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WINDY CRAGGY

On May 5th Stephen Hume had an article in the Vancouver Sun giving his economic views and on May 7th he had another article published in the Sun giving his views on Windy Craggy. These two articles are in such direct conflict that they demand comment.

His Wednesday May 5th column attempts to apply some shaky economic theories in order to convince government that profligate spending is okay in order to keep workers in honourable jobs and off welfare. He derides the economic system which allows us to spend \$40 billion annually on the poor and unemployed. His logic does not recognize that the \$40 billion has to come from somewhere. Someone should remind Mr. Hume that "which one man receives without working for, another man must work for without receiving".

His column of Friday, May 7th completely ignores the problem of finding the \$40 billion. Does he know that Canada also spends \$25 billion annually on payment of interest to foreigners who lend us the money to do all these wonderful things for people?

His May 7th column makes the typical preservationist's plea to stop any resource extraction (mining) activity in the Tatshenshini area of Northwestern British Columbia. He wants the area left "untouched by human enterprise", and he admits that "only a minuscule fraction of us will ever see" that area. He apparently wants it left so that only very rich people can afford to fly in there by helicopter, raft the rivers, enjoy the awe-inspiring scenery and be guided by his preservationist friends who make huge profits guiding a few dozen wealthy tourists for a few weeks each summer at \$10,000.00 each.

WHAT SHOULD THE TAX PAYER BE ASKED TO AFFORD?

The poor people, the unemployed, the welfare recipients, even workers who provide the taxes that fund the government profligacy that Stephen favours, will never see this Shangri-la unless there is some development there. The area is huge. There are already vast preserves in the area - the Kluane National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Glacier Bay National Park, the Russel Fiord Wilderness and the Tongas National Forest. On the other hand the mineral resources of Windy Craggy are valued at many billions of dollars. Large portions of the Tatshenshini can be preserved, but we don't need to preserve it all and deny British Columbian's the benefits of the area's other resources.

The provincial government must carefully assess its long-term needs for a healthy economy to pay for the benefits we need to provide for our citizens. We cannot ignore the resources of this area or deny long term access to the area or the less fortunate among us will never benefit from its resources and beauty. Perhaps with a little development and access more of us could afford to visit the area as ordinary tourists.

It would be fun to join Mr. Hume's rich preservationist friends at a price we can afford. This area should not become a rich man's preserve.