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BOTH SIDES OF PIPELINE DEBATE PLAY OUT AT LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION IN WINNIPEG

Friday morning speakers present differing views of resource development

"Last time we spoke, Prime Minister Trudeau encouraged me to speak my mind and push hard whenever I felt we might collectively err," said Steven Guilbeault, the environmental activist invited to address Liberal Party delegates first thing on Friday morning. "Let's talk pipelines then." A pleasant weekend in Winnipeg suddenly seemed in danger of being ruined, or at least livened up. Guilbeault proceeded to address the prime minister directly. "Prime Minister, large pipeline projects have failed to get social licence from all across the continent. From Lincoln, Nebraska, to Kitimat, B.C., to Montreal, Quebec — communities don't want them," he said. "The atmosphere and our climate certainly don't need them. Many of us believe we cannot build pipelines and meet our international climate commitments

at the same time." And with a world working around the clock to avoid the worst of climate change, it makes no sense from an ethical and a moral perspective to produce and ship more of a substance that is causing a problem, that disrupts the future of our children and grandchildren. There are much better things to do."

Suffice it to say this is not the official position of the Liberal government. "I know this is hard for some of you to hear," Guilbeault said, "but I believe it to be the truth."

And in this truth, he included not only pipelines from Alberta but also liquid natural gas in British Columbia and oil and gas development in Quebec. Guilbeault later said it was a "credit" to the Liberals "that they would invite on stage someone who disagrees with them and give that person carte blanche to say whatever he wanted, no strings attached." He said he sensed some wincing when he told organizers what he planned to say, but he had not been asked to refrain from saying anything. In the hallway after Guilbeault's remarks, Environment Minister Catherine McKenna posed for pictures with the environmentalist and then

defended his presence on the main stage. "The good news," she said, "is the Liberal Party wants to hear from a diversity of perspectives." That play was becoming apparent inside the main hall as the convention moved to remarks by Peter Tertzakian, an energy analyst and economist with ARC Financial. Tertzakian said he was "aligned with Steven and others" on the "need to tackle this problem" of climate change. "Where I differ," he explained, "is the route to go." Transitions in energy, he said, "never all or none ... there's often a balance and a mix in an economy." And transitions take time. What's more, he ventured, we should be "proud of all the resources we develop. Because we're good at it." Canadian oil, he said, is "some of the best oil in the world in terms of its responsible development and its cleanliness." "We need to get out and teach the rest of the world and supply the rest of the world with a type of energy through this transition that everyone needs," Tertzakian said. This was something like a cross between Ezra Levant's argument about ethical oil and Trudeau's approach to the question of pipelines. Together, pipelines and climate change amount to the

generational and national questions of the moment. And it is these questions that tore a chasm through the middle of the NDP convention last month; Alberta Premier Rachel Notley and the country's only NDP government on one side, Avi Lewis and the Leap Manifesto on the other. This being the Liberal Party, the matter was handled quietly with a relatively genteel exchange of speeches. Two sides can come away feeling that their views were represented without the party being quite yet tied to a position on any particular project.

This is also in keeping with the Liberal government's repeatedly stated desire to listen and consult at, and before, each and every turn.

It's possible this form has some function; that, in hearing everyone out, the government will be more likely to find acceptable solutions and less likely to be outright condemned for the solutions they eventually settle on. In the meantime, it is a handy way of demonstrating #realchange from the aloof ways of the previous government. A while after Guilbeault and Tertzakian had taken their turns, the environment minister and the natural resources

minister were on stage as part of a session on "how growing Canada's economy and climate change action can go hand in hand." A more-than-middle-aged man from North Bay, Ontario, stood and told the ministers that the big issue back home was the Energy East pipeline, which is to run under the town's sole source of drinking water. He'd been to a meeting organized by anti-pipeline activists and heard all the "predictable" arguments about what might happen. There was large group in the audience, he said, "who are reasonable people and who honestly hope that you can grow Canada's economy and at the same time deal with climate change." But how to reconcile these things, how to build pipelines and meet international climate targets, was a "puzzle," both to him and to other "rational people." This, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr said, was a question he and his office deal with on a daily basis. "But," he added, "we have to reconcile different interests all the time in government." The way to do this, Carr explained, was to set up a process that hears all perspectives. (Resources were going to have to move somehow, he also noted, and so how to move those resources most safely had to be considered, an implicit argument in favour of pipelines, at least as opposed to rail transport).

Ultimately, he said, the government would have to make a decision. It's possible the process will get the government closer to a popular decision, but it's also possible it won't. At least not entirely. This much Carr would seem to concede in response to another question. Each

day in the House of Commons, he said, the government is presented with questions representing the views of four different political parties. "No single answer is going to satisfy all four of those perspectives, not to mention our own," he said. "The reality of governing and of politics is that you make tough decisions that don't satisfy all the people. Courageous politicians that look generationally at what's best for the country, I think, are the ones we want and, I hope, the ones you've elected." Possibly even the minister is interested to see what happens after the time for talking is over.

ERA OF OIL NEARING ITS END

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley won't take no for an answer on getting a bitumen pipeline to tidewater. It's got to be the Energy East line because other proposed oil pipelines face greater opposition. But why should provinces east of Alberta accept what the United States and British Columbia reject? U.S. President Barack Obama killed the Keystone XL pipeline. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau effectively killed the Northern Gateway line by banning oil tankers off B.C.'s northern coast. Despite the National Energy Board approval last week to triple the capacity of Kinder Morgan's existing pipeline to Vancouver, opposition is very strong. TransCanada's proposed Energy East, which passes through Winnipeg, has the best chance to be built. But would building another pipeline rescue Alberta's oil sector, which has never pumped more oil, yet has never been in more trouble? Jeff Rubin said Alberta's



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oil sands producers lose \$15 to \$25 on every barrel they ship. An Energy East pipeline to New Brunswick will not make the oil profitable. Low international oil prices are the culprit and beyond Canada's control. Enbridge line 9 already brings lots of western Canadian and U.S. shale oil to Quebec's two refineries. Oil on the Energy East pipeline would be largely surplus to their needs. It is mainly an oil sands export line. Mark Sherman, plant manager at the Irving oil refinery in St. John, New Brunswick, said the Energy East line would send "way more than we would ever use at this refinery, so the bulk of it would all be exported." Premiers

in Alberta and Saskatchewan are stuck on yesterday's problem. In 2013-14, the North American (WTI) oil price was much lower than the international (Brent) oil price due to oil's lack of access to tidewater and a 40-year U.S. ban on oil exports. Neither hold today. Washington now allows oil exports and Alberta's oil gets the international oil price despite Obama's high-profile rejection of TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline. Pipelines to the U.S. Gulf coast were completed, ending oil's bottleneck at Cushing, Okla. Current pipelines to the U.S. Gulf coast have sufficient spare capacity because the international

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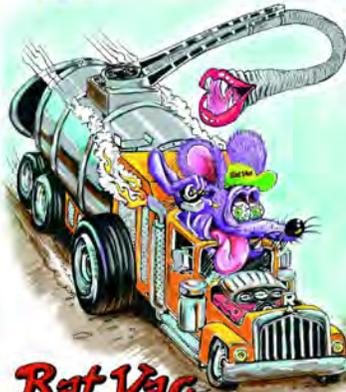
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oil price crash mothballed much of Alberta's future oil output.

Almost half the oil projects cancelled in the world last year were in Alberta. Peter Tertzakian, a prominent Calgary energy economist, says none of the 17 major oilsands projects withdrawn in the past 18 months will likely revive even if prices rebound. Bitumen is a high-cost, marginal product that commands a low price because it's inferior oil. It has high viscosity (stickiness) and high sulphur content. It costs more to refine and transport. Building the Energy East pipeline won't change any of that. The era of oil is nearing its end. Until last year, OPEC and Big Oil assumed oil in the soil would grow in value. They're beginning to realize

it may be less valuable in the future. That's why Saudi Arabia announced Vision 2030 to wean the kingdom off oil and is selling so much oil today even though that holds down oil prices. The combination of factors will likely reduce oil demand — rising vehicle fuel efficiency, the ending of gasoline subsidies to consumers in OPEC countries, growing gasoline carbon taxes, and cheaper batteries leading to a shift to electric vehicles. Instead of peak oil, experts now point to peak demand. Amy Myers Jaffe, a leading oil expert, predicts world oil use will fall below 80 million barrels a day by 2040, 20 per cent lower than today. If true, prices will decline, spelling disaster for Alberta's oilsands boosters. The province's new oilsands projects need prices

above \$68 to \$100 a barrel to be profitable. If Alberta's oilsands fail to expand, there will be no need for more oil takeaway capacity. Even if Ottawa and the premiers of the five provinces east of Alberta support the Energy East pipeline, it would not help Alberta's economy. Alberta's government and Big Oil are on the wrong side of history. They are betting the age of carbon fuels will continue for decades. That's unlikely. Alberta must join the international transition to a low-carbon future, or be left behind in a "fossil fuel belt" of abandoned oil wells and tar ponds resembling the U.S. "rust belt" and coal states. Alberta has an alternative. Its future lies in learning that a unit of carbon energy saved creates more jobs than a unit of

carbon energy dug up, burned and emitted. Alberta should not bank on another oil boom. If it happens, it will only be followed by a permanent bust.

SUNCOR RESTARTS PRODUCTION

Suncor Energy began the safe and staged restart of its oil sands operations late last week with the first bitumen production from the Firebag in situ facility. Start-up activities were also underway at the base plant and MacKay River in situ operation, and they should be on-line later this week as long as long as conditions do not deteriorate. Suncor and other oil sands producers north of Fort McMurray curtailed operations as wildfires seared through the town and then northward



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over the past three weeks. They are now in the process of returning to normal production. Suncor moved more than 4,000 employees and contractors back into the region, including Fort Hills workers, and anticipates that over the coming week it will move approximately 3,500 additional people to support the return to operations. Likewise, production at Syncrude is imminent. Construction activities at Suncor's Fort Hills mine have continued to ramp up and it is expected that the Fort Hills workforce will return to its full complement this week

**PICTOU COUNTY
HELP LINE CLOSURE
'HEARTBREAKING'
FOR COMMUNITY,
VOLUNTEERS**

Independent mental health phone service closed on Tuesday after 33 years in operation. The Pictou County Help Line, the last of its kind in Nova Scotia, disconnected permanently on Tuesday. "Yesterday was very sad. It was a very emotional day. As I've said many times, it was very bittersweet," said executive director Arlis MacCallum.

The registered non-profit group provided a listening ear to those seeking mental health care. A small full-time staff and volunteers answered phones, referring callers to resources in Nova Scotia for 33 years. The service recently struggled to fundraise for a \$60,000 administrative and training budget, MacCallum said. "We've kept our doors open on a shoestring for several years now," she said. "It's the times." MacCallum, who's been a volunteer in Pictou County for the last 40 years, says they heard from new callers and regulars

alike on their final day. She spoke with one caller in crisis for over an hour — someone who'd "just fallen through all the health care cracks and the mental health cracks," she said. "I was speechless with him. I couldn't help him. ... It gives you an idea of what we do here, or what we did here, I should say" she said. "It's heartbreaking."

The help line was a creation of the Pictou County Council of Churches. It later grew into an independent organization. Over the years, fundraising goals became harder and harder to meet. "The sense here is resigned acceptance," said Rev. Jim Webber-Cook, president of the Pictou County Council of Churches. "We grieve this change." Webber-Cook says the last five years were particularly tough. "How do we move forward? What fills the gaps for people here? That we will continue to address this through the government," he said, adding the council has been in contact with Health Minister Leo Glavine. "We will try to continue advocating for sufficient resources to meet the needs of people here."

MacCallum says she's hoping to retire. She'll return to the help line's office over the next two weeks to shut it down. She's thankful for the county's support, but worries about the calls she's not able to answer. "Nova Scotia has to step up for mental health. There are lots of services out there, but there's wait times and it's the people that are in crisis that don't seem to have the necessary service at that time," she said. "When you're in a crisis or when you have mental health problems and you have to be sent to another part of the province and away from your loved ones, your family and support — that's just not acceptable."



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