

# Newspaper Discourses on Environment<sup>1</sup>

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Media bias on behalf of productive interests has resulted in inadequate [environmental] coverage or presentation of issues and fewer resources allocated to coverage.

—Hessing and Howlett, *Canadian Natural Resource and Environmental Policy*, p. 80.

From, Jeffery Klaehn (Ed.) *Filtering The News: Essays on Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2005.

According to the eminent Canadian economic historian and media theorist, Harold Innis, news “dwells in a one-day world,”<sup>2</sup> making it well suited to the interests of advertisers and the fashion industry. Those controlling the press system, Innis maintained, have little interest in continuity; their major goal is to promote hedonism and consumption. Innis contended more generally, as have Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, that the élites in any society, by definition, control the dominant means of communication, and normally exercise their “monopoly of knowledge” in ways that enhance their perceived self-interest. In this chapter we put this Propaganda Model to the test by analyzing environmental news coverage by leading Canadian newspapers.

As noted by the Brundtland Commission (the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development), among many others, economy and ecology in our day are on a crash course. However, following Innis, Chomsky and Herman, one would expect that the daily press, financed by advertisers and usually owned by multimedia organizations if not indeed conglomerate interests, will downplay the conflict between our economic system and the environment.

This is not to say that there will not appear in the press, on occasion, environmentally-sensitive articles. But the Innisian claim would be that these are the exceptions that prove the rule, that despite such smatterings of ecologically-sound reporting and opinion, by far the major thrust of the press is to promote hedonism and consumption.

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<sup>1</sup> Written with the assistance of Mary N. Babe.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Innis, “A Plea for Time,” *The Bias of Communication*, p. 79.

Media discourses on economy and environment are, of course, highly influential. They help set the tone and subject matter of the public's discourses — in the words of communication theorist Maxwell McCombs, media help “set the agenda”<sup>3</sup> for the public.

Before proceeding, a few words of qualification. The following data and analyses do not deal with radio or television broadcasting; in the case of CBC, at least, this is likely an important omission. Internet sources (apart from on-line versions of the newspaper titles referenced below) are not analysed, even though the internet can be an important source of environmental information for some. Nor are all Canadian daily newspapers studied here; rather, the chapter focuses primarily on the *Globe and Mail*, arguably the premier Canadian print journal, with some comparisons of its environmental coverage to that of the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*. Although two of these three dailies purport to be “national newspapers,” there is definitely an Ontario — even Toronto — focus. These qualifications need to be kept in mind when interpreting the analysis that follows.

## World Scientists' Warning, and Models of the Press

On November 18, 1992, fifteen hundred scientists released a document entitled “World Scientists' Warning to Humanity.” Among the signatories were 92 Nobel laureates (over fifty percent of all living Nobel recipients). They declared:

Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know..<sup>4</sup>

The World Scientists further claimed that virtually all aspects of our natural habitat — the atmosphere, water, soil, forests, biodiversity — are experiencing “critical stress.” They warned,

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<sup>3</sup> Maxwell McCombs,

<sup>4</sup> Document available at: <http://www.hgrm.com/warning.htm>

A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it, is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated.

The World Scientists noted that rich and poor nations alike bear responsibility for rapid deterioration in environmental conditions: the rich on account of “overconsumption,” and the poor because of excessive population growth. Regarding the rich, the World Scientists asserted: “The developed nations are the largest polluters in the world today; they must greatly reduce their overconsumption, if we are to reduce pressures on resources and the global environment.” They therefore called for “a new ethic — a new attitude towards discharging our responsibility for caring for ourselves and for the earth.”

For anyone regarding the press as an “objective” gatherer and disseminator of news, or as a platform for the unconstrained expression and exchange of ideas and opinions, or as the public’s watch dog checking abuses of power by exposing malfeasance (the doctrine of the “fourth estate”), the paucity of coverage of the World Scientists’ Warning must be perplexing: as noted by David Suzuki,<sup>5</sup> however, the “Warning” was not reported by the *New York Times*, by the *Washington Post*, or by the *Globe and Mail*; nor was their statement covered by the major US television networks; likewise, the CBC was silent.<sup>6</sup> (On the other hand, as Suzuki notes ironically, “the O. J. Simpson trial and President Clinton’s alleged sexual behaviour [were] inordinately reportable”).<sup>7</sup>

It is well known that some 80 percent of newspaper revenues derive from advertising, as opposed to 20 percent from subscriptions or single copy sales. From a business perspective, as Dallas Smythe observed, the editorial content of a newspaper (sometimes referred to as the “news hole”) is the cost publishers incur to assemble readers for advertisers; newspaper owners sell readership to advertisers, and “content” is their cost of producing this “audience commodity.”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, from a business perspective, this “content” should not detract from,

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<sup>5</sup> David Suzuki, *Earth Time: Essays*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1998, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> David Suzuki and Holly Dressel, *From Naked Ape to Superspecies: A Personal Perspective on Humanity and the Global Eco-Crisis*, Toronto: Stoddart, 1999, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> David Suzuki, *Earth Time: Essays*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1998, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Dallas W. Smythe, “Communications: Blindspot of Western Marxism,” in *Counterclockwise: Perspectives on Communication*, edited by Thomas Guback, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994, pp. 266 – 291; first published in 1977.

and indeed ideally should contribute to, the effectiveness of the surrounding ads.<sup>9</sup> In brief, editorial content, from this perspective, should not be inconsistent with the consumption ethic in general, or with printed inducements to procure advertised goods and services in particular. The World Scientists Warning to Humanity obviously failed to satisfy this criterion. After all, the World Scientists stated pointedly: “The developed nations are the largest polluters in the world today; they must greatly reduce their overconsumption, if we are to reduce pressures on resources and the global environment.”

## Overall Content of the Press

To attain a better idea of the content comprising the daily press, I performed a content analysis on 12 issues each of the *Toronto Star*, the *National Post*, and the *Globe and Mail* for the period of June 3 – June 8 2002 and May 3 – May 9 2003. Tables 1 and 2 are based on the first of these periods; these tables summarize the general orientation of these three large Canadian daily newspapers, generally thought to cover a spectrum of right/neo-conservative to centrist/liberal.

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<sup>9</sup> CanWest Global Communications Corp., owner of the Southam chain, for example, strategically couples news items with targeted advertising. On March 29, 2003, CanWest’s *National Post* ran an eight page “Body and Health” section that focused on asthma and allergies; the section was supported entirely by advertisements for Reactine, an over-the-counter asthma and allergy remedy. During the last two weeks of March 2003, CanWest’s *Ottawa Citizen*, *Montreal Gazette* and other dailies ran articles on asthma and allergies above ads for Reactine.

**Table 1**  
**Content of Three Toronto Papers, % Area per Category, June 3 – 8, 2002\***

Average,	National Post	Globe & Mail	Toronto Star	
<b>Category</b>	(%)	(%)	(%)	%
News & Commentary	19.8	21.2	17.7	19.6
Advertising	31.5	49.3	52.7	44.5
Sports	7.4	7.9	10.8	8.7
Consumption/Lifestyle	41.3	21.6	18.8	27.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	100	100	100

**\*Excludes special supplements such as Pull-Out Book Reviews Section, Colour Comics, Business Magazines, advertising inserts, etc.**

**Table 2\*\***  
**Content of Three Toronto Papers, Number of Articles by Category (Excludes Advertising): June 3 – 8, 2002**

Category	National Post		Globe & Mail		Toronto Star		3 Paper Average	
	Articles	(%)	Articles	(%)	Articles.	(%)	Articles.	(%)
News & Commentary	310	25.8	373	38.4	380	38.0	354	34.1
Sports*	154	12.8	146	15.1	219	21.9	173	16.2
Consumption/Lifestyle	738	61.5	449	46.4	401	40.1	539	50.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1202</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1066</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Sports statistics and standings counted by headings; financial tables counted by headings

\*\* Excludes special supplements such as Book Reviews Section, Weekend Colour Comics, Business Magazines, advertising inserts, etc.

In Table 1, the content of the three presses is divided into four categories:

- *News & Commentary* consists of “news” excluding human interest, sports, and life-style. It comprises coverage of local, regional, national and world events, backgrounders to such events, and commentaries. The subject matters run the gamut from economy, business and politics to accidents, crime, and the weather.
- *Advertising* includes both display ads and classified advertisements.
- *Sports* concern the activities and performance of athletic teams and athletes, and normally appear in the sports section (although coverage of “big” games may be positioned on the front page).
- *Consumption/Lifestyle* includes special supplements (food, automotive, travel, real estate) designed to stimulate consumption, with the editorial content supporting targeted advertising. As well this category includes personality profiles/interviews, movie reviews, and other content on the entertainment industries (apart from that contained in

the business section); and also the daily comics, cross words, horoscopes and so forth. This category excludes separate (detachable) supplements and weekend colour comics.

To compile Table 1, the area occupied by items of these categories was measured and aggregated. For Table 2, a “frequency of occurrence” mode of measurement was used; that is, every item in each category received equal weight regardless of size. For Table 2, the category “advertising” was dropped, primarily because hundreds of two and three line classified ads in small print could, if included, render the table misleading.

From the tables above, the relatively low priority accorded news and commentary, and the relatively high priority accorded consumption/lifestyles is evident. For the three presses, advertising plus consumption/lifestyles took up over 70% of the space, whereas news and commentary comprised less than 20% of the printed space. In terms of number of entries, only about one-third of the non-advertising items constitute “news and commentary;” two-thirds pertain to “entertainment/lifestyles/sports. It is apparent from these data that whatever else the daily press may be, predominantly it is an agency promoting consumption/lifestyles/leisure/entertainment.

## Environmental Press Coverage

Let's turn now to the nature of the *environmental* coverage. Table 3 highlights environmental coverage during the week in June 2002, and Table 4 for the week in May 2003; this latter week was significantly different from the one in 2002 due to the onset of SARS in Toronto and escalating concerns regarding West Nile Virus.

**Table 3**

**“Environmental” Stories: *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *National Post*, June 3 - 8, 2002,  
By Topic**

Topic	<i>Globe &amp; Mail</i>		<i>Toronto Star</i>		<i>National Post</i>		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Infectious diseases (SARS, West Nile, cholera)	1	11	1	8	0	0	2	6
Ocean fisheries	0	0	1	8	1	10	2	6
Extinctions/ endangered species	1	11	0	0	1	10	2	6
Toxins/pesticides/pollution- general	2	22	7	54	3	30	12	37
Forestation/deforestation	1	11	0	0	0	0	1	6
Biotechnology & environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuclear and environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Natural disasters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Global warming/Kyoto	3	33	3	23	5	50	11	34
Other	1*	11	1**	8	0	0	2	6
TOTAL	9	100	13	100	10	100	32	100

\* animal rights

\*\* “Earthweek”: 8 short items as a “diary of the planet”

In these tables, items are considered “environmental” if they call attention to the dependence of life on nature/environment. Several of the items are anything but “environmental,” however, in the sense of advocating care for the planet. During the week of June 3 – 8, 2002, for example, the *National Post* ran five items on global warming/Kyoto. Undoubtedly a report issued that week by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), acknowledging the existence of global warming and attributing it to human activity, caught the paper’s eye and ire. One of these articles, positioned on the front page, announced that the Earth Summit, to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa at the end of the summer, would cause

more greenhouse gas emissions through delegates travelling to the conference than would “half a million ordinary Africans in a year.”<sup>10</sup> A second, bearing the headline “More Bad Science,” was authored by university economist Ross McKittrick, an outspoken critic of the scientific consensus on global warming;<sup>11</sup> McKittrick attacked not just the EPA study, but the competency of the EPA generally, and Environment Canada too. A third *National Post* article covered President Bush’s dismissal of the EPA report; Bush said it was written by “bureaucrats.”<sup>12</sup> A fourth acknowledged that humans probably do cause global warming, but maintained that rather than trying to reduce greenhouse emissions the proper strategy would be to view global warming as inevitable and enact measures to help humans adapt to it.<sup>13</sup> The fifth article, accompanied by a large picture of President Bush holding a young child in his arms, summarized the White House position that “tackling global warming on a massive scale is not cost-effective.”<sup>14</sup> In all, there were but 32 “environmental” articles (about 3 percent of all articles) in the three papers during the week in June 2002 — a modest number to be sure. And many of these, as we have seen, in fact dismissed environmentalists’ concerns.

Comparatively, environmental coverage for the period in 2003 covered by Table 4 was intense; this is because of the attention afforded infectious diseases. A second major environmental topic, highly charged politically, was the federal government’s ban on cod fishing and its reduction and redistribution of snow crab limits, setting off bitter exchanges between federal and provincial politicians and even leading to the burning of ships in New Brunswick. Those two topics — infectious diseases and Atlantic fisheries — accounted for three quarters of the “environmental” coverage by the three newspapers. Apart from those two topics, there were 34 other “environmental” items published by the three papers between May 3 - 9, 2003 (excluding the Sunday editions) — a total very close to the number appearing in the selected week of 2002.

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Clover, “Earth Summit to Study and Augment Greenhouse Gases,” *National Post*, June 4, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>11</sup> Ross McKittrick, “More Bad Science: Washington’s EPA Joins Environment Canada to Produce the Same Old Story,” *National Post*, June 5, 2002, p. FP 19.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Doggett, “Bush Rejects EPA Report Blaming Humans for Global Warming,” *National Post*, June 5, 2002, p. A11.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Kay, “Kyoto: Both Sides Have Got It Wrong,” *National Post*, June 5, 2002, p. A14.

<sup>14</sup> Steven Edwards, “U.S. Report Acknowledges Global Warming: Washington Still Believes Tackling Global Warming on a Massive Scale Is Not Cost Effective,” *National Post*, June 4, 2002, p. A2.

**Table 4**  
**“Environmental” Stories: *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *National Post*, May 3 – 9, 2003,**  
**By Topic**

Topic	<i>Globe &amp; Mail</i>		<i>Toronto Star</i>		<i>National Post</i>		Total %	
	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Infectious diseases (SARS, West Nile, cholera)	27	50	37	58	23	68	84	59.2
Ocean fisheries	12	27	6	9	6	18	24	16.9
Extinctions/other endangered species	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0.7
Toxins/pesticides/pollution	4	9	13	20	0	0	17	12.0
Forestation/deforestation	1	2	1	2	0	0	2	1.4
Biotechnology	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.7
Nuclear	1	2	1	2	1	3	3	2.1
Natural disasters	1	2	4	6	4	12	9	6.3
Global warming	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0.7
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	44	100	64	100	34	100	142	100

Another way of summarizing the environmental coverage of these periods is presented in Table 5, which concerns the view of nature/environment propagated by the “environmental” items. One view of nature is that nature is wild, dangerous, capricious; human activity, in this view, must therefore try to “tame” nature to make it more predictable, controllable and safe. A second view is that nature is our home and that it sustains life; often this view is accompanied by the position that nature is now endangered through human activities, and that we should, therefore, either care for it (stewardship) or endeavour to tread lightly on it so as to interfere as little as possible with its balance. To complete the picture, a third category is presented in Table 5 consisting of items in which neither view is either expressed or implied.

Virtually all stories on SARS and West Nile Virus, as well as natural disaster stories, foster the view that nature is dangerous and that humans must try to dominate it. On the other hand, items pertaining to fishing quotas indicate that human activity can disrupt nature’s life-

sustaining cycles; stories on pollution and deforestation also may imply a conservationist stance. Kyoto/global warming stories, on the other hand, could fit into any one of the three categories depending on the tack taken: if global warming is said to be part of an inevitable process of natural climate change, the story qualifies as nature being depicted as dangerous (even though, it is generally said in such articles, humans should adapt to change rather than try to prevent it); if global warming is attributed to human activity, then it would fit into the category of humans interfering with nature's balance (even though, here too, the recommendation often is that we should learn to live with climate change, rather than slow it down); if the article simply recounts disagreements on the issue, it would be categorized as not taking a position.

As is evident from Table 5, SARS/West Nile certainly caused the view of nature to become much more menacing than was presented in the week studied in 2002. In the first period, nature was deemed dangerous in 7 of 32 articles (22%), whereas humans were acknowledged to be threatening nature in 15 of the 32 articles (47 %); in May 2003, however, nature was deemed dangerous in 67 % of the articles, and humans seen as threatening nature in only 27 percent of the items. Nature viewed as dangerous is, of course, much more consistent with a consumption ethic than is the view that humans are damaging nature.

**Table 5**  
**Views of Nature in Environmental Coverage, 3 Toronto Papers, June 3 – 8 2002, and**  
**May 3 – 9, 2003**

	<i>Globe &amp; Mail</i>		<i>Toronto Star</i>		<i>National Post</i>		TOTAL	
	Jun 02	May 03	Jun 02	May 03	Jun 02	May 03	Jun 02	May 03
Nature is Dangerous	2	25	1	43	4	27	7	95
Nature Is Threatened	5	15	7	20	3	4	15	39
No Position	2	4	5	1	3	3	10	8
TOTAL	9	44	13	64	10	34	32	142

From this overview of the content of the daily press and review of the amount and nature of environmental coverage, we turn now to a detailed analysis of a particular environmental issue: Kyoto/global warming.

## Case Study: Coverage of Global Warming/Kyoto Protocol

### *Background on Kyoto and Global Warming*

The world is getting warmer.<sup>15</sup> The 1990s are judged to have been the warmest decade of the millennium, and the twentieth as the warmest century.<sup>16</sup> Although some still claim that this warming is “natural” and unrelated to human activity, the majority of scientific opinion maintains that global warming is largely “anthropogenic,” that is human-induced.

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<sup>15</sup> Dinyar Godrej, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change*, Toronto: New Internationalist Publications, 2001, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Dinyar Godrej, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change*, Toronto: New Internationalist Publications, 2001, p. 13.

In the 1980s, studies began linking global warming to the combustion of fossil fuels.<sup>17</sup> Currently, human activity releases over 22 billion tonnes<sup>18</sup> of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year.<sup>19</sup> Carbon dioxide levels today are thought to be 30 percent greater than pre-industrial levels. The concern is that “greenhouse gases,” such as carbon dioxide, block solar heat from radiating from Earth into space. According to some projections, average global temperatures could rise by 5.9°C (10.6°F) by the end of this century if greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced.<sup>20</sup>

The first scientific conference on the issue, the World Conference on the Atmosphere, was held at Toronto in 1988, with delegates from 46 countries attending.<sup>21</sup> In their closing statement, the scientists declared: “Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war.” Hence they urged a 20-per-cent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, based on 1988 levels.<sup>22</sup>

In 1990, in its first report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (established by The World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program), concluded that the world would need to reduce greenhouse gases by 60 percent merely to stabilize carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Global warming was also an explicit concern of The World Scientists in 1992. Also in 1992, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed, which aimed to stabilize, by the year 2000, world emissions of greenhouse gases at 1990 levels. Unfortunately, the voluntary reductions countenanced by that treaty were not effective and hence, in 1997, representatives of 160 countries gathered at Kyoto, Japan, and signed “the Kyoto Protocol,” described by the Canadian government as “the first global

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<sup>17</sup> Actually, a “greenhouse effect” had been proposed as early as 1824 by Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Fourier, but the warming induced by the Earth’s atmosphere was thought to be totally benevolent for over a century. See Gale E. Christianson, *Greenhouse: The 200-Year Story of Global Warming*, Vancouver: GreyStone Books, 1999, p 12.

<sup>18</sup> One tonne equals 1,000 kg. or 2,240 lbs.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada, “Removing Carbon Dioxide: Credit for Enhancing Sinks,” [http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/english/whats\\_new/removing\\_e.html](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/english/whats_new/removing_e.html), July 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Dinyar Godrej, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change*, Toronto: New Internationalist Publications, 2001, p. 20

<sup>21</sup> David Suzuki Foundation, “What Is The Kyoto Protocol?”, 2002. [http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate\\_Change/kyoto/Kyoto\\_Protocol.asp](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/kyoto/Kyoto_Protocol.asp)

<sup>22</sup> Alexa McDonough, “*Globe and Mail*, September 4, 2002, p. A13.

agreement that establishes binding targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.”<sup>23</sup> Canada’s target was set at a 6% reduction from 1990 levels by the year 2012.

The Kyoto Protocol was to become legally binding, however, only when ratified by at least 55 countries collectively accounting for at least 55 percent of the world’s emissions.<sup>24</sup> These dual criteria were established because emissions from developing countries, including China and India, are much lower per capita than those of industrialized countries; moreover, the negotiators believed those countries would be less able to absorb the initial costs of reducing emissions. (Third World countries currently emit about 35 percent of world greenhouse gases and account for 80 percent of the world’s population). It was anticipated, however, that Third World nations would be brought into a revised agreement upon the expiry of the Kyoto Agreement in 2012. In May 2002 The European Union ratified the treaty, followed in June by Japan. As of early December 2002, over 80 countries had ratified the Protocol, but collectively they still fell short of the 55% emissions requirement.<sup>25</sup>

A major reason for this shortfall was the fact that in March 2001, American President G. W. Bush announced that the U.S., which had been a major force in drawing up the Kyoto treaty in 1997, would not ratify it; Bush called the treaty “economically irresponsible.” He claimed that ratification would cost the U.S. economy \$400 billion and 4.9 million jobs.<sup>26</sup> Later, Bush unveiled his “Clean Skies” plan, which linked reductions in greenhouse emissions to growth in GNP.<sup>27</sup> Since the U.S. accounts for about 25 percent of the world’s human-made carbon-dioxide emissions, U.S. rejection meant that virtually all other industrialized countries needed to ratify the Protocol for it to become binding.

Canada, of course, came under immense business pressure to “harmonize” with the U.S., and until early September 2002 it was generally assumed that Canada too would not ratify

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<sup>23</sup> Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “Taking Action on Climate Change,” 7 Feb., 2003; <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/departement/focus/kyotoporotocol-en.asp>

<sup>24</sup> Government of Canada, “Canada and the Kyoto Protocol: Overview: Climate Change Affects Us All,” [http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/english/whats\\_new/overview\\_e.html](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/english/whats_new/overview_e.html), July 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Tom Cohen, Associated Press, “Canada Plans Kyoto Ratification Vote As Soon As Monday, December 4, 2002, Environment News Network <http://www.enn.com/news/wire-stories/2002/12/12042002/ap-49101.asp>

<sup>26</sup> Tom Cohen, Associated Press, “Canada Ratifies Kyoto Protocol Following Months of Debate,” December 17, 2002, Environmental News Network <http://www.enn.com/news/wire-stories/2002/12/12172002/ap-49191.asp>

<sup>27</sup> CBC News, “Backgrounder: The Kyoto Protocol, Canada and Kyoto,” September 23, 2002, [http://www.cbc.ca/news/features/kyoto\\_canada.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/features/kyoto_canada.html)

Kyoto. It was a surprise for many, therefore, when on September 2, 2002 Prime Minister Chrétien announced at the United Nations Earth Summit at Johannesburg, South Africa, that he would ask Parliament to approve ratification of the agreement before the end of the year.<sup>28</sup>

Although Canada accounts for only about 2% of world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, Canada's signature, plus that of Russia (17 percent of emissions), was needed for the Protocol to take effect. (The latter country promised to finalize ratification in 2003, but as of November 2003 had yet to do so).

In response to Mr. Chrétien's announcement, thirty-five business groups, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association, and the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, formed The Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions. At the peak of its campaign this coalition, assisted by National Public Relations, was spending a quarter of a million dollars a week on television ads advocating a "made-in-Canada solution" instead of Kyoto.<sup>29</sup>

Imperial Oil, Canada's largest integrated petroleum company, was likewise opposed, and it launched its own campaign. According to Imperial Oil:

Meeting Canada's Kyoto target by domestic action only would require the energy-use-reduction equivalent of shutting down all industrial activity in Ontario and Quebec combined, of taking every second vehicle in Canada off the road. ... No other country in North or South America will be subject to Kyoto limits.<sup>30</sup>

Imperial championed a "made-in-Canada approach," which, in its words "reflects the realities of increasing North American economic integration and is compatible with the approaches being taken by our economic partners."<sup>31</sup> This "approach," according to Imperial Oil, would consist of (1) ongoing scientific research to better understand global warming (Imperial has yet to affirm the existence of global warming); (2) continuing to take "economic steps" to improve energy efficiency; and (3) continued research on innovative technologies. During the height of its

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<sup>28</sup> CBC News, "Backgrounder: The Kyoto Protocol, Canada and Kyoto," September 23, 2002, [http://www.cbc.ca/news/features/kyoto\\_canada.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/features/kyoto_canada.html)

<sup>29</sup> Steven Chase, "Business Groups Opposed to Kyoto," *Globe and Mail*, 27 September, 2002, p. B3.; Hugh Windsor, "Oil Patch Candour Needed on Ad Campaign," *Globe and Mail*, 13 November, 2002, p. A4.

<sup>30</sup> Imperial Oil, "Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol," 2002, [http://www.imperialoil.ca/Canada-English/News/Issues/N\\_I\\_Climate.asp](http://www.imperialoil.ca/Canada-English/News/Issues/N_I_Climate.asp)

<sup>31</sup> Imperial Oil, "Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol," 2002, [http://www.imperialoil.ca/Canada-English/News/Issues/N\\_I\\_Climate.asp](http://www.imperialoil.ca/Canada-English/News/Issues/N_I_Climate.asp)

campaign Imperial sponsored a “scientific conference” featuring anti-Kyoto speakers. It also published opinion pieces in the daily press. In a *National Post* article entitled, “Canada’s Missing Governance on Kyoto,” for example, Imperial’s chairman and CEO, Tim Hearn, declared flatly: “Canada will ... be the only nation in the Western Hemisphere ... to be constrained by Kyoto.”<sup>32</sup> (Hearn’s monumental error in geography — he forgot entirely about Western Europe — was soon parroted by the *Globe and Mail*’s editorial writers, as we’ll note more fully below).

Imperial found a ready and vocal ally in Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, even though rival integrated oil companies, like Suncor Energy<sup>33</sup> and Shell Canada,<sup>34</sup> were quite reserved in their criticisms. Klein crossed the country, denigrating both Kyoto and the Prime Minister, and this was all of course dutifully reported by the daily press.

Another strident opponent was the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters Association. In its booklet, *Pain Without Gain: Canada and the Kyoto Protocol*, it projected gloomily that “production closures across Canadian industry could result in the permanent loss of 450,000 jobs in manufacturing alone by 2010.” The Association also projected dire consequences for individual Canadians. According to the Association, we would all have to:

- Drive less often, drive smaller cars, or take public transit that would, in turn, require massive infrastructure spending on the part of governments;
- Re-insulate our homes, change our furnaces, windows and appliances;
- Pay up to 100% more for electricity, 60% more for natural gas, and 80% more for gasoline; and
- Pay more taxes, in part to finance Canada’s purchase of emission credits.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Tim J. Hearn, “Canada’s Missing Governance on Kyoto,” *National Post*, 28 November, 2002; <http://www.imperialoil.ca/Canada-English/News/Issues/N-I-KyotoTJH.asp>

<sup>33</sup> Timothy Gardner, Reuters, “Suncor CEO Says Prepared for Kyoto, Unhappy About It,” September 5, 2002, (Yahoo! Headlines); <http://www.google.ca/search?q=cache:3JyG8gji-yoC:ca.news.yahoo.com/020905/5/ore8>. Also, Patrick Brethour and Steven Chase, “Kyoto Impact Minimal, Suncor Says,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 January, 2003, p. A1.

<sup>34</sup> Patrick Brethour, “Shell Canada to Spend Billions on Oil Sands: Says Kyoto Concerns Won’t Stop Project,” *Globe and Mail*, November 29, 2002, p. B3.

<sup>35</sup> Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, *Pain Without Gain: Canada and the Kyoto Protocol*, <http://www.cme-mec.ca/kyoto/>

There was also a modicum of academic hostility. Two outspoken critics — Christopher Essex, a mathematician at the University of Western Ontario, and Ross McKittrick, an economist at the University of Guelph — published *Taken By Storm: The Troubled Science, Policy and Politics of Global Warming* just in time to enter the fray.<sup>36</sup> Their position was enthusiastically endorsed by *Globe and Mail* columnist, Margaret Wentz (more on this below). Other “climate scientists” too contended in the *Globe* that climate change was not human-induced (more on this below as well).

Indeed, much of the battle over Kyoto took place in the pages of the *Globe and Mail*, giving rise (in one sense) to perhaps the most intensive period to that point of environmental coverage in the paper’s history. It is to that coverage that we now turn.

### *Globe and Mail Coverage*

This section provides an in-depth review and analysis of the *Globe and Mail*’s coverage of Kyoto for the period September 3, 2002, the day after Prime Minister Chrétien announced that Canada would ratify the Protocol, to December 11, 2002, the day after the House of Commons endorsed ratification. The *Globe and Mail* is, arguably, Canada’s most influential newspaper.

The *Globe*’s coverage of Kyoto, as we will see, was not primarily “environmental.” Rather, Kyoto was treated above all as a story of political conflict: the provinces vs. federal government; Alberta Premier Ralph Klein vs. Jean Chrétien; Prime Minister-in-waiting, Paul Martin vs. Jean Chrétien; the energy and manufacturing sectors vs. the federal government. It was a story too of Chrétien “clinging to power,” of the change of focus in his governance after he had announced his retirement, and of whether he would be able to control his MPs in the eventual vote in the House of Commons. And it was a story of political uncertainty — who or what would Ontario Premier Ernie Eves support?

In the *Globe*, Kyoto was also often treated as an economic/business/financial story — what ratifying the treaty would do to or for employment, profits, investment, balance of trade,

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<sup>36</sup>Christopher Essex and Ross McKittrick, *Taken By Storm: The Troubled Science, Policy and Politics of Global Warming*, Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2002.

innovation, and other economic/financial indicators. What it was *not*, primarily, at least in the pages of the *Globe and Mail*, was a story of the impact of global warming on the capacity of the planet to sustain life, or the impact of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming.

In fact, to an inordinately large extent, the *Globe's* Kyoto coverage was derived from disaffected interests who, by means of public relations strategies, attained free media exposure to publicize their views in efforts to turn public opinion against the accord. There were, consequently, multitudinous *pseudoevents*<sup>37</sup>—special studies, conferences, speeches, polls, interviews, announcements, name callings, threats, news leaks, sound bites, as well as press releases and letters—much of which was duly and “objectively” reported as “news.”

In this section, we first provide an overview of the *Globe's* coverage for the period. Then, we look at several continuing themes in the coverage in greater detail.

### *Overview*

On April 16, 2003 we accessed from the *Globe's* web site all stories listed under the headings: “Kyoto,” “Greenhouse,” “Climate Change,” “Global Warming” “Martin Mittelstaedt,” and “Alanna Mitchell.” We also visited Yahoo News Canada for *Globe* stories on Kyoto, and consulted our extensive collection of clippings. Excluded in the quantitative analysis below, however, are letters to the editor.

For the period September 3 – December 11, 2002, we identified 137 items (excluding letters to the editor) in the *Globe* dealing with Kyoto and/or climate change/global warming. As our initial exercise, we classified the articles by main focus: environment, legal/political, or business/financial/economic. Of course, all of the 137 articles in a sense are “environmental,” as without a concern for climate change there would be no Kyoto Protocol. Nonetheless, for the great majority of items in the *Globe*, environmental consequences of greenhouse gas emissions and/or the efficacy of the Protocol in reducing these emissions were mere background, often implicit, to the political or economic/financial thrust of the stories and commentaries. We identified only 18 items of the 137 (13%) as having an environmental focus; those articles are listed in Table 7 below.

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<sup>37</sup> Defined by Daniel J. Boorstin as events that take place for the purpose of being reported.

As well, there was often overlap between a legal/political and economic/business/financial focus due to the simple fact that Kyoto was of political controversy due to its apprehended economic/financial impact; nonetheless, in practice, most articles gave predominant emphasis either to political struggles or to dollar impacts, thereby making distinctions quite easy. Examples of “Legal/Political” articles are: “PM Makes Bid for Green Legacy,”<sup>38</sup> “Klein Prepares Battle Over Kyoto;”<sup>39</sup> and “Albertans Turn Against Kyoto in Poll.”<sup>40</sup> Examples of “Business/Economic/Financial” articles are: “Ottawa Pegs Kyoto Job Risk at 200,000;”<sup>41</sup> “Stop Whining: Kyoto Equals Jobs;”<sup>42</sup> and “Another Oil Sands Firm Cuts Back, Blaming Kyoto.”<sup>43</sup>

The results of this initial classification and tabulation are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Focus of Kyoto/Global Warming Coverage, *Globe and Mail*,**  
**September 3 – December 11, 2002\***

Major Focus	Number of items	% of total
Environment	18	13.1
Legal/Political	65	47.4
Business/Economic/Financial	54	39.4
Total	137	100

\* Excludes letters to the editor

We now take a closer look at those few articles actually dealing with climate change/global warming. Of the 18 articles focusing on the environment, 10 were explicitly or implicitly favourable to Kyoto and/or other immediate action to curb greenhouse gas emissions,

<sup>38</sup> Steven Chase, “PM Makes Bid for Green Legacy,” *Globe and Mail*, 3 September, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>39</sup> Alanna Mitchell, “Klein Prepares Battle Over Kyoto,” *Globe and Mail*, 4 September, 2002, p. A4.

<sup>40</sup> Steven Chase and Jill Mahoney, “Albertans Turn Against Kyoto in Poll,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 October, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>41</sup> Steven Chase and Jill Mahoney, “Ottawa Pegs Kyoto Job Risk at 200,000,” *Globe and Mail*, 25 September, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>42</sup> Dale Marshall, “Stop Whining: Kyoto Equals Jobs,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 September, 2002, p. A17.

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Brethour, “Another Oil Sands Firm Cuts Back, Blaming Kyoto,” *Globe and Mail*, 7 November, 2002, p. B1.

1 was neutral, and 7 were hostile. It is also worth noting that of the ten pieces favouring Kyoto and/or other immediate action against greenhouse gas emissions, 4 were written as commentaries by non-*Globe and Mail* authors, and 4 were written by the *Globe's* Environment or its Earth Sciences reporters (more on this below). Only two were written by non-environmental staff at the *Globe*. Short summaries of these 18 items are provided Table 7.

**Table 7**  
**Kyoto/Global Warming Items with “Environmental” Focus,**  
***Globe and Mail*, September 3 – December 11, 2002**

***Items Explicitly or Implicitly Favourable to Kyoto:***

David McGuinty, “Overdraft at the Nature Bank.”<sup>44</sup> McGuinty, president and chief executive officer of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, assails economics and accounting practices for not taking into account non-market costs and benefits. We are rapidly depleting “natural capital ... whose services make life possible on a biological level; these services include air and water purification, productive soils, wildlife, climate regulation, flood control, and pollination of crops.” Since Kyoto will lead to monetization and trading of carbon-reduction credits, it is to be welcomed.

Alanna Mitchell, “Your Own Private Kyoto.”<sup>45</sup> The *Globe's* Earth Sciences Reporter lists various, rather painless ways individuals can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, thereby contributing to Kyoto targets.

Martin Mittelstaedt, “Firms Breaking Promises on Emissions, Study Says.”<sup>46</sup> The *Globe's* Environment Reporter writes: “Most of Canada’s largest corporate greenhouse-gas emitters have failed to honour voluntary pledges to limit pollution responsible for global warming, says a new study by the Pembina Institute and the David Suzuki Foundation. ...”

Alanna Mitchell, “Greenhouse Pollution Rate Increasing, Data Reveal.”<sup>47</sup> The Earth Sciences Reporter cites data showing “that rather than slowing this pollution, Canadians are accelerating it.”

Alanna Mitchell, “Arctic Ice Melting Much Faster Than Thought.”<sup>48</sup> The story recounts, among other things, that “polar bears are likely to die off when the Arctic ice vanishes.”

David Barber, “Chill Prediction.”<sup>49</sup> The article concerns dwindling Arctic ice. The author writes: “Humankind is still evolving from a mentality of ‘doing battle’ with nature for survival; but those days are gone and now we must think of ourselves as nature’s stewards, because our habitat, like that of the polar bear, is threatened.”

Thomas Homer-Dixon, Karl Braganza, James Risbey, and David Karoly, “Kyoto Skeptics Miss the Point.”<sup>50</sup> The article, by climate scientists, is a rejoinder to a skeptical global warming piece by other climate scientists.

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<sup>44</sup> September 4, 2002.

<sup>45</sup> October 5, 2002, p. F7.

<sup>46</sup> October 18, 2002, p. A4.

<sup>47</sup> November 7, 2002, p. A9.

<sup>48</sup> November 28, 2002, p. A11.

<sup>49</sup> November 18, 2002, p. A17.

<sup>50</sup> November 28, 2002, p. A21.

Maurice Strong, "Don't Blow It, Canada."<sup>51</sup> The former head of Petro-Canada and former Secretary to the Brundtland Commission states we must act on the best evidence available (as do oil companies when deciding where to dig for oil), and the great majority of scientists believe greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub> are responsible for global warming.

Gloria Galloway, "The Icing Call of the Arctic One of Lament."<sup>52</sup> Winters are getting shorter in the Arctic, thereby shortening the outdoor hockey season.

Alanna Mitchell, "Doubts Cast on Warming's 'Green' Lining."<sup>53</sup> The *Globe's* "Earth Sciences Reporter" cites a new study projecting that build-up of carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere will stunt plant growth rather than increase it as some had projected.

**Item Neutral to Kyoto:**

Chris Morris, "Climate Change Affecting Flora."<sup>54</sup> The author of this Canadian Press item writes there are good as well as bad consequences associated with global warming. For example, growing seasons will be longer. Kyoto is not mentioned.

**Items Negative to Kyoto:**

William Thorsell, "Accept It: Kyoto Won't Stop Global Warming."<sup>55</sup> The *Globe's* former editor argues that since global warming will continue apace with or without human help, better to prepare for global warming than vainly try to stop or slow it down.

Rex Murphy, "Selling Something, Dr. Suzuki?"<sup>56</sup> The *Globe* columnist, in a highly sarcastic tone, disputes David Suzuki's claim, made at a press conference sponsored by some doctors, that 16,000 people die each year in Canada from causes related to global warming. Murphy cites an estimate of 200,000 lost jobs if Kyoto is implemented. The *Globe* subsequently published Suzuki's rejoinder as a letter to the editor.

Michael Den Tandt, "Anti-Kyoto Science Must Have its Day."<sup>57</sup> The *Globe* reporter reviews the position of several "anti-Kyoto" scientists who contend one or more of the following: climate change is constant, inevitable, and natural; there has been a decline in "extreme weather events" over the past 40 years; the Earth is cooling, not warming; there is nothing to worry about. The author suggests the government hold a referendum on Kyoto so that the issue can be debated fully.

Sallie Baliunas, Tim Patterson And Allan MacRae, "Climate Change Is Natural."<sup>58</sup> The authors, representing themselves as "objective" climate scientists (more on this below) conclude, "When it comes to climate change, humans aren't the culprits." They reason that "greenhouse gases, clouds and aerosols in the atmosphere do trap some of the solar radiation reflected from the Earth's surface, causing a natural greenhouse effect that warms the Earth and makes it habitable; those gases comprise less than 0.1 per cent of the air. ... Water vapour, comprising 99 per cent of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, provides most of the greenhouse effect, followed by water in all its phases in clouds."

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<sup>51</sup> December 6, 2002, p. A25.

<sup>52</sup> December 7, 2002, p. A31.

<sup>53</sup> December 7, 2002, p. A18

<sup>54</sup> September 20, 2002, p. A7.

<sup>55</sup> September 9, 2002, p. A13.

<sup>56</sup> September 28, 2002, p. A25.

<sup>57</sup> November 18, 2002, p. B2

<sup>58</sup> November 19, 2002, p. A21.

Deborah Yedlin, "CAPP Chose Wrong Tactic on Kyoto."<sup>59</sup> This piece reviews that skeptical position regarding greenhouse gases and global warming put forth by Talisman CEO, Jim Buckee — for example, water vapour accounts for 98% of greenhouse gases; some evidence points to temperatures having dropped between 1940 and 1970 despite an exponential increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Margaret Wentz, "The Kyoto-Speak Brainwashers."<sup>60</sup> The *Globe* columnist suggests that concern over greenhouses gases is a scam put forward by the majority of climate scientists in efforts to get government grants. Wentz states: "The climate is indeed changing. Always has, always will."

Anne McLroy, "Green Options Fall Short, Study Says."<sup>61</sup> The article explores various ways greenhouse gas emissions could be cut, and concludes that a "Herculean effort may be needed to take the measures that will actually stabilize the climate."

We also classified the 137 entries by headline: positive to Kyoto and/or federal government; negative to Kyoto and/or federal government; and neutral. Examples of favourable headlines are: "Alberta Can't Beat Ottawa in Battle of Kyoto;"<sup>62</sup> "Kyoto Investment Can Pay Off;"<sup>63</sup> "EnCana CEO's Urge to Kill Kyoto is Misguided;"<sup>64</sup> "Good Grief! Kyoto Might Actually Be Good;"<sup>65</sup> and "Despite the Hazy Debate, Kyoto May Be Just What Canada Needs."<sup>66</sup> Note how lukewarm or equivocal some of the "positive" headlines are, and how several arise from negative concerns.

Examples of negative headlines are: "Ottawa, Conservationists Disagree on Earth Summit Results;"<sup>67</sup> "Kyoto: The Wrong Note to Go Out On,"<sup>68</sup> and "EnCana Chief to PM: Kill Kyoto."<sup>69</sup>

Examples of neutral headlines are: "PM Makes Bid for Green Legacy,"<sup>70</sup> "Canada Confronts Kyoto Challenge,"<sup>71</sup> and "Alberta Planning National Tech Site on Emissions."<sup>72</sup> The results of this classification and tabulation are reported in Table 8.

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<sup>59</sup> November 29, 2002, p. B2.

<sup>60</sup> December 2, 2002, p. A23.

<sup>61</sup> 1 November, 2002, p. A9.

<sup>62</sup> John Ibbitson, "Alberta Can't Beat Ottawa in Battle of Kyoto," *Globe and Mail*, 3 September, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>63</sup> Alanna Mitchell, "Kyoto Investment Can Pay Off," *Globe and Mail*, 7 September, 2002, p. A8.

<sup>64</sup> Eric Reguly, "EnCana CEO's Urge to Kill Kyoto Is Misguided," *Globe and Mail*, 14 September, 2002, p. B6.

<sup>65</sup> John Ibbitson, "Good Grief! Kyoto Might Actually Be Good," *Globe and Mail*, October 10, 2002, p. A23.

<sup>66</sup> Barrie McKenna, "Despite the Hazy Debate, Kyoto May Be Just What Canada Needs," *Globe and Mail*, 20 September 2002, p. B10.

<sup>67</sup> Alanna Mitchell, "Ottawa, Conservationists Disagree on Earth Summit Results," *Globe and Mail*, 4 September, 2002, p. A4.

<sup>68</sup> Roger Phillips, "Kyoto: The Wrong Note to Go Out On," *Globe and Mail*, 5 September, 2002, p. A19.

<sup>69</sup> Steven Chase, "EnCana Chief to PM: Kill Kyoto," *Globe and Mail*, 12 September, 2002, p. B1.

<sup>70</sup> Steven Chase, "PM Makes Bid for Green Legacy," *Globe and Mail*, 3 September, 2002, p. A1;

<sup>71</sup> *Globe and Mail*, "Canada Confronts Kyoto Challenge, editorial, 5 September, 2002, p. A20.

**Table 8**  
**Headlines in *Globe and Mail*: Positive, Negative and Neutral to Kyoto and/or Other**  
**Immediate Action on Greenhouse Gas Emissions,**  
**3 September – 12 December, 2002**

	Number	<i>Percent of Total</i>
Positive	34	24.8
Negative	61	44.5
Neutral	42	30.7

Here we see that one quarter of the Kyoto/global warming/climate change headlines were positive or supportive to Kyoto and/or other immediate action, while 45 percent were negative or unfavourable. (Headlines favouring a “made-in-Canada” solution are deemed negative, as no “made-in-Canada” plan existed).

Of course, a headline does not necessarily reflect the tone of the accompanying article. In Table 9 we classify all 137 articles as to whether the overall thrust was to favour, oppose, or be neutral/balanced toward Kyoto and/or the government’s handling of the treaty. In the Table we also distinguish between news reports and commentaries/editorials. Negative news items/commentaries outnumber positive or favourable items by about 2:1. Only 20 percent of *Globe* articles favoured Kyoto/immediate action. (And, as we saw previously, even of the environment-focused items, only slightly more than 50 percent favoured Kyoto/immediate action). Table 9 is quite consistent with Table 8; in general, the thrust of the headline matches the tone of the story.

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<sup>72</sup> Patrick Brethour, “Alberta Planning National Tech Site on Emissions,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 September, 2002, p. B3.

**Table 9**  
**Number and Percent of Articles Favourable, Unfavourable and Neutral/Balanced**  
**Toward Kyoto, *Globe and Mail* September 2 – December 12 2002**

	Favourable	Unfavourable	Neutral/Balanced	Total
Commentary/ Editorial	20	31	11	62
News	7	28	40	75
Total	27	59	51	137
<i>% of all items</i>	20	43	37	100

The most commonly cited reasons for not favouring Kyoto were: it is divisive and unfair to energy-rich regions; it is too costly; it will cause dis-investment and unemployment; it is not proven that global warming is caused by humans; there is too much uncertainty and no plan for implementation; Canada is disadvantaged vis a vis USA; Kyoto will be ineffective; it ignores population growth; Canada will have to buy carbon emission rights abroad (from Russia).

The most frequently cited arguments in favour of Kyoto were: Canada assumes an international leadership role on global warming; the treaty will reduce global warming; Canadians are in favour of Kyoto; the majority of scientists agree that greenhouse gases cause global warming; new technologies and new opportunities will be spawned; there is negligible costs to implementing Kyoto; Kyoto will stimulate employment; Kyoto incorporates pollution in the price mechanism; ratification is needed before a plan will be developed; costs of global warming are seldom considered by economists and businesses; it is proven that reductions in emissions can take place; it is better to proceed internationally than nationally on a global issue.

Yet a further indicator of the over-all thrust of *Globe and Mail* coverage can be gleaned by tabulating who were cited as authorities and/or quoted. Table 10 clearly supports a previous finding that, for the *Globe*, Kyoto was primarily a story of political conflict and of economic/financial consequences, not an environmental story.

**Table 10**  
**News Source and Authorities, by Occupation, *Globe and Mail* Coverage of  
Kyoto/Global Warming, September 2 – December 11, 2002**

Business executive	54
Federal Liberal politician	53
Provincial politician	53
Un-elected official	22
Federal Opposition politician	21
Scientist	20
Environmentalist	17
Social Scientist (think tank; pollster)	16
Citizen	7
Celebrity	1

*Coverage of Specific Issues*

*1. Is Human-Induced Global Warming Real?*

In several pieces, writers in the *Globe and Mail* queried whether global warming is real, and if real whether humans are responsible. *Globe* columnist Margaret Wentz, for example, devoted a 3/4 page spread to the topic, complete with a 1/4-page illustration of sheep gathered before a TV screen on which appears a close-up of yet another sheep. Evidently she had just read *Taken By Storm* by Drs. Essex and McKittrick, and was completely won over. Fortified by the facts and analysis of that book, Wentz pronounced global warming to be a monumental scam. She charged that “science has been corrupted by the official doctrine; governments, including Canada’s, hand out millions to people to conduct research into climate change — but only if the research confirms the central thesis.” She stated: “Serious scientists have given up trying to explain to the public just why the entire edifice of global warming is an intellectual house of cards;” in the very next sentence, however, she quotes Dr. Essex, whom she termed a “serious

player in the world of climate science” — despite his strident attempts to explain to the public that the edifice of global warming is an intellectual house of cards. According to Essex, “Over the past 10 years, the voice of scientists has disappeared from the discussion; we’re like spectators with our noses pressed up against the glass.” Completely reversing what many consider to be the real power/control aspects of media, Wenté wrote:

But the real eye opener is their [Essex and McKinrick’s] account of how the politics of global warming has produced certainty in public discourse. It starts with pressure from environmentalists and the public, who convince policymakers that something should be done, who appoint sympathetic experts to head up massive studies, who hire like-minded people to carry them out, which are then synthesized by bureaucrats into executive summaries from which all doubt and uncertainty have been stripped away,. These summaries are said to be the “consensus view,” and are used as the ultimate authority invoked by politicians to justify their calls for urgent action. . . . This certainty is then amplified by the media which search out stories that appear to further prove the doctrine....<sup>73</sup>

Note that in the Wenté/Essex/McKitrick account, alarm over global warming and the greenhouse effect originated not from scientists who finally converged at a conference in Toronto in 1988 to discuss their concerns, nor with the 1500 scientists who signed the petition “warning humanity,” but with “environmentalists and the public” who, she writes, were fatigued by an unusually hot summer in 1988. Note also that, according to Wenté, “media” selectively and consistently search out people expressing concerns over global warming to lend credibility to the cause, a contention, incidentally, quite at odds with contributions to the *Globe* for the period considered here.

Then, on November 19, the *Globe* published a piece entitled, “Climate Change is Natural: Believe the Science, not the Rhetoric, We Aren’t Causing Global Warming, Say Scientists.”<sup>74</sup> The *Globe* described the accreditation of the authors of the article as follows: “Dr. Sallie Baliunas is deputy director at Mount Wilson Observatory and an astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics; Dr. Tim Patterson is a professor of geology (paleoclimatology) in the Department of Earth Sciences at Carleton University in Ottawa; Allan

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<sup>73</sup> Margaret Wenté, “The Kyoto-Speak Brainwashers,” *Globe and Mail*, December 7, 2002, p. A23.

<sup>74</sup> Sallie Baliunas, Tim Patterson, and Allan M. R. MacRae, “Climate Change is Natural: Believe the Science, Not the Rhetoric, We Aren’t Causing Global Warming, Say Scientists,” *Globe and Mail*, November 19, 2002, p. A21.

M. R. MacRae is a professional engineer, investment banker and environmentalist.”<sup>75</sup> Three days later, however, to its credit, the *Globe* published a letter to the editor from Andrew Baines of the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, University of Toronto, giving remarkably different credentials for these authors. According to Professor Baines: “Allan MacRae, an ‘environmentalist,’ is president and CEO of Odyssey Petroleum; Tim Patterson, a geology professor, has been a geologist and biostratigrapher for the oil industry; Sallie Baliunas is a senior scientist at the Washington-based George C. Marshall Institute (supported by the Exxon Education Foundation) that studies how the Kyoto Protocol impacts on national security.” Baines then charged that the authors had “misrepresented the contents of the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] report – for example, the accuracy of climate models, tropospheric temperature and the importance of water in CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse effects.”<sup>76</sup>

Let us turn, however, to the original article itself. Here is an excerpt:

The Kyoto Protocol assumes humankind causes global warming, but climate has always changed. For two million years, the Earth has been in an ice age marked by more than 30 glaciations, during which ice sheets covered most of North America to a depth of several kilometres. In the past 800,000 years, the pattern has been 100,000 years of extensive glaciation, interspersed with brief, warmer interglacials of 15,000 years. The next glaciation is less than 5,000 years ahead.

While the authors agree that the greenhouse effect is real, (“Greenhouse gases, clouds and aerosols in the atmosphere do trap some of the solar radiation reflected from the Earth's surface”), and also that carbon–dioxide, a greenhouse gas, has been increasing in atmospheric concentration (“during the past 300 years, atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have risen from 275 parts per million to around 360 parts per million, a 30-per-cent increase; most of the increase has been recent, caused by fossil fuel burning and deforestation”), nonetheless they deny that the causation is from carbon concentrations to global warming; rather, they propose cause in the opposite direction: “Climate change drives major changes in CO<sub>2</sub>, not the reverse; carbon dioxide is only a minor contributor in the many factors that influence global climate.” They conclude: “There is strong evidence that variation in the sun's energy output is a much

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<sup>75</sup> Sallie Baliunas, Tim Patterson, and Allan M. R. MacRae, “Climate change is Natural: Believe the Science, Not the Rhetoric, We Aren't Causing Global Warming, Say Scientists,” *Globe and Mail*, November 19, 2002, p. A21.

<sup>76</sup> Andrew Baines, ‘Hot air on Kyoto,’ letter to editor, *Globe and Mail*, 28 November, 2002, p. A22.

more significant driver of surface temperature than human-made greenhouse gases. When it comes to climate change, humans aren't the culprits.”

Also to its credit, about a week later, the *Globe* printed a rebuttal by other climate scientists<sup>77</sup> who accused the aforementioned deniers of employing “such a selective reading of scientific theory and evidence that their picture bears little resemblance to the reality understood by the vast majority of climate scientists around the world.” Reviewing arguments and evidence presented in the previous article, these authors concluded:

[Their] opinion is at odds with the latest conclusions of the International Panel on Climate Change — which state that “most of the observed warming over the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations” — and with the opinions of the majority of climate scientists. Although the weight of numbers does not guarantee truth, the skeptics are increasingly clutching at straws.”

In the absence of a larger context, it would be difficult for a layperson to know just how to interpret the *Globe*'s presenting of this exchange of opinion in its pages. Was the exchange the equivalent of granting space to representatives of the flat earth society in the name of “public debate”? Or was it truly a case of the National Newspaper becoming a forum for experts on an unsettled scientific issue of public concern?

## 2. Commissioning and Reporting Polls

The first poll during the period of intensive debate was taken by Ipsos-Reid for *The Globe and Mail*, and was reported on page A1 of the October 8, 2002 issue, under the headline, “Albertans Turn Against Kyoto in Poll.”<sup>78</sup> The main thrust of the story, as given in the opening paragraphs, was that support for Kyoto by Albertans had declined (from 72 percent to 27 percent since an earlier poll in the spring), putting that province “out of step” with the rest of the country, since a majority of Canadians, according to the report, still supported Kyoto. The article maintained, however, that national support for the treaty, too, had “softened,” even though

a sizable majority still supports implementing the accord. Across the country, backing for the agreement to fight climate change has fallen 12 percentage

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<sup>77</sup> Thomas Homer-Dixon, Karl Braganza, James Risbey, and David Karoly, “Kyoto Skeptics Miss the Point,” *Globe and Mail*, November 28, 2002, p. A21.

<sup>78</sup> Steven Chase and Jill Mahoney, “Albertans Turn Against Kyoto in Poll,” *Globe and Mail*, October 8, 2002, p. A1.

points, to 74 per cent from 86 per cent in an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted May 22 to June 2. Twenty-one per cent oppose implementing the deal, up from 10 per cent.

The article then reported, “support for Kyoto has also fallen in the Atlantic provinces, by approximately 19 percentage points, in British Columbia by roughly 15 percentage points, and in Saskatchewan-Manitoba by about 13 percentage points.” The article did allow, however, that “the percentage of residents backing the accord in these three polling regions is still in the high 60s and low 70s,” and moreover that “more than 80 per cent of Quebeckers and Ontario residents also support Kyoto.” Only on p. A4, however, were the actual results of the national poll presented, and those data are sufficiently contradictory to put into doubt the validity of the entire survey. Here are the results, as reported:

Views on the Kyoto Accord			
Suggestions for implementing the Kyoto accord			
		Agree	Disagree
1. The government of Canada needs to spend more time in investigating the cost and impact of the Kyoto accord before implementing it.	78%	20%	
2. I don't think I have enough information about the Kyoto accord to say whether I support or oppose it.		59%	40%
3. Even if there are some problems with the Kyoto accord, I think it should be implemented because it is a good first step.	74%	22%	
4. It is possible for Canada to develop an alternative to the Kyoto accord that is just as effective but would cost the Canadian economy a lot less.	71%	22%	
5. The government of Canada should ratify the Kyoto accord and implement it, even if it means significant costs to the economy and changes to the lifestyles of Canadians.	57%	39%	

Source: Ipsos-Reid, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* Oct. 8, 2002, p. A4.

For Question 2, 59% of respondents agreed they had insufficient information to make any pronouncement on Kyoto, but in Question 3, 74% confidently opined that Kyoto should be implemented. Likewise, responses to Question 1 indicated widespread opposition to Kyoto, and responses to Question 4 pointed also to strong opposition, but the responses to Question 3 indicated overwhelming support, while the responses to Question 5 identified modest support even if Kyoto entailed “significant costs to the economy and changes to the lifestyles of

Canadians.” Rather than really measuring public attitudes toward Kyoto, then, the poll probably indicated that respondents are more inclined to “agree” than to “disagree” to questions.

The real significance of the October poll, however, came only with publication of another poll the next month. It too was undertaken by Ipsos-Reid, but this poll was commissioned by the Alberta government. This time respondents were asked to choose one of the following:

Withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol and develop a made-in-Canada plan for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions (45 % agreed), ratify the Kyoto Protocol (44 % responded yes), or do nothing.

The headline on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* screamed that support for the protocol had “plunged” — from 75% to 45%!<sup>79</sup> According to reporter Patrick Brethour,

Support for the Kyoto Protocol has plummeted, with the country split between ratifying the accord or forging a made-in-Canada approach to tackling global warming, a poll suggests.

He continued,

The survey by Ipsos-Reid suggests that 45 per cent of respondents preferred the federal government withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol and develop a made-in-Canada plan for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, while 44 per cent wanted Ottawa to ratify the accord. ... The lukewarm backing for the Kyoto Protocol countrywide was a marked turnaround from early October, when an Ipsos-Reid poll suggested that 74 per cent of Canadians supported implementing the accord, with 21 per cent opposed.

To its credit, four days later, the *Globe* printed a letter to the editor from Frank L. Graves, president of Ekos Research Associates, a rival polling firm which undertook polling on Kyoto for the federal government. Graves noted that the first poll asked respondents if they favoured Kyoto, whereas the second asked them to choose among Kyoto, a “made-in-Canada solution,” and doing nothing. “Unsurprisingly,” commented Graves, “when provided with three rather than two choices, the incidence of support for ratification drops.”

Indeed, on the basis of the results published by the *Globe*, the proper conclusion would be that support for action against greenhouse gas emissions had increased substantially. In the October poll, almost thirty percent of Canadians felt no action was required, whereas in the

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<sup>79</sup> Patrick Brethour, “Support for Kyoto Plunges,” *Globe and Mail*, November 2, 2002

November (Alberta government) poll, only about 10 percent either recommended no action or expressed no opinion.

It is interesting that in his original article, Brethour also noted results of an Ekos poll undertaken, as he put it, “for the Liberal Party,” a few days earlier, which suggested that “there was massive support for the Kyoto Protocol, with 79 per cent approving ratification; only Albertans opposed ratification.” Regarding that poll, Brethour chided, however, that “the poll's methodology was not released publicly.”

The story on polling, however, did not end there. On November 5, 2002, the *Toronto Star* quoted Environment Minister David Anderson as claiming that in releasing the results Alberta had “cooked the books” to show that support for Kyoto had fallen. Anderson termed the poll “fraudulent.”<sup>80</sup> The *Star*'s article then proceeded to quote Ipsos-Reid Senior Vice-President John Wright as follows:

We were unaware they [the Alberta government] were going to do this. .. We were very disturbed at how this was playing out. The way in which this was spun in the media was overenthusiastic. ... We have not seen from our numbers a plummeting of the Kyoto accord. There is not a significant drop in support. Right now they're being asked to differentiate between an accord they know nothing about and a made in Canada solution they know nothing about.

The *Star* article went on to note that, “because of the uproar, the firm is redoing the poll.”

On November 6, the *Globe* turned to a press conference held the day before, attended by “a handful of people” launching a pro-Kyoto campaign by the Sierra Club of Canada.<sup>81</sup> The campaign was supported by several “prominent Canadians” who had become distraught by the spin put on the Ipsos-Reid/Alberta Government poll. The *Globe* reporter listed “broadcaster” David Suzuki, NDP leadership candidate Jack Layton, members of the bands Tragically Hip and Barenaked Ladies, authors Pierre Berton, Michael Ondaatje and Farley Mowat, comedians Cathy Jones and Greg Malone, cyclist Clara Hughes, and actor Gordon Pinsent as supporters of the campaign. Also present was Bob Hunter, Greenpeace co-founder and currently an environmental reporter for CITY-TV, a Toronto television station. According to reporter Gloria Galloway, at the news conference Mr. Hunter called Premiers Klein and Eves “ecological criminals,” and he contended that the question in the Ipsos-Reid/Alberta Government poll had been worded to

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<sup>80</sup> Andrew Chung, “Alberta's Kyoto Poll ‘Fraudulent’: Anderson,” *Toronto Star*, November 5, 2002, p. A7.

<sup>81</sup> Gloria Galloway, “Kyoto Backer Lambastes Klein, Eves,” *Globe and Mail*, 6 November, 2002, p. A5.

obtain the results desired by Mr. Klein and the oil industry. She then quoted Mr. Hunter as saying:

Another poll came out today which points out that support for the Kyoto Protocol all across Canada is solid at about 80 per cent, that there has been no slippage and the previous poll . . . was, in fact, fraudulent. . . . It's not that Canadians have lost interest in the whole thing. It's just that the Alberta government and its buddies are paying a lot of money to hire pollsters to ask stupid questions.

As reported by the *Globe* the next day<sup>82</sup> (Nov. 7), Ipsos-Reid quickly jumped on Mr. Hunter (but not on Environment Minister Anderson!), demanding through their lawyers that Hunter make an immediate apology. From the Ipsos-Reid web site we learn that the apology was both immediate and profuse.<sup>83</sup> In the same article, the *G & M* quoted an Ipsos-Reid official: “The poll does not suggest that Canadians support for the climate-change accord had plunged but indicates that Canadians are open to a “made-in-Canada solution.” Also on November 7 the *Globe* published a piece by Darrell Bricker, president of Public Affairs of Ipso-Reid, who wrote:

At no place in the analysis [of the poll] did we indicate that support for the Kyoto accord had plummeted (Support For Kyoto Plunges – Nov. 2). In fact, the numbers from the poll released on Nov. 1 are not comparable with previously released polls because different questions were asked and answered.<sup>84</sup>

The controversy was visited again on November 8 by columnist Hugh Windsor and yet again by reporter Steven Chase on November 9.<sup>85</sup> Jeffrey Simpson indirectly entered the fray on December 11, trashing polls generally, albeit barely mentioning the Kyoto polls. It is nonetheless useful to extract a portion of Simpson’s column since it leads so nicely into the next topic, “trashing the public.”

A big chunk of Canadians are ignorant or barely informed about anything in the public domain. They get most of their information from television, but what they take in doesn't inform them very much. Television, in general, entertains but does not inform. A corollary point: A chunk of the electorate is completely

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<sup>82</sup> Jill Mahoney, “Ipsos-Reid Lashes Out At Critics of Kyoto Poll” *Globe and Mail*, November 7, 2002, p. A9.

<sup>83</sup> Ipsos-Reid, Press Release, “Activist and CITY TV Commentator, Bob Hunter, Issues Full Retraction and Apology to Ipsos-Reid for Remarks Made on Kyoto Poll,” November 8, 2002.

<sup>84</sup> Darrell Bricker, “The Kyoto Numbers,” *Globe and Mail*, 7 November, 2002, p. A24.

<sup>85</sup> Hugh Windsor, “Questions Lurk Beneath Surface of ads on Kyoto,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 November, 2002, p. A4; Steven Chase, “Information About Kyoto Insufficient,” *Globe and Mail*, 9 November, 2002, p. A12.

tuned out of everything beyond its immediate world. It doesn't matter what the media, interest groups, governments or political parties do. They can't reach the unreachable. ... With so much ignorance about public policy, polls really don't reveal very much, despite their use by just about everyone. No wonder interest groups dominate debate, because they display passionate intensity about issues. No wonder, too, that they commission polls that in almost every case reveal answers they like -- answers that depend on the questions asked.<sup>86</sup>

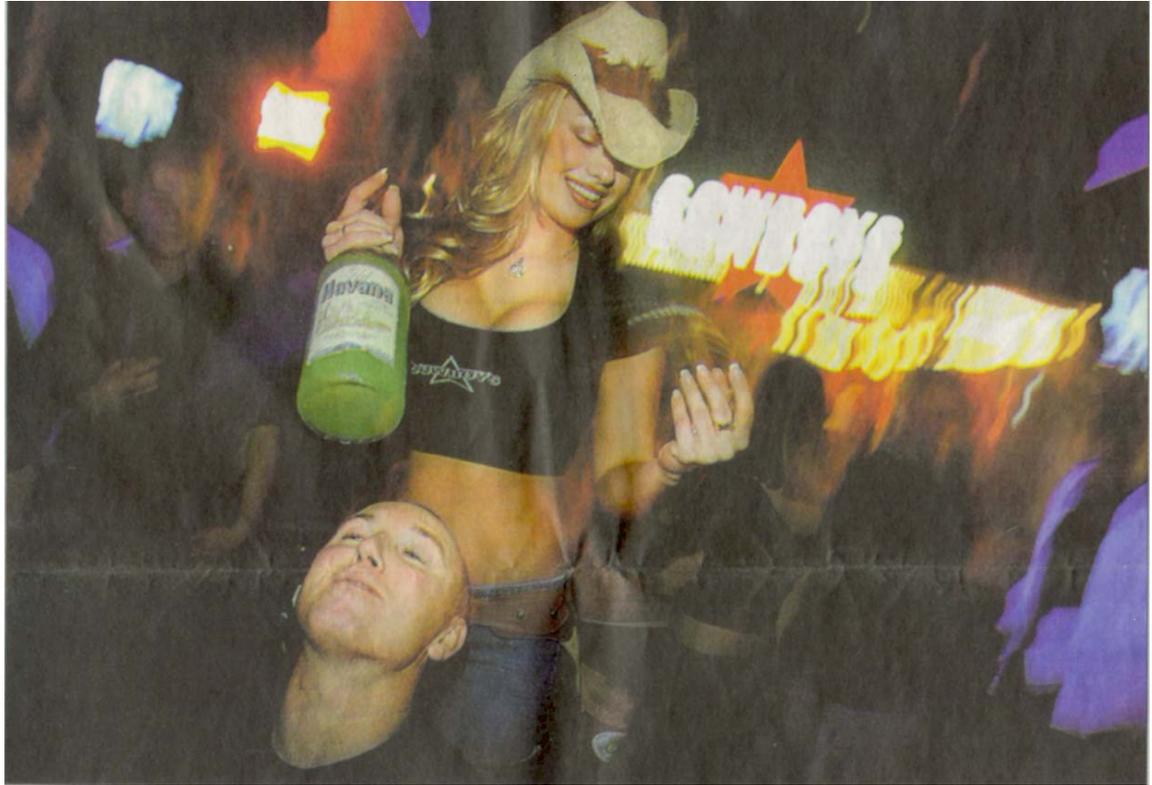
### 3. *Trashing the Public*

Ian Brown wrote a lengthy weekend Focus piece in the Saturday *G & M* of October 26, 2002 (pp. F1, F8, F9). It was entitled "The Kyoto Stampede," and came complete with a large colour photo of the Alberta bar scene, as well as photos of anti-Kyoto crusaders Peter Lougheed (former Premier of Alberta), and Nexen Inc. CEO, Charlie Fischer. The first part of the article, was really about Calgary nightlife. Here is an excerpt:

...Another young woman, Natalie, whose lips are so glossed over they look like two shimmering eels, is pouring upside-down margaritas. This is how it works.: With Natalie standing behind him on a chair, Doug Donald, the manager, ("Biscuit" to his friends), tips his head backward between her breasts. She pours tequila and mix into his open mouth from two bottles she wears in a holster. Then pushing her upper arms around her breasts, and her breasts around Biscuit's head, she whacks his noggin back and forth to 'mix' the drink. And what are the first words out of Biscuit's mouth when she's finished? "Kyoto," he says. "It's the uncertainty, right? I don't like anything that upsets the oil patch.."

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<sup>86</sup> Jeffrey Simpson, "When They Poll the No-Nothings," *Globe and Mail*, December 11, 2002, p. A21.



“Kyoto Stampede”

This initial portion of the article, then, not only trivializes the global warming issue, it also denigrates the public. The real meaning of this part of the story is: *Let the experts decide.*

Hence, Brown shifts immediately to the 45<sup>th</sup> floor office of Peter Lougheed, who was then chairing Premier Klein’s External Advisory Committee on Kyoto. Later in the article, he reports also on a series of interviews with Calgary oil-industry representatives, all opposed to Kyoto. Toward the end of his piece, however, Brown returns to the general public, this time quoting a Toronto bus driver. Here is an excerpt:

A bus driver named Warren Brubaker said he was for Kyoto because “I know how corrupt the oil industry is.”  
“How do you know?” someone said.  
“I just know.”  
“But why should we ratify Kyoto?”  
“Because the Europeans have all ratified it.”  
“Are you aware there’s a made-in-Canada alternative?”  
“No, I don’t care that I know nothing about Kyoto. Because I read the experts. And they haven’t let me down.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ian Brown, “The Kyoto Stampede,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 October, 2002, p. F1.

Also in the *G & M* for October 26 was Jeffrey Simpson's column, entitled "The Great Canadian Effort to Save the Planet" (p. A21). There Simpson trivialized not just Kyoto, and of course Jean Chrétien's advocacy of it, but the whole philosophy of trying to care for the Earth for the benefit of future generations. He accomplished this by concocting a mock telephone conversation between himself and "Uncle Fred." Note in the excerpt that follows how Simpson rhetorically uses the language of safe sex to depict global warming:

"Mildred and I are desperately worried about you," said Uncle Fred from Gabriola Island. "Are you taking the necessary precautions to save your life?"  
"I appreciate the call, Fred," I replied, "but what are you talking about?"  
"Didn't you hear what Jean Chrétien said this week? Here, I'll read it to you. He said, 'Some people will be dying in 30 years in Canada because we have not been responsible today.'"  
"Chrétien says a lot of incomprehensible things, Fred. What was he talking about this time?"

Simpson then remarked that each summer two or three people are killed by bears, but that doesn't mean all bears should be killed. Likewise for global warming. Fred and Mildred, he suggested, have about the same chance of being killed by global warming as by a bear attack. But let us pick up the conversation a bit later:

"But David Suzuki says climate change is the end of civilization as we know it. He's very popular with my Gabriola neighbours. We've got to do something to save this planet."  
"Okay, did you know that you and Mildred emit 10 tonnes of greenhouse gases between you?"  
"I know I sometimes have indigestion that can be embarrassing in public places, but we don't flatuate that much."  
"No, no Fred. Not methane. Carbons. They're the baddies., and the average Canadian emits five tonnes of them a year ..."

Note how Simpson pits his expertise against the concerned but ill-informed general "public" represented by well-meaning but dim-witted Fred and Mildred. Soon, however, and with little or no resistance, he turns them against Kyoto by emphasizing that *they* will have to use public transit or buy a fuel-efficient car, and retrofit their house, to cut emissions — the self-interested consumer of capitalism in Simpson's story quickly gets the better of their innate publicly-spirited intentions. Note also how responsibility for global warming now seems to rest almost entirely with the Freds and Mildreds of this world, as opposed to the oil companies, the auto manufacturers, and other industrial users of energy. It is also apparent that Simpson

borrowed his litany of personal inconveniences from *Pain Without Gain* by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

#### *4. Accepting Industry Statements as Fact*

The *G&M* editorial of December 9, 2002 was entitled, “The Terms of Canada’s Participation in Kyoto.” There the *Globe* charged that Chrétien’s plan to pass the Protocol before Christmas was “precipitate” and “irresponsible.” The editorial ended: “Canada, if it ratifies the accord, will be the only nation in the Western Hemisphere to take on the international obligation to reduce greenhouse gases.” This false statement, it would appear, was lifted directly from the pages of the *National Post* and the opinion piece appearing there by Imperial Oil’s CEO.

#### *What Was Not Covered*

The Media Propaganda Model set out by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman proposes that indoctrination is achieved not only by what is covered and how it is covered, but also by what is omitted. Here we look briefly at some material, or possible material, that did not make the pages of the *Globe and Mail*.

- Timothy Gardner, Reuters, “Suncor CEO Says Prepared for Kyoto: Unhappy About It,” September 5, 2003.<sup>88</sup> “Suncor Energy Inc. will push ahead with its marquee Canadian oil sands projects regardless of whether or not Ottawa ratifies the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas reduction, its chief executive said on Thursday. ...”
- Articles by “Earth Sciences Reporter,” Alanna Mitchell. Alanna Mitchell was named the best environmental reporter in the world in 2000 by the World Conservation Union and the Reuters Foundation. And in both 2000 and 2001 that organization appraised Mitchell’s work as being the best environmental reporting in North America and Oceania. In a speech given at the University of Regina on January 30, 2003, she was outspoken in her insistence that “the earth’s climate could be in peril if we don’t change

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<sup>88</sup> Yahoo News Canada,  
[http://www.google.ca/search?q=cache:3JyG8gji\\_yoC:ca.news.yahoo.com/02905/5/ore8](http://www.google.ca/search?q=cache:3JyG8gji_yoC:ca.news.yahoo.com/02905/5/ore8)

our ‘dirty’ habits.”<sup>89</sup> During the period between September 3, 2002 and December 11, 2002, however, this award-winning journalist was barely evident in the pages of the *Globe and Mail* with regard to Kyoto/global warming. According to the *Globe and Mail*’s web site, Alanna Mitchell published 27 articles during this time period, of which only 10 were related to Kyoto/global warming. Of those ten, five appeared within one week of the prime minister’s announcement in early September; the remaining five were spread over the ensuing 13 weeks. A number of her stories during this time period had no environmental thrust at all: “Man Killed, Two Injured in 3 Latest Shootings,”<sup>90</sup> “Universities Grapple With Rising Enrolment,”<sup>91</sup> and “CFL Players Catch Woman Leaping to Escape Fire.”<sup>92</sup> Why did the *Globe and Mail* all but silence their high-profile Earth Sciences Reporter after the first week following the Prime Minister’s announcement?

- Articles by Martin Mittelstaedt. Mittelstaedt is the *Globe*’s “Environment Reporter.” For the period, we identified only one article in the *Globe* by Mittelstaedt dealing with Kyoto/global warming.<sup>93</sup> (A second article, concerning the re-death of Lake Erie, contains a one sentence reference to global warming).<sup>94</sup> By contrast, business reporter Patrick Brethour (he of the ill-fated coverage of Kyoto polling) had his byline on 18 articles dealing with Kyoto, while political reporter Steven Chase authored, or helped author, 42 articles on Kyoto (7 being co-authored with Brethour). After Canada ratified the Protocol, however, Mittelstaedt was back again publishing pieces in the *Globe* related to global warming, such as:

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<sup>89</sup> Karla Paragg, “Globe and Mail Journalist Offers the Goods on Kyoto,” *The Manitoban*, 12 February 2003.

<sup>90</sup> November 11, 2002.

<sup>91</sup> November 11, 2002.

<sup>92</sup> September 23, 2002.

<sup>93</sup> Martin Mittelstaedt, “Firms Breaking Promises on Emissions, Study Says,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 October, 2002, p. A4.

<sup>94</sup> Martin Mittelstaedt, “Dead in the Water,” *Globe and Mail*, 5 October, 2002, p. F1.

\* “Putting Out The Fires.” The sub headline here states: “Canada’s coal-fired power plants are in the pollution big-leagues, writes Martin Mittelstaedt, spewing out a witches’ brew of contaminants that clog the air and cause acid rain ...”<sup>95</sup>

\*“World Faces Water Crisis” Here Mittelstaedt notes: “The world is facing a water crisis due to pollution, climate change and surging population growth ...”<sup>96</sup>

\*“Arctic Lakes Deemed Warmest in History”<sup>97</sup>

\*“Global Warming May Shrink Great Lakes, Report Says”<sup>98</sup>

Why was Mittelstaedt all but unheard during the period of the Kyoto debate? He responded to our question as follows:

Most of the Kyoto coverage was handled out of Ottawa and Alberta because it was seen as more of a political story. Although I've written a number of the political stories related to Kyoto over the past few years, I've written more extensively on the science of global warming, which is seen as more of an environmental story.<sup>99</sup>

## Conclusions:

1. The great bulk of the *Globe*'s coverage was negative toward Kyoto. There was no “made in Canada” plan in place, so both by implication and directly the *Globe*'s favourable coverage of this “alternative” was tantamount to recommending that no organized action be taken against global warming at this time.

2. Most of the *Globe*'s coverage did not deal with the accord itself, nor with global warming and the environment, but focused rather on political conflicts and with economic/financial repercussions of meeting Kyoto's targets.

3. Much of the coverage centred on personality.

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<sup>95</sup> *Globe and Mail*, March 15, 2003.

<sup>96</sup> *Globe and Mail*, March 5, 2003;

<sup>97</sup> *Globe and Mail*, April 8, 2003, p. A121.

<sup>98</sup> *Globe and Mail*, April 9, 2003, p. A17.

<sup>99</sup> E-mail to Robert Babe from Martin Mittelstaedt, dated May 13, 2003.

4. There was no attempt to quantify the benefits of Kyoto, only the costs.
5. None of the coverage explained the range of harms (“costs”) from global warming. While there were a few stories describing select negative effects (melting polar ice caps, extinction of polar bears, shortening of the outdoor hockey season), no article or articles attempted to describe the full range of environmental consequences foreseen to accompany global warming: these range from the submerging of sea coasts, to mass extinctions, to severe weather patterns including droughts, floods and storms.
6. The *Globe*’s Environment Reporter published only one piece relating (indirectly) to Kyoto/global warming during the period of policy debate. The *Globe*’s Earth Sciences Reporter fared somewhat better, but only marginally; one half of her ten pieces appeared in the week following the Prime Minister’s initial announcement, just as the forces of opposition were beginning to mobilize.
7. Only one article was critical of the US for withdrawing from Kyoto; it reported on the hostile reception paid to U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, at the UN Earth Summit,.
8. NGO and environmental groups had very little coverage.
9. Non-believers in human-induced climate change were given inordinate space and accorded much greater credibility than was the large majority of scientists who accept global warming.
10. There is a definite pattern of denigrating concerned citizens, both with respect to their knowledge level, and their sincerity in backing an issue that may cost them personally; there is, concomitantly, a deference to business leaders.
11. Even business leaders were selectively interviewed and quoted. Scanty attention was paid to Suncor and Shell, which announced that their plans for oil exploration and investment would remain undiminished, but ample attention was given to energy executives from Imperial Oil, Talisman and EnCana, who were militantly opposed to Kyoto.
12. The thrust of the coverage was to cite opposition to Kyoto, and then, perhaps, to quote a federal defender of the Protocol.
13. When polls could be interpreted as indicating a decline in public support for Kyoto, they were accorded prominent coverage; poll results that could indicate increased support for Kyoto were scarcely reported at all.

In conclusion, there was a definite and pronounced tilt in the *Globe's* coverage toward the position of certain business leaders, particularly of hostile executives in the energy sector. As noted, one looks in vain during this period for interviews even with executives from Suncor or Shell, whose companies were much less opposed to Kyoto than were the executives from Talisman and Imperial Oil, who received prominent attention in the pages of the *Globe*. Moreover, the paper accorded but modest attention to environmental concerns and appears even to have de-commissioned its environment reporter from writing on the issue. The "modest attention," however, while important, is easy to explain. Kyoto was a case of the Canadian government and significant portions of the business community being in opposition to one another; Kyoto became a story *because* government suddenly announced its intention to ratify the Protocol. In other words, power was divided, and the range of coverage in the *Globe* reflects divisiveness within circles of power.

Having said that, the analysis and evidence of this chapter point firmly to the *Globe's* lack of balance. We might say that while "lip-service" was paid to environmental concerns, those issues were never addressed in their full range and seriousness; the lip-service, we might speculate, served to divert attention from the overall thrust of the reporting, which was one-sided and hardly environmental.

Only seldom does an issue like Kyoto enter the public domain. Most often government and business are in much greater harmony. Where government-business consensus exists, one can anticipate even less diversity in coverage. Coverage of Kyoto is consistent with the Propaganda Model of Chomsky-Herman and is in accord with the media thesis set out by Harold Innis.