Thorsell speaks on Budget

Pete to reject "bribe"

by Bruce Pollock

The proposed federal budget is a "most difficult challenge to Alberta and Mr. Lougheed", according to William Thorsell of the Journal.

Thorsell predicted a number of Lougheed's possible responses to the federal budget, speaking at the university yesterday.

He predicted Lougheed will announce "a series of production restraints", resulting in an increase in the purchase of offshore and imported oil by the federal government.

"Lougheed intends to determine the actual monetary figure of lost Alberta revenue due to the increase and then cut back production equivalently," said Thorsell.

This would negate any profits the federal government might realize from a proposed tax on natural gas and oil, because it would have to absorb an increase in petroleum subsidization payments.

Lougheed will also claim the Transfer Act of 1930 has been repealed, said Thorsell. This act guarantees provincial ownership and control of natural resources.

It should be noted that the Alberta government does retain control over the production of natural resources despite imposition of the Petroleum Administration Act, said Thorsell.

In a nutshell, Thorsell said, Lougheed's plan of attack will be to call for the people of Alberta to "reject the federal government's seductive bribe to protect provincial resource rights and prepare to accept a recession."

Thorsell said he believes this plan is not "the best one for the people of Alberta because the budget descriptively offers Albertans a sustained economic boom."

This was supported by political science Professor Garth Stevenson who said the Liberal energy pricing arrangements were a "coherent and commendable strategy".

Stevenson noted that the Alberta government has been out maneuvered because any opposition can only appear to favour the oil industry and large multinational companies.

Basically the proposed energy taxes will result in a transfer of revenues from the private sector to the public sector with a relatively small drop in provincial income, said Stevenson.

Any action, therefore, would be seen by the public to support what is already considered the exhorbitant prices and corresponding profits that are enjoyed by the multinationals, according to Stevenson.

Stevenson remarked that Lougheed had probably written his response before the budget was released and that his response would have been the same regardless of the budget.

Nukes

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He said the best way to get government action on disarmament is to write letters to MPs, Cabinet Ministers, and the Prime Minister, and strongly voice your concern.

Epstein's lecture was jointly sponsored by the U of A Institute for Strategic Studies, the Political Science Undergraduate Association, Project Ploghshares, The Nuclear Concern Committee of the Edmonton UN Association, and the U of A Chaplains Association.

The UN has declared October 24-30 worldwide Disarmament Week.

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