

PROPAGANDA OF CANDIDATES INDICATES NONE OF THEM IS AWARE OF THE BASIC ISSUES

by Hamlet Hilpert, Centralia, WA
The Chronicle, Oct. 5, 1996

Reading the propaganda of candidates for county, state and federal offices had convinced me not one of them is aware of basic issues and what must be done if our nation is to be saved from falling on its face during the next century. Some of the real issues politicians don't talk about are:

(1) Energy: Twenty-two years ago our Arab friends forced this country to its knees with an oil embargo. At that time the U.S. imported one third of its petroleum consumption. Today more than 50 percent of our petroleum consumption is imported and our streets and highways are gridlocked with more and bigger fuel-guzzling vehicles.

(2) Natural resources: For more than 200 years they have been plundered and polluted by robber barons and congress, our presidents, state governors and legislatures have done little to stop them.

(3) A regressive tax structure: Every level of government taxation bears most heavily upon people at the bottom of the income escalator.

What are the solutions?

(1) Energy: In addition to fuel taxes, the licenses for motor vehicles should be a function of engine power and vehicle weight. Also, speed limits should be maintained, not raised, and in the case of heavy equipment be further reduced. Our streets and highways are being pounded to rubble faster than they can be maintained with current funding resources.

(2) Natural resources:

* Forest lands: For thousands of years our nation was covered by conifer forest, especially the Pacific Coast region from San Francisco to Alaska. Today hardly 5 percent of that resource remains and the logged areas have been grown over by hardwood species that during the growing season transpire significantly more moisture into the atmosphere than do conifers. An aggressive effort to restock the forest land resource with conifers should be initiated. That would be beneficial to wildlife, water quality and quantity, air quality and ensure a substantial supply of wood fibre.

* Fish: The Pacific salmon resource is being plundered toward extinction by ocean trawlers, trollers and gillnetters. It should be stopped!

* Minerals: The 1872 mining law which allows mining interests to acquire federal land for prices of less than \$5 an acre should be repealed.

* Water: Prohibit discharge of waste water into ground water, streams, lakes, etc., that has not been cleansed of pathogens and cleansed of nutrients, minerals and other undesirable matter in excess of ambient levels.

(3) Taxation: Shift the incidence of taxation from the processes of production and distribution, wages and property improvements to a charge upon community-created land values and to taxes upon extractive industries, petroleum, mining, fisheries, timber and users of the electro-magnetic spectrum.