical lesbian feminism. Knoechel doesn't have to agree with "radical lesbian feminism," but I would invite him to at least try to understand it before he attempts to criticize and make fun of it.

LWAM GHEBREHARIAT
Arts IV

More cabs aren't the answer to city's transportation woes

I can understand a person [does] not want to wait for a taxi. We in general as a people hate to wait for anything. The problem with your idea of flooding the market with more taxi cabs is that the people who driver them now do so for less than minimum wage most of the time. By adding more cabs you would be slicing an already meager pie into smaller pieces. Your comment [that] "it will create more jobs for potential taxi drivers, who are often newcomers to Canada" is offensive. This sounds as if you are suggesting we bring more people into our country to fill low-paying jobs no one else wants, just so

a few people who do not know how to go out and drink responsibly can do so and not have to wait for a cab.

All cities in Canada issue taxi plates the same way: size of population. To say that owners "reap huge benefits due to a crazy bylaw" is not really true. The cost of owning a taxi ... can vary from \$50 000-\$130 000 depending on the city you live in. Then there's the cost of the car, insurance, upkeep, gas—the list goes on and on. I understand that for a few days a year people have to wait longer for a cab but to ask an industry to supply extra cars at a huge cost is not the way to go. I might suggest you ask your city to place more buses on the routes that are affected or have them run the bus schedule longer on those nights.

Flooding the market with more taxis will only make matters worse. This will reduce the income of the already underpaid taxi drivers, which in turn will make it hard to find new drivers. This will create and even longer wait period, [so] you may want to sit down with your local cab companies and see if you can come up with a better solution. You cannot find good people to drive cabs if they cannot make a living. As our politicians say whenever they vote themselves a raise, you have to pay good money to find good people.

JIM MARLOR
Via e-mail

Senseless LRT attack fails to move bystanders

On Tuesday 28 November, at approximately 1pm, three young men physically attacked a distraught homeless man on the LRT. One of these men was adorning U of A sweatpants and was clearly a student. The fight started verbally and quickly escalated to spitting. The homeless man walked away, but continued to yell at the three men. One of the men got up and hit him, but quickly went back to his seat. Soon after, however, the

U of A student got up and started verbally assaulting the homeless man and arguing with him. Then the man who had hit the homeless man got up again and attacked him, this time with the other two, kicking and punching him and pushing him to the ground. Nobody did anything to stop this. Even I was guilty in hesitating (until the three ganged up) and had to run across the LRT to try to break it up, only able to hold back two of the men.

This reminds me of the similar attacks by young men on homeless people not too long ago. If this man was someone else, not clearly a mentally unstable homeless man, the attack probably wouldn't have happened. The men felt like it was appropriate to attack this man because there would be no consequences. These three cowards, along with everyone who did nothing, deserve [to] be round[ed] up from their comfortable, warm beds and be given a vicious sack-beating while this man sleeps outside in the freezing cold.

MICHAEL SNIDER
Education IV

Is it Thursday already?

I would like to thank the student(s) who nominated me as a "professor of the week" (23 November). I also want to thank and compliment the Students' Union for encouraging students to recognize their instructors in this way.

DON CARMICHAEL
Department of Political Science

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, sent via carrier owl or e-mailed to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca.

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