

Chapter 8 - Projecting for Life

Getting Older:

"The silver livery of advised age." -William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

"We don't wear out, we rust out." -Heart Specialist (name unknown)

"Growing old is no more than a bad habit which a busy man has no time to form. In old age most of all it is necessary to live every minute. Let death find us on horseback, or planting cabbage." -Andre Maurois (1885-1967)

"YOUR SUNSET SHOULD BE AS MEMORABLE AS YOUR SUNRISE." -The man

After the 2130 hour CBC-Radio news there is an excellent program called "Ideas," which features some outstanding Canadian in person, or by means of knowledgeable commentary. Judged in toto, these people seem to represent the best that compassionate Canadian liberalism has to offer. Frequently, there are fearful remarks about the colossus on the southern border, and how corporations, "free trade" and globalization is usurping the powers of governments, elected by the people and for the people.

"A nice way to absorb benevolent political philosophy whilst drifting off to sleep," muses the man, "and the music that continues until 0300 would be great if that wee-wee-hour-ethnocentric-toffee-nosed-British-accented announcer would cut the chatter and let the band play on.

"Then the vigilant radio announces 0600 hours with a hymnody - "WE LOVE THEE NEWFOUNDLAND!" hums the man, "but Theodore and I have already finished our mixed-grain pancakes, maple syrup and fresh bacon (unsmoked, no salt or nitrites); or fresh mackerel and potatoes; or a 'Western Omelet' containing two eggs mixed with tofu, mung bean sprouts and sliced onion. 'Baby it's dark outside,' so I must turn on the bridge (porch) light to see if there's slippery ice, snow, or rain. 'What do you expect, Theodore? This is late October, and the sun won't rise until 0830 hours, if it's in the mood.'

"You stupid dawg!" yells the man. "Last night I had to get all suited up to walk you up Lighthouse Lane in the freezing wind and all you did was sniff around, so stop whining about your bladder now. I'm driving as fast as I can. Well, here we are in the park, come on you dawg-gone-dawg, we gotta get to the beach, NOW where are you?

"THEO! WHERE ARE YOU?" shouts the man. "What are you doing back there, sniffing the hind wheels of the van? Get out there and check the field for moose, you stupid hound, don't you remember last week, when you were chased by a bull-moose and cow?" (The man thinks: "Gotta be careful crossing to the beach. A few days ago a man was almost killed by a rutting bull-moose.")

"Each morning, this time of year, there's a unique heavenly extravaganza," thinks the man. "If heavy mists and fog succeed in blanketing the sunrise, the rays may penetrate

above the clouds and create a false sunrise far across the water to the north! But the best show is a half hour or so before an actual sunrise. A whole spectrum of tastefully tinted widening colors that swiftly shade the beach with rosy-sandy blends that match the brown kelp accumulated by the last high tide. The rocky offshore islands are highlighted, it seems, by a multicolored searchlight, and suddenly the show's over, as soon as the sun appears. Except, the wonderful warmth of an infra-red 'heat-lamp' on our backs, as Theo and I return to the van, in daylight, OR, remember this is Newfoundland - by then it could rain, snow, or blow a biting wind from Labrador."

EARLY DAYBREAK ON SHALLOW BAY BEACH :





The man looks at the above quotes by Shakespeare and Maurois. "Glory be!" marvels the man. "What a panacea (elixir vitae) for old age, all those mood-building maxims, proverbs, dictums, gnomes, prescripts, and catch phrases, witness the above samples, directed at keeping us stumbling, fumbling, grumbling olde fartes from teeter-tottering off the tracks in old-fashioned disarray. So-be-it, dear readers, if words will suffice to hold off the Grim Reaper, 'that grim ferryman; that fell sergeant' (Shakespeare), then 'Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition!' Fire Away!"

Meanwhile, Ed has been struggling to disentangle the man's verbiage (diarrhea of the mouth) to achieve an appropriate tongue-in-cheek rebuttal. "At last, Honorable Oldster, you have discovered immortality, attained through amorphousness, blobbiness, and reiterativeness."

"Nice going, Edward," replies the man. "Every little word helps, but I do suggest that 'diffusiveness' is more to the point than 'blobbiness.' As to the rest, 'PROJECTING' appears to be the Rosetta Stone to throw at the filthy beast."

Part 1. Projecting is the Sum of All Parts that Apply

"For the sake of the illiterates amongst us," says the man, "I must explain that 'projecting' means *tinging* along with one or more of the following":

Be manifest - be there for all to see; go without saying; stick out a mile.

Externalize - bring out; show; display; exhibit; objectify; actualize.

Image - Hold the mirror up to nature; personify, impersonate, illustrate.

Intend - Aspire to; draw a bead on; set one's sights on; desire; intend.

Intention - Intent; mind set; resolve; motive; determination; ambition.

Jaculate - project; ejaculate (if such be possible).

Launch - project; shoot; fire; blast off; abort.

Lie ahead - plot; plan; be in the books; anticipate; scheme; hope for.

Overhang - hang over; hang out; beetle; thrust over.

Plan - aimed at; designed; deliberated, calculated; envisioned; conscious.

Projection - proposition; scenario; game plan.

Protrude - convexness; bulging; bellying; puffing out (if that's what turns you on).

Task - work; stint; exercise; irons in the fire; fish to fry; matters in hand.

The future - after years; time to come; offing; the sweet by and by; next.

Undertaking - enterprise; initiative; commitment; engagement; venture.

"I find much reassurance in this collection of words," says the man. "It comforts me to know that I've made effective use of these multiple choices to remain on the right track. I don't want to be too specific, because in this twilight game, it's everyone for one's self to decide how to keep up and running the longest."

"You're all heart! You've just refused a helping hand to those who are generous enough to read the twiddle-twaddle, gibble-gabble, bibble-babble, fiddle-faddle, blather-jabber, not

to mention mumbo-jumbo, that you've stuffed into this narrative," groans Ed. "If you're really on the right track, tell us about it."

"Hoisted on me own petard, dear Edward!" replies the man. "When I'm on a downer, I regard this narrative as superfluous. I wonder why I rant against globalization, privatization, and environmental downgrading, when David Suzuki does it so much better.

"For example," quotes the man, "Dr. Suzuki says, 'Global economics must be exposed for what it is - a complete *perversion*. To begin with, economics is a chauvinistic invention, a human creation based on a definition of value solely by the criterion of utility to our species. As long as we can see a use for something and hence can realize a profit from it, it has economic worth. Yet, it is the *ecosystem* that is the fundamental "capital" on which all life depends....We are only one species out of perhaps thirty million, and however much we may think we are outside nature and control it, as biological beings we remain dependent on clean air, water and soil like all other organisms. Economics has no ecological foundation because it dismisses air, water, and soil diversity as limitless "externalities" shared globally.' (Source: *Inventing the Future: Reflections on Science, Technology, and Nature*, (1989) Stoddart Publishing Co., Ltd. Toronto, p. 110)

"Suzuki's unknowing concurrence on bothersome issues is very comforting," admits the man, "and then "PROJECTING" provides added justification with such key words or phrases as: Hold the mirror up to nature; draw a bead on; set one's sights on; bring out, and show.

"Recently, another key word, 'abort,' rescued me from the diligent Canadian medical services," continues the man, "a happening that began with another downer. Sometimes I feel they are overly protective because I'm from the States (it couldn't be my age, could it?)"

"I can't imagine why they'd pay attention to you, especially," comments Ed, "but I recall that dreary day when you refused to talk to me, and dragged your heels when Theodore took you for a walk. If you had asked, I'd have told you: You have a smidgeon of distressfulness, a tetch of melancholia, and a slight concavity in your normally rotund zest - a diagnosis that wouldn't have cost you one red Canadian cent."

"Well Ed, cool kid that I am, I recalled 'PROJECTING's' advice to 'be manifest: be there for all to see; stick out a mile." (Reports of illness, real or supposed, spread with the speed of light when an easily recognized vehicle and dog are spotted by those keen Newfoundland hunters' eyes, parked near the Cow Head clinic, or Norris Point Hospital.)

"The nurse at the clinic measured my blood pressure as being alive and well," recalls the man. "But hark! An irregular pulse! I thought, 'Oh my, I've given myself away, she's so attractive.' Her command, 'Off you go, 'bye, to Norris Point and git you an ECG.'

"While my van sat outside the hospital and broadcast my plight all the way back to Cow Head, I was taped to the ECG machine and the readings transmitted to Corner Brook for

review by a specialist," recalls the man. "The nurse kept dropping by the examination room, sent me to the lab for a blood sample, had a lunch delivered to the waiting room (something I've never seen them do for outpatients), and then the doctor, with the nurse present, said the options were to join the blood thinner circuit, or see a specialist. A few days later, after the lab reported a satisfactory blood profile, I told him I didn't want to take the warfarin blood thinner, so he called in the nurse and repeated his entire message, as if he hadn't been clear the first time. He's a fine doctor and I felt sorry and embarrassed that he had visions of being dragged into court, and thought he needed a witness to prove he had left nothing to chance.

"Then, whatever happens will be blamed on my poor judgement," laments the man. "Not the first time I've witnessed this high tech buck-passing by the medical *profusion*, but it stiffened my resolve to rely on my own instincts in deciding upon medications for my body.

"I recalled that sad time, ten years ago, when Sylvia and I sat on a hard bench at Duke Hospital, in Durham, and waited several hours for her biopsy to be performed," recalls the man. "A completely inert black woman was wheeled into the waiting room on a stretcher and left unattended for over an hour. At last, a nurse and doctor appeared, pulled her body into a sitting position, and guided her hand to complete a legal release form.

"Shades of Dr. Pirosh - friend, councilor, family doctor, when I was young. Mostly, his cures depended on a confident bedside manner, since he didn't have an armada of broad-spectrum drugs (now becoming useless through misuse), supposed to cover every eventuality."

"Olde Farte, I can read you like a book, especially the one you read back in the 1970s called *House of God*," says Ed to the man. "Did you really expect that nice, overworked Canadian doctor to condone the actions of the fictitious one, whose attitude towards many of his troublesome old patients (he called *Gommers*) was to reassure them and help them continue in a safe state of undisturbed equilibrium, instead of subjecting them to medical services with highly questionable benefits?"

"Edward, read my quips whilst I select the most aphoristic words that will most pithily apply," replies the man. "Aging properly from beginning to end requires a resolute mental attitude, a determined effort to keep the body continually active, and to never reduce efforts to learn, observe, judge, develop, ripen, bloom, flourish, mellow, and most of all, to regard this beautiful world with a feeling of wonder and with an activist's concern for its future. This regimen leaves no time for doctors, except when there is actual need."

Part 2. Theodore has Guests for Dinner

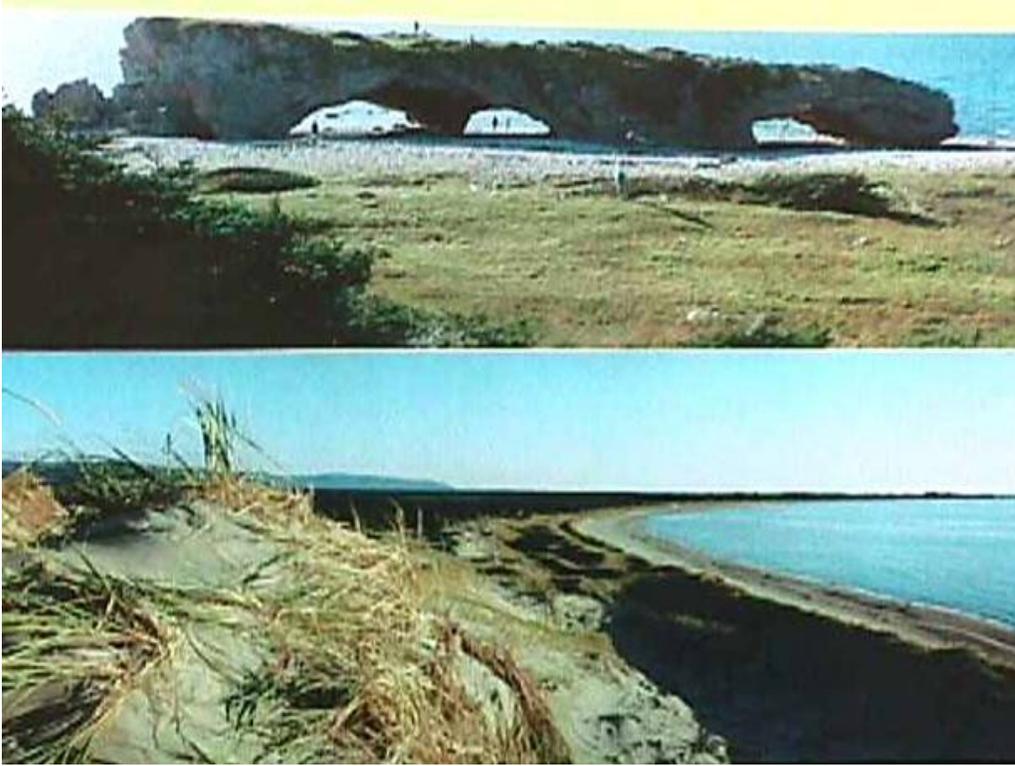
"Theodore and I recently met Frank, a retired MD, and his wife Eunice, from Ottawa," says the man, "through a number of coincidences which are par for the course in Newfoundland. During his visit, Frank, at seventy, proved his stamina by climbing Gros Morne. They sent us a wonderful letter, some of Eunice's photographs, and Frank's

journal which described their visit to Broom Point and conversation with Jean, the interpreter for tourists."

Some of Eunice's Photographs

Lobster Gear Demonstration Building (Jean's favorite view):

"The Arches" and Shallow Bay Beach:



Cow Head Fishing Harbour:





"When Jean told them she is from Cow Head," continues the man, "they asked about the white van emblazoned with "Wildegeest." She assured them of a welcome if they wanted to visit the man and his dog. Frank's notes describe this visit as follows."

The next day it's raining. We escape from our wet camp into our warm truck. Again the causeway of Cow Head calls us. It has a multitude of wave washed round stones. We love them. Their deep colors glow in the wet and telephone poles in a line to the headland - Eunice's passion for her camera. The man's hut is just beyond, but Eunice is reticent. However, as we're leaving, my rear view mirror sees a familiar truck, Is it his?

We stop. A big golden dog pulls up beside me and stares. I jump out. My undone boot laces soaking up the muddy road. I must look like something else standing there in the rain. My wife calls out an apology to the dog's friend for the disgraceful look of her sloppy footed old man.

But the friendly face beyond the dog eases my embarrassment with, 'I go around that way all the time.' Then to our tentative enquiry, "We'd like to talk to you about your 'Home Ports.'" The dog says, "Yes, come anytime." The man ponders. He's on his way down the coast to campfire with young friends. But after a moment of hesitation replies, "Come tomorrow at twelve." The dog nods, "Yes, that will be fine."

We're pleased. Our roadside encounter will be followed by a chance to visit. But how come the twelve o'clock? That doesn't sound like the Island time we're getting used to.

The next morning, too close to noon to take a chance on empty stomachs, we munch down peanut butter and jam sandwiches - the usual camping in the rain lunch. Hesitantly, we leave our water-logged tent, and the torn tarpaulin over the picnic table. (We're

Mainlanders, braving it out in the wilds of Newfoundland.) Off we go to that neat little hut nested on the Head of Cow Head.

We needn't have worried. To our gentle knock Theo gives us an overly warm welcome. He establishes his animal superiority by chewing on my offered hand and wrist up to the elbow with his slobbering lips and tentative bites. The rest of his golden body is joyously exuberant with pawing legs threatening to back us right out of the door. But eventually Theo approves of us and lets us by to formally shake hands and introduce ourselves, "Eunice and Frank" to Theo's pet human, "Ted."

Ted quietly welcomes us in. We're all a bit reserved with wondering how this strange visit will turn out. Ted shows us around this cosy one-room fisherman's hut, followed by the galloping dog who stakes out his place up on the padded sitting nook bench. "That's his," says Ted. "This dog knows his place." Ted has a sleeping bunk with a sideboard for the big storms.

But there's a small yellow table and three chairs for visiting, for Newfoundland kitchen parties. Wine is offered and mostly declined. With age, our pills would conflict with the good stuff, the Newfie Screech.

So we visit and question between demands by Theo for his due attention. "Where're you really from? Where is Ocean, North Carolina?" It seems to be his haven for winter and family and friends. It seems he found his niche in life as a chemist to the fishing industry.

Then his wife died. Presumably the emptiness drove him to hit the road. "Wildegeest? My daughter said, 'With your forever wandering you're really a wild goose, searching.'"

He thought it fit and the truck acquired its artful logo of flying geese and the teasing words, "Home Ports_____." And why Cow Head? Somehow he stumbled on this haven, accepted their welcoming ways and stayed to return their friendliness. Simple as that. When the right people are ready, nice things happen.

"The men built me this place one winter after I laid it out. I came back, it was done. They knew what could be built here, here on the head." A fisherman's hut was allowed. (A house wasn't. Unsaid?) "Didn't need windows. Wanted all the wall space I could have____" (Wife's pictures and paintings, family photos covered the walls, and too, his daughter's oh so glamorous painting of Theo in all his exuberant anticipation. But there are windows, small and high up. Do they tell Theo the weather - when it's fit outside to take Ted for a walk?)

A corner is for writing when the spirit moves him. There, his modern electronics. They send off his E-mail or post another page of his web site for his ongoing story of "Theo and His Man." A fisherman's shack? Hardly, more a place for a retired chemist to still be wired to the world. His web page says, "Are we chemically poisoning ourselves; can't we do without those toxic additives?" We're told Theo does. No doctored dogfood for him, and what Theo eats, Ted eats.

Theo is now paying attention to the stove. Fresh cod cakes are frying. We're to be royally treated. Potatoes, salad, and just baked bread that teases our noses. Peanut butter and jam are now long gone.

We warm in anticipation, amazed at this offering to bedraggled campers he just met on the road. But we learn that's just Ted's way, "I suppose most of Cow Head have eaten here."

And stories unfold as cod cakes go down - of Theo's misdemeanors and the RCMP - of Theo's friends and enemies (sheep) and how the town rose up, took sides, but to be calmed by "The Force", and Ted's all coverage insurance.

"Theo? I never wanted to OWN a dog, he sort of owns me." And with that, Theo speaks up for another cod cake. And from Eunice he wolfs down hot buttered bread which she absentmindedly waved in the air. She didn't fully understand the rules of this house.

We suspect that if Ted's little kitchen table hadn't been jammed against the wall there would have been a four-footed wonder with bib on, helping himself to this feast as well.

Our enquiring curiosity soon changes to warm togetherness and we marvel again at this natural way in Newfoundland, kitchen partying.

Thank you again, Theo and Ted (and Jean who made it happen).

Part 3. Stop, Look, and Listen

The end of WWII at Camp Upton, Long Island, NY, a military base made famous in the previous war by Irvin Berlin's U. S. Army show, "Yip Yip Yaphank," and songs which included, "Over There" and "Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." Now the camp was being deactivated for good. A major, back from overseas and waiting for discharge, failed to observe a railroad "STOP, LOOK, LISTEN" sign, drove on the rails, and was struck by a passenger train. Instead of a discharge and the promise of a long life, he received a military funeral.

The Gisborne Lake debate is reminiscent of this sad event because political forces, armed with locomotive power and tunnel vision, are barreling down the global throughway, so intent on deals and sell-offs that they ignore the true owners of these resources and endangered places, the citizens who put them in office, whose rights are being destroyed by these uncontrolled forces.

"Well, well, that's a real blast," says Ed, "and one that's well-deserved, but what's it to you, and is it really your business?"

"I may be a foreigner, but the issues are worldwide, and shockingly described in a well-publicized book by Marq deVilliers, called *Water*, says the man. "It has been in the Corner Brook library (located on two floors of the provincial government building) since June, and has only been borrowed four times. I am shocked at the placid acceptance of

this threat to water resources, and its potentially damaging effects on fish and wildlife nursery areas, wetlands and natural waterways."

"Now listen to me, Olde Tymer," says Ed. "I think you're barking your shins on the wrong tree. Why don't you settle down and enjoy this Great Northern Peninsula before it's completely overrun by the Hun mentality? Jumpin' Jehosaphat! Now the Canadian government is about to draw the man's fire!"

"Calm yerself, Edward, I'm just looking at the jacket of *Canada Year Book '97*, reads the man, "where it says, 'Canada is a country still fresh on the page, Here, all is beginning,'" written by the Canadian poet Ralph Gustafson in 1951. "Here in this land of great space, beauty and many cultures, we are young in history, and still creating our collective memory.'

"This bright vision of Canada dims considerably as I turn the pages," comments the man. "Take a look at some of their concerns: Climate warming - Much produced by burning coal, oil, natural gas, and by stripping trees from vast areas. Scientists believe this may warm the planet 1 deC to 3.5 deC in 100 years. Flooding of vast areas, crop failures, and melting of Arctic permafrost could result. Ozone Erosion - Skin cancer and damage to crops, marine food chains, estimated will last 100 years. Waste - Canadians rank among the world's leading garbage generators. 'Troubled Waters' - Canada has one-fifth of the world's freshwater supply, mostly in the Great Lakes; twenty million people draw their drinking water from the lakes into which waste is poured, 20% from U.S. industry and 50% from Canadian industry; There are 360 identified chemical pollutants in the Great Lakes.

"Enough!" cries the man. "This week there's even a proposal to turn responsibility for food safety over to the Minister of Agriculture, a move which would weaken the surveillance process and make it easier to wheel and deal overseas. This is what happens when the highest ranking elected government officials become the lackeys of corporations, do their bidding, and go overseas with them on sales expeditions.

"James Laxer, author of *The Undeclared War - Class Conflict in the Age of Cyber Capitalism*, (1998) Penguin Books, on Page 247, states, 'Unfettered capitalism has promoted a one-myth ethos in which the pursuit of profit is paramount. And rather than wealth being produced for the use of individual citizens to pursue their dreams in myriad ways, profit is the one objective that subsumes all possible others. When art, literature, medicine, architecture and the sciences are captured by the drive for the bottom line, whether directly in the case of the private sector or less directly in the public sector, the consequence is a narrowing, not broadening of options. Contemporary capitalism embodies the ultimate reversal of ends and means. In a class-divided society, the vast majority of the population becomes the means by which the profit-making ends of the minority are realized.'"

Part 4. Stormy Weather

This morning our vigilant radio reports heavy snow across Labrador, and strong winds offshore. The entire island of Newfoundland is warned of gale force winds, or higher.

"Theo! Did you hear that? I suppose that's why you're huddled under the computer - well 'bye, the computer ain't gonna save us now. Even the phone is 'give out.' But this solid cabin will handle it," promises the man, "and Edward, do you hear me? I want you to stay here and take care of things, and if Jonathan Swift shows, please tell him I don't need his cooking advice. I've found someone more up to date - *Brillat Savarin!*"

"Sure, I remember when I used to travel with you in those days long ago when you were gainfully employed," recalls Ed. "You'd salivate in front of those expensive Savarin Restaurants, in the train stations, and wonder if the boss would approve your charging big steak dinners to your expense account."

"No, Ed," says the man. "Now I'm in touch with the maestro himself, who wrote in 1825 that 'Gourmandism is far from unbecoming to the ladies: it agrees with the delicacy of their organs, and acts as compensation for certain pleasures which they must deny themselves, and certain ills to which nature seems to have condemned them.' Amen to that! But I don't have time to explain in detail, since Theodore and I have to suit up and move out into the great windblown outdoors.

"Theo! Will you please get into the van? I'm hanging onto the door for dear life," says the man. "There, we'll park near the postal trail, where dogsleds carried the mail from 1882 to 1952. Thank goodness for these tough, hurricane-resistant trees. I think we'll survive."







THE WESTERN STAR, Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Oct. 19, 1999, Page 6.

Letters to the Editor : "GISBORNE WATER BELONGS TO ALL OF US"

Dear Editor: At the end of the Second World War there was a military funeral for a decorated major, just before his discharge from the army. His life ended at a railway crossing when he failed to obey the warning, to "Stop, Look, and Listen."

The Gisborne Lake debate is reminiscent of this sad event, because political forces, armed with locomotive power and tunnel vision, are so preoccupied with deals and sell-offs, that they ignore the true owners of these resources and endangered places - the citizens who put them in office, whose rights are being destroyed by these uncontrolled forces.

One "stop" should be at the Corner Brook Library, where a book called *Water* should be required reading for the water resource policy-making honchos. This book has been borrowed only four times since June 1, in spite of the publicity given the author, Marq de Villiers, and his shocking assessments of potable water depletion all over the world.

There should be a hard look, not a permissive one, at the amount of pristine water that can be safely removed without adverse effects to the downstream habitat of fish, wildlife, nursery areas, waterways, and wetlands. If there is indeed a reliable supply of pristine

water available, then the first concern should be for domestic use, to improve the health and well-being of Newfoundlanders, and if there is anything left over, for visitors to these shores, who have been heard to complain about miserable drinking water. Pure water should be an important part of everyone's food intake. Ignoring this requirement causes ailments which increase the burden on medical services.

Listen to the "pie in the sky" promises of the politicians and compare with the following:

"Our goal is the creation of a network of parks, ecological reserves and other protected areas to preserve the diversity of Canada's wildlife and wilderness for future generations. While progress in this project may not be as rapid as we may like, significant advances have been made.

"As I noted last year, we cannot measure our concern for the environment solely by the creation of protected areas. It must be reflected in our stewardship of all our resources. Our best hope in protecting the environment and providing for sustainable development remains with the cooperation of governments, groups such as World Wildlife Fund, The Protected Areas Association (of Newfoundland and Labrador), and the people of Canada." - Clyde Wells, Premier of Newfoundland, 1994. Source: Protecting Canada's Endangered Spaces, (1995) Monte Hummel, Ed. Key Porter Books, Page 140.

Signed, Ted M. Miller, Cow Head

LATE NEWS

10-20-99 Premier Bryan Tobin announced government decision - No water will be permitted to be shipped in bulk from any part of the Province of Newfoundland. This includes Gisborne Lake.

The man has just added this news announcement, closely watched by Theodore. "Well, Theo, that's one time an aroused public has succeeded in making itself heard. If you'll pardon the expression, Theo, a classic case of the 'tail wagging the dog.'"

November, 1999