

ENVIRONMENTAL PANEL VOTES BRIAN MULRONEY

GREENEST PM IN CANADIAN HISTORY

Corporate Knights held a poll to determine who was the “greenest” Prime Minister in Canadian history. Our jury of 12 included 10 of Canada’s foremost environmentalists, one former federal environment minister and a historian.

Jim Fulton, Executive Director of the David Suzuki Foundation, who had a ring-side seat sitting as a member of parliament through five prime ministers, said he had to abstain because they were all delinquent. Desmond Morton, McGill Professor and Don of Canadian History toyed with us initially, suggesting that as a historian he was bound to stick to the old meaning of “green” (one who was inexperienced and therefore unreliable). His first vote was for the current Prime Minister, with honourable mentions for Tupper, Campbell, and Turner—“all who were not on the job long enough to do good or harm.”

But in the end, after all the ballots had been counted, there was an unlikely winner. It was not the buckskin-clad “I’m a canoeist, not a communist” Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Instead, the environmentalists expressed democratic preference for a man mostly reviled in left-of-centre circles: The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney.

It used to be that the Conservative Party was not an obstacle to environmental progress. Sir John A. Macdonald ushered in Banff as Canada’s first national park, way back in 1885. R.B. Bennett, the jowly Conservative Prime Minister from Alberta, enacted the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, a

seminal piece of environmental legislation that made prairie agriculture possible again after the Dirty Thirties. Mulroney, the jury’s choice, led the fight against acid rain.

Jim Bradley, the former Liberal Minister of Environment for Ontario, reflected, “When I think of [Mulroney], I always think of him and Reagan singing *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*. But he never really bought into Reagan’s destructive environmental policies. He was a schmoozer and he cajoled Reagan and the administration and the Congress into eventually passing the Clean Air Act. Mulroney knew how to schmooze and he used that to advance the environmental agenda.”

“I am not going to rain on his parade,” said Bradley. “I can see him being portrayed as Green Prime Minister and leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.”

The Conservative Party was different then. The times were different—not as partisan. There is a contrast between the old Progressive Conservatives with Brian Mulroney and today’s Conservatives under Stephen Harper, who seem to deny the existence of the critical environmental issue of the day: climate change.

Jacques Gerin, who was Deputy Environment Minister for part of Mulroney’s term,

reacted in jest when he heard that Mulroney had been voted Greenest PM. “The Green Plan, the acid rain battle, South Moresby national park, Brian Mulroney was the best and the worst,” he said, before flying off to Africa to examine the Chad-Cameroon pipeline.

Charles Caccia, Trudeau-era Environment Minister, jabbed, “Mulroney just finished what Trudeau started with acid rain.” But Monte Hummel, President Emeritus of WWF Canada, countered, “Trudeau rarely, if ever, even uttered the words ‘acid rain’ publicly.”

For all he got done on the environmental file, Mulroney’s ultimate environmental legacy will be tempered by three things: His ambitious Green Plan for a Healthy Environment was never fully implemented, in part due to his Liberal successor who chose to focus on deficit reduction at the expense of many programs, including enforcement of environmental policies. Second, the Free Trade Agreement brought many unintended consequences for the environment. Some argue that because of our raw material-focused economy, increased trade has accelerated the depletion of Canada’s resources and many of the provisions in the FTA and NAFTA frustrate industrial policy

A Tale of Twelve Jurors

What an unruly bunch our jury turned out to be. Many cast their votes with reluctance; two jurists abstained; one could not contain himself and cast three ballots; and one retracted his original choice and voted again. No one asked for a recount. In the end, there were 12 votes from 12 jurors so it all balanced out.

Mulroney's environmental accomplishments include:

- Acid Rain Accord with the United States
- ratification of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the ozone layer
- placing environment minister on top cabinet committee of planning and priorities
- appointing strong ministers to Environment portfolio and giving them authority (Bouchard and Charest)
- first industrialized country to ratify both the biodiversity convention and the climate change convention agreed to at the UN Conference on the Environment
- significant new national parks (Bruce, South Moresby and Grasslands)
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- strengthening enforcement of environmental regulations
- Raise the River Action Plan—the clean-up of the St. Lawrence River
- Great Lakes Action Plan
- Atlantic Coast Action Plan
- Partners in Sustainable Development of Forests Programs
- Arctic Strategy
- signing and ratifying of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITIES)
- Sustainable Agriculture Initiative
- funding to improve water and sewage services on all reserves
- Green Plan that committed the government to specific environmental targets

tools that could be used to promote sustainability such as price and tax policies to internalize environmental costs, according to Bruce Campbell of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Third, under Mulroney's style of executive federalism, devolution of power to the provinces picked up steam, a hindrance when it comes to en-

forcing national environment standards.

At the end of the day, however, Mulroney was a leader who had the courage to spend his political capital on more occasions than any other Prime Minister doing what was right for Canada's environment—even though trees can't vote.

Despite the fact that trees can't vote.

Suggestions for the current Prime Minister

Maude Barlow: Cancel the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. It will be an environmental disaster used only to mine the Athabaska tar-sands to send more oil to the US; pass a National Water Act to protect Canada's watersheds from pollution, over-use, for-profit corporations and trade agreements.

Sheila Copps: Implement the Kyoto commitments we made as a party in the 1993 election; get rid of the incentives to pollute that stem from the biases of our tax system.

Beatrice Olivastri: Put the environment at the fore of our foreign policy; focus on the development of renewable energy; stop being marketer for the biotech sector; label genetically modified food; better manage municipal waste water and fish processing effluents.

Elizabeth May: Hit Kyoto targets in a way that creates momentum for next round; complete national parks; fight for wilderness areas that are under assault from development; reorient

the health care system through prevention by steadily eliminating those things that damage health, cause cancer and disease; new deal for cities focusing on greening of infrastructure.

Liz White: Move aggressively forward to combat climate change (make Canada a top quintile Kyoto performer); get smog under control (50 per cent reduction in urban areas).

David Boyd: Prime Minister Martin knows what needs to be done. His challenge is to translate that knowledge into strategic changes, smart investments, and innovative policies that make Canada a cleaner, greener, more efficient, more generous nation. The title of Canada's greenest prime minister certainly lies within his reach, but the clock of history is ticking.

Monte Hummel: Ensure that all this "new industrial revolution/sustainable economy" rhetoric actually hits the ground in some specific, tangible way; get on with implementing Kyoto and much more (remember that Kyoto targets

Stockwell Day said dinosaurs roamed the earth at the same time as humans...

Turns out he was right.

Canadians were proud to join other countries in the Kyoto agreement to fight global warming. Now Stephen Harper wants to break our commitments and back out of the treaty: Do we really want our children to inherit a world of more droughts, more extreme weather, and an old polluting economy?

Stephen Harper may prefer extinction, but the rest of us deserve a fighting chance.

Don't vote for dinosaurs.

www.conservationvoters.ca

Conservation Voters of BC

WHO VOTED? Electorate for Greenest Prime Minister in Canadian History



MAUDE BARLOW, CHAIRPERSON, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS

VOTED FOR? No one

WHY? I feel that all our Canadian Prime Ministers have failed to protect our environmental heritage and that it is a major failing of our political system.



SHEILA COPPS, FORMER DEPUTY PM, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT

VOTED FOR? Sir John A. Macdonald

WHY? The creation of Parks Canada was the most important environmental decision by a PM and it happened more than 100 years ago in 1885 when he founded the Parks System with Banff. I guess things were more bi-partisan in those days, as Sir John A MacDonal'd's party was called the Liberal Conservative party.



BEATRICE OLIVASTRI, CEO, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH CANADA

VOTED FOR? Pierre Elliot Trudeau

WHY? I would say that he is a man that actually did connect with nature on a personal level. He did see foreign policy and environment development issues in a way that we need to today, in a way that was connected.



ELIZABETH MAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SIERRA CLUB OF CANADA

VOTED FOR? Brian Mulroney

WHY? For his acid rain fight with Reagan; helping push through the Montreal protocol; his Green Plan, which committed the government to specific targets and was funded with \$3 billion; the signing and ratifying of the framework convention on climate change, UN convention on biodiversity; negotiation and role of Canada, which helped stop it from being sabotaged by the first Bush administration in '92. Under Mulroney, Canada was the first industrial country to go against Bush and say we should sign it anyway; placing environment minister on top cabinet committee of planning and priorities; bringing in Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and Environmental Protection Act.



LIZ WHITE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT VOTERS

VOTED FOR? Brian Mulroney

WHY? He invested some real political capital in the environment, which is rare in most politicians; he hired many enforcement officers to enforce regulations, both pollution and wildlife; Acid Rain Treaty; he appointed strong ministers to the environment portfolio and then also gave them authority (Tom McMillan, Jean Charest, Lucien Bouchard).



DAVID BOYD, AUTHOR, 'UNNATURAL LAW'

VOTED FOR? Chrétien, Mulroney, Trudeau

WHY? None of these three contenders had an unblemished record. Each made many decisions that had damaging long-term impacts on the environment, and none made the hard decisions necessary to make Canada a real-world leader in environmental protection. Jean Chrétien established a number of national parks; the passage of the Species at Risk Act; creation of the federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development; placed greater attention on Canada's marine ecosystems; ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Pierre Trudeau deserves consideration because he had the most passion for the wild and rugged beauty that embodies the Canadian spirit; he also presided over the establishment of what is now called Environment Canada; created some fabulous national parks; enacted the first generation of Canadian environmental laws.

Brian Mulroney's environmental credentials may surprise many Canadians, particularly in light of the absence of progressive environmental policies from today's Conservative Party. However, Mulroney's record includes passage of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act; development of Canada's ambitious (but never implemented) Green Plan; ratification of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the ozone layer; the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity; the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change; the creation of new national parks; strong steps to reduce ozone depletion and acid rain.



JIM FULTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION

VOTED FOR? No one

WHY? I served with five PMs from '79 to '83—and I cannot name one, because they were all delinquent on the environment file. No one moved on the 1981 fuel efficiency bill that is ready to go, been through both houses, and now only requires proclamation.



MONTE HUMMEL, PRESIDENT EMERITUS, WWF CANADA

VOTED FOR? Brian Mulroney

WHY? For the agreement with the US on acid rain; for giving the environment portfolio high political priority (Bouchard); for the St Lawrence Action Plan; for significant new national parks (Bruce, South Moresby and Grasslands).



DESMOND MORTON, PROFESSOR, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

VOTED FOR? R.B. Bennett

WHY? For the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (PFRA). As a prairie boy, influenced greatly by Jim Gray's book, *Men Against the Desert*, the practical achievements of this program made prairie agriculture possible again after the Dirty Thirties. I suspect it is almost entirely forgotten now in an age of big talk and meagre performance.



KEN OGILVIE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POLLUTION PROBE

VOTED FOR? Pierre Elliot Trudeau

WHY? For establishing first Minister of Environment to advocate for the environment even if it ran counter to government policy.



DAVID RUNNALLS, PRESIDENT, IISD

VOTED FOR? Brian Mulroney

WHY? He was the best of a bad bunch.



RICK SMITH, ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE CANADA

VOTED FOR? Sir Wilfrid Laurier

WHY? He began a process of defining environment as a public good, as opposed to just being private resources; He tracked what was happening in the US with Teddy Roosevelt and the idea that the environment was a public good; he established the Committee for Conservation which began a series of changes for conservation policy in this country, holding hearings nationwide; he got up in House on a regular basis to talk about how important conservation was, how it would be a denial of the future rights of Canadians if his government didn't exhibit leadership on the environmental front.

The Final Tally:

1. Brian Mulroney 5 votes
2. Pierre Elliot Trudeau: 3 votes
3. R.B. Bennett: 1 vote
- Jean Chrétien: 1 Vote
- Sir Wilfrid Laurier: 1 vote
- Sir John A. Macdonald: 1 vote

Paul Martin: to be determined...



BRIAN MULRONEY

No regrets

with Toby A.A. Heaps

During the Rio Summit, Maurice Strong wrote that you caused a mini-international incident. Apparently, George H.W. Bush had come on the condition that Al Gore wouldn't be there, but you didn't know that when you invited Gore into your meeting with Bush.

The Secret Service arranged a room for Bush and me before the main event, and as we were going in, I spotted Al Gore. I said "Al, come on in." So he came in with us, and it was only President Bush, Barbara, Mila, myself, Arthur Campeau, and Gore.

I thought this was an important event where partisanship shouldn't play a role. In fact, part of our delegation was headed by Jean Charest, and on the other side was the opposition critic, Paul Martin. So they were taken fully into our confidence. It was only a Canadian delegation; it wasn't a Liberal delegation or a Conservative delegation, which is one of the reasons why I thought that we managed to make some progress.

President Bush originally did not want to go. He had been advised by Vice President Quayle and the members of the American Competitiveness Council that this might not be a good idea. Because he might get snookered into signing something that would impact on the competitiveness of the American economy.

I spoke to President Bush, whom I knew to be a great environmentalist. I said "Look, there is a French expression that says '*Les absents ont toujours tort.*'" In other words, if you're not at the table, you're going to get hoaxed. So you're much better to be there, to defend your interests and to speak about your record, which was not a small one in Bush's case, and make your own mind up whether you're going to sign onto this or not.

And so he came down and you know what happened after that.

How did you get the US on board for the Acid Rain Treaty?

First, President Reagan was not enthusiastic. But I built up a relationship with him in other areas and then persuaded him that this was important to us and to me, and

that we had to at least be in the process of looking at this seriously. Which a lot of people in Congress resisted because it meant placing an economic burden on the American economy. They argued it would cause layoffs in the industrial midwest, which was heavily represented by Congressmen and Senators who said "Hey, hey, hold the phone. If you do that I'm going to vote against you in another area."

So that was Reagan's political problem. As a rancher in California, he was an environmentalist himself. But the President of the United States doesn't control everything that happens in Washington. So I built up a very good relationship with him in other areas, and we then got him to move with the appointment of the Acid Rain Envoys—Drew Lewis, former secretary of transportation, and Bill Davis, former Premier of Ontario. We had two high-profile people who pushed this agenda item for us and moved it along. I concluded that while I was going to be able to get a lot of things done with Reagan, I was not going to be able to get the Acid Rain deal with him.

Early on in Reagan's first term in office, I met Vice President Bush. Every time I'd go to Washington, or he'd come up here, we'd meet together. I would go to his home and he would come see me in Ottawa. I came to understand that he was a great environmentalist himself. I would constantly tell him about the importance of [acid rain] in substantive and symbolic terms for Canadians that we conclude an acid rain accord. He once said, "I got a hell of an earful from Prime Minister Mulroney." Well he did. Both on trade and on acid rain and on other things, but I spoke frankly to them. If I couldn't support Reagan, I called him up and told him. We didn't let the thing fester and let [our positions] slip out in the newspaper. We didn't do things like that. This apparently is a new way of foreign policy.

So, new President Bush, in 1989, went up to Camp David with *reading books* [President's briefings] which indicated that he shouldn't proceed with the Acid Rain Treaty. He came back and decided that he would. His Chief of Staff, Governor Sununu was certainly not hot on it. His Vice President was not hot on



PHOTO Allison Martens

A well-read PM

Why does a former Prime Minister read *Corporate Knights*? Hint: it's not for the comics.

Others were not. But he was. And so was Secretary Baker. Before he saw anybody else or did anything else, he came to Ottawa, and spent the day with us. And that's when we knew that he would sign it.

So it required persistence and understanding of the American system, what moves people, understanding interest groups, the media, the House, the Senate, and the Presidential function in all of this. We worked with George Mitchell, who was the majority leader of the Senate. I had Mitchell come up and see me, as our guest. We looked after him and explained to him why this was important. In those days, the Democrats controlled the Senate, and George took control of that. He was very supportive on acid rain. So we built alliances, and we looked after the right people. And we got it through, thanks in large measure to the decision of President Bush to just say, "I'm going to do this, period." And he did.

How high up the totem pole was the environment during your time in office?

When I appointed the Minister of the Environment to major cabinet status, the Planning and Priorities committee, the signals that that sent through Ottawa were major, because that's what the bureaucracy understands. The reaction was "Holy smokes! Prime Minister Mulroney is really serious about the environment." It used to be considered a secondary or a tertiary assignment, with the Minister of the Environ-

ment reduced to mendicant status with a tin cup knocking on the door of the Minister of Finance to see if he would finance a program or two. We revolutionized that. We created the Cabinet Committee on the Environment to review the environmental implications of all government initiatives. I think what made us successful was the fact that it was a sustained approach. We did something new every year. We didn't just hit a few and then say "Well, we've done that to please the environmental groups. Now let's go out and do something else."

Which one of your environment ministers created the most projects for you?

I think [Lucien] Bouchard because he took [his mandate] so seriously and it was such a rupture with the past. Every cabinet minister gets a mission statement from the Prime Minister. The letter says "Here is what we want you to achieve and here are your attributions and your resources and authority." Bouchard didn't hesitate to muscle other people around, in terms of the cabinet infighting that goes on over allocations and so on. He was also the Quebec leader of the government so that gave him added influence. The fact that he was known to be a close friend of mine didn't hurt him when the infighting got pretty tough, so I thought he made a significant break with the past. He was the first [environment minister] appointed to [Planning and Priorities].

I guess the most effective one internationally was Jean Charest. He did a fabulous job down in Rio. Charest was thrilled to be appointed environment minister. That's what he wanted. In those days the [environment] ministry was a prized assignment. Now, I suppose, so little has been accomplished there in recent years that people [today] would probably think that it was a bit of a demotion.

And, of course, the fact that Maurice Strong, a Canadian, was in charge made it important for us to pull up our socks and become leaders in this field. Now, here is a field we should be a leader in! We have the second-largest landmass in the world. We've got countless rivers and lakes. We have tremendous resources in forests and throughout our North. This is something where we can lead the world. This is what we tried to do.

How did you get business outside?

I would go to them and I would explain this is the price of going forward. We're going to move ahead in all these other areas. We're moving ahead in tax reform and GST, we

are moving ahead on trade, but this will not be done at the cost of the environment. We are going to advance the cause of the environment throughout this entire process. And here is why, I'd explain. And when you explain things to people, they tend to come along. Overall, they'll say, "Look, I don't agree with you. But I understand why you're doing it."

Take the Gulf War, where I brought the country to war. I went to the people and explained it. A lot of people disagreed with me. Others agreed. But at the end of the day, I was elected to make up my mind and decide. Not to conduct a Gallup poll as to what people in Quebec or Saskatchewan were thinking every other day. You have to decide. All Prime Ministers have to do that. We decided that the environment was an integral part of our policies and the political thrust of our government. We gave it the priority and we sustained it with the money required to make it happen.

How do you get the public to buy in?

Once you articulate an agenda, you have to follow it. For example, the Prime Minister earlier this year talked about the importance of the Arctic to our future. He's right. A hundred years from now, the strength of Canada is going to be coming from our resources in the Arctic. Our environment up there is being badly done by. So the Prime Minister was right in talking about that as an objective. But then you have to follow through. You can't be chasing 15 rabbits. Otherwise, the public mind cannot follow you. If everything is very important, then nothing is important. You need perseverance, and an ongoing commitment. So that people, after a while, say, "You know, that's interesting. The Prime Minister talked about an Arctic policy. The next thing I knew is that they had done this, and then the next thing I knew they had done that. And you know what, that makes a hell of a lot of sense. I can see now a vision emerging how Canada is going to profit in the future from our Arctic resources without destroying the environment on which it is all based."

Any advice for Stephen Harper?

I think every Conservative leader has to deal with this in his own way. I've explained to you why I did [what I did], and how I did it. I believe that [conservation] is a very important part of our political heritage. The Conservatives over the years have done a great deal, from Sir John A, to Diefenbaker, and others. But this part is leader-driven.

No Regrets

"When you get to be my age, after you've been Prime Minister for a long time, you look back on certain things and you say "Aw, Jesus, how could I be so stupid? Why did I do this when I should've done that." I don't feel that way about the environment. I think there are a lot of things we missed, but I think we did a lot of the big things that we should have. And I'm glad we did." — Brian Mulroney

Because the leader has to make choices. There are so many demands on your time, on your resources, and on the prestige of the government. So the question is: Where does the Prime Minister allocate and commit those resources and time? I'd say, for instance, "I'd like to be known as the leader of African development." Well, that's a noble thing to do. But if you're going to do that, then you have to say, "The first thing I'm going to do is increase the aid budget by \$2 billion a year, which means I'm going to take it away from X, Y, and Z." Well, if that's the case, then you've got to commit those resources and your own personal influence. Like our fight against apartheid in South Africa—right off the bat—when we fought until Mandela was free. He called me the next morning [after his release]. This was not a one-shot deal. We didn't just make a speech and say, "We're all in favour of this." We fought for years. You have to spend your political capital on great causes for your country. If your only objective is to be popular, you're going to be popular but you will be known as the Prime Minister who achieved nothing. You accumulate political capital to spend it on noble causes for Canada. If you're afraid to spend your capital, you shouldn't be there.

Any green wisdom for the current government?

I think the government has to reposition environment on top of their national and international priorities. It has to be an integral part of the articulation of a national series of objectives. Right now, it's not. And only the Prime Minister can do that.

Do you ever think of getting back into politics?

I told Mila the other day that I was thinking of getting back into the leadership of the party again, to be Prime Minister. And there was silence. I said "What do you think?" She said, "It's a wonderful idea. And I know your new wife is really going to love it." **CK**