

# son Ottawa in full gloom

I am still, at times, entertained by the garish images in my mind of Stéphane Dion in the last federal donnybrook, with always-fraudulent Green bible in hand, warning of the post-apocalyptic disharmony of a government that will not see the environment as "more important than anything else".

It was the kind of excessively staged, rhetorical twaddle that was contrived to terrify.

Presumably, you would have thought thrice before jumping off the proverbial cliff, while holding on to Stephen Harper's hand.

The Liberals painted this overcast landscape for you, with all the sincerity of a cobblesmith in the wee hours of a Las Vegas dawn.

They had nothing else, and it failed — miserably.

The Prime Minister, certainly, didn't see Dion's bluster as anything less compelling than I did.

But even he got it wrong, for in the ensuing half year since the Liberals clownish attempts at electoral sleight-of-hand; it is, as it really has always been, about the economy.

We are into a \$50 billion-dollar deficit, don't you know?

And the man who not six months ago predicted a surplus, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, might have new numbers, yet again.

Oh the woe we will endure. Though, seated right across the aisle is another man, who has only returned from Harvard Yard

to, as he has told mutual friends, "Get Canada straightened out".



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And so, I am not sure what I find more disturbing: That Michael Ignatieff actually believes what he is shoveling, or that he actually knows it as false, but repeats it nonetheless.

With the glazed eyeballs of environmental idealism vacated from Liberal caucus, The Baron of Ignominy will somehow lead us to better days.

Well, I'm not buying it.

I like Ignatieff enough; he's grown on me, but I'm unsure how he will play during an election that could come this year.

Nor am I convinced that the Liberals are anywhere in the vicinity of being capable enough to navigate the dark, choppy waters of a world-class economic stir.

The tides continue to shift too quickly and I am doubtful of the *HMCS Ignatieff's* sea-worthiness.

And for all the negative advertising folly the Tories can muster; one message remains as sure as it was that fateful day Iggy bolted the Crimson: Until very recently it was HIS "America".

The latte-swillers in Montreal might forgive him for this, but in places throughout rural Canada, where he will need the votes, Ignatieff will be rightly condemned.

His inexperience as a Canadian will also be something to behold. After all, it was his naïveté that prompted the "Quebec Nation" idiocy.

Which leaves us with the Tories, battered, and with fractious caucus meetings between the inflexible Alliance intellectualoids and the moderate progressives (that are the only ones to have ever delivered a blue majority).

Instead of blunting their social conservatism, this government only seeks to heighten it with not one change to their agenda where Quebec or any urban centers are concerned. Rather than useful discourse; loathsome prairie-demagoguery to rile up the base.

How else does one explain that up until the coalition absurdity, there was widespread Tory support for a private member's bill that fanned the flames of the abortion fracas?

The centralization of party power and thought by this PM will make it almost impossible for a majority.

He has no Rolodex of confidants and advisors from Victoria to St. John's, like all his predecessors.

Instead relying on a group of young, mostly doctrinaire Republican jackboots, whose idea of salient advice was to have Harper run the disastrous campaign 'Safety Dance' of last fall.

The Prime Minister cannot change. Woe betides us indeed.

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