

OPERA Letter to the Editor of *Western Standard Magazine*

The right to own private property in Canada was first authorized in the British North America Act which invested each province, and later our national government as well, with the discretionary responsibility to enact appropriate legislation. That authorization quietly disappeared from Canada's Constitution on its rehabilitation from England with the promise it would be re-instated in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But, thanks to back room politics, property rights has not, in fact, ever been included in the Charter. Most Canadians are totally unaware of this critical omission. The bottom line? Although owning real estate in Canada is commercially legitimate, it's not a recorded constitutional right for private citizens in this country.

Provincial and federal bureaucracies know very well they are shielded by lack of constitutional ownership rights when drafting arbitrary legislation that, in effect, discriminates against landowners. Aided and abetted by professional lobbyists, special interest groups and well paid consultants, these agencies have been emboldened for the past 30 years to systematically manipulate use, title, mortgage worth and market value of privately owned freehold by regulation without compensation. Such proscriptions, usually clothed in the sparkling raiment of environmental necessity or sustainable development or the public good, are often preceded by consultant-arranged public hearings. These combine a tightly controlled agenda with an invited majority of anointed "stakeholders" who have absolutely no propriety right or financial investment in the assets on silent auction in that pre-jigged venue. Assets, it should be noted, that are later reduced or reassigned by draconian enforcement measures invented months or years after the soothing rhetoric of the original legislation has faded from public memory.

Among the thousands of convoluted government policies that now bedevil Canadian landowners many are necessary, some are commendable, a few are outstanding. But, with no constitutional land ownership rights in balance, the process by which extortions by statute are conceived and applied evades due process of law, violates natural justice and demeans individual enterprise. Thus the questionable grounds and dire consequences inherent in government efforts to transform private land into a public benefit without paying for it cries out for searching examination.

Some years ago an American newspaper assigned two young reporters to full time investigation of political malfeasance that ultimately exposed a national scandal. If, in reviewing what amounts to government-inspired land fraud, enterprising Canadian media interests were to make a similar investment in public duty and journalistic opportunity, the resulting documentary might rival Watergate. Not to mention surpassing that other national disgrace in our True North Strong and Free, the Adscam heist!

For example, a feature page in every issue of the *Western Standard* dedicated to the fate of Canadian landowners squeezed between legislated social engineering & self-serving special interests would be a good start. Connecting the philosophical, financial and administrative dots that mark the cozy relationship in private land regulation shared by senior bureaucrats and their non-government accomplices would certainly provide some riveting chapters. And reporting United Nations stated opposition to private land ownership in the context of its acknowledged support for environmental extremists now prowling the hallways of Canada's senior governments would surely guarantee reader attention. After all, covert erosion of provincial and federal sovereignty translates to global governance without the consent of the governed, an emerging objective of the United Nations for which full disclosure in the public press is long overdue.

Here's a message for the publisher, editors & writers of Canada's most fearless and hence most respected magazine: The Canadian property rights ball is now in *Western Standard's* court. Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines!

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