



## The Round-Up: November 28th 2006

Posted by [Stoneleigh](#) on November 28, 2006 - 2:03pm in [The Oil Drum: Canada](#)

Topic: [Site news](#)

Tags: [alberta economy](#), [climate change](#), [danny williams](#), [energy boom](#), [equalization payments](#), [first nations](#), [greenhouse gas emissions](#), [nuclear regulation](#), [oil and gas revenues](#), [oil sands](#) [[list all tags](#)]

### [Canada stores up problems at its booming energy frontier](#)

Alberta's clout in Ottawa is also growing. Stephen Harper, Canada's prime minister, and many close advisers come from the western province. The population of Alberta and neighbouring British Columbia has overtaken that of Quebec for the first time. Together, the two will be entitled to more members of parliament than the French-speaking province.

The oilsands have boosted Canada's profile in the US and abroad. McKinsey plans to hold its next global energy conference in Calgary. "It's fantastic to have a piece of the economy that is so focused on improving productivity," says Bruce Simpson, the company's managing partner in Canada.

Yet, for all the benefits, a frisson of nervousness has recently emerged that short-term growth may be taking precedence over long-term prudence. Mr Vander Ploeg estimates that the province's Progressive Conservative government has saved just 8.6 per cent of the C\$120bn it has collected in non-renewable resource royalties over the past 30 years.

By contrast, Alaska has set aside about one-quarter of its resource revenues in "permanent" and "reserve" funds. Norway has tucked almost two-thirds of its North Sea riches into a rainy-day petroleum fund....

....The oilsands investment has created such a dire labour shortage that one coffee-shop chain prints a "now hiring" message on its paper cups. But soaring accommodation costs have expanded the ranks of the working poor. The Mustard Seed, a church-based community group, serves 14,000 meals a month in the capital Edmonton. Tim Seefeldt, its chairman, says: "The impression people have that a boom makes all problems go away is not true."

### [Harper 'will rue this day,' experts say](#)

Parliament's historic acknowledgment of the Quebecois as a nation may be nothing more than a symbolic gesture, but it will embolden separatists and eventually plunge Canada into another constitutional crisis, analysts warned yesterday.

And the Liberals and Conservatives have only themselves to blame for this because they placed their own political needs -- competing against each other to be the federalist

option in Quebec -- ahead of what is good for the country.

"This prime minister and federalists in both parties who voted for this motion are going to have to gird their loins and get ready to fight separatism on a new front," said Rudyard Griffiths, executive director of the Dominion Institute.

### [Greenhouse emission rate doubles](#)

Global efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions have had little impact with the rate of emissions more than doubling since the 1990s.

CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research scientist, Mike Raupach, said that from 2000 to 2005, the growth rate of carbon dioxide emissions was more than 2.5 per cent per year. "In the 1990s it was less than one per cent per year."

### [Kyoto retreat could hurt economy](#)

Canada's repudiation of its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol could harm its economy in coming years, warns the head of the United Nations Environment Program.

Achim Steiner says Canadian business could be left out of major profit opportunities created by an international emissions trading system that he predicts will be worth \$100 billion in 10 years.

### [Williams ready to go national with campaign against Tories over equalization](#)

In an interview after his address, the Progressive Conservative premier said he's not alone in worrying about equalization reform undermining the progress made thanks to new oil and gas revenues. Saskatchewan got a similar commitment from the Harper government, he said.

### [Rural gas retail network is in jeopardy](#)

Despite the best intention of government gasoline regulation, small gasoline retailers in rural Nova Scotia are on the verge of a crisis. The regulation of the retail gasoline business was originally designed to smooth out fluctuations in the price of gasoline for consumers and, at the same time, offer protection for rural gasoline retailers who have been struggling to make a living in the face of stiff competition from higher-volume, lower-priced retailers.

### [What's Danny to do?](#)

With Husky Energy's announcement of new reserves found on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, a crop of political questions have arisen questioning the Williams' administration's options regarding development of the reserves.

Are the new fields new? Or are they part of the existing White Rose field? The answer to those technical questions could make a world of difference for the provincial government's financial and political fortunes.

If they are part of the current reserves, then they will be considered to be under the existing royalty structure, known as a generic royalty regime. They would likely be quickly developed and the revenues would soon fill provincial coffers (see related story, Good Prospects, on page 13). Possibly by \$12 billion over the life of the field, an expert says, double the previous projected revenue.

If they are new fields, they could possibly be viewed as subject to a new royalty regime and potentially billions more in revenue.

### [An oasis in the north country](#)

It's been a year since the Kashechewan reserve in Ontario was evacuated because of contaminated water, drawing national attention to the water crisis in aboriginal communities. In March, federal Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice promised to solve the crisis. On the facing page, Sun Media returns to Kashechewan to find a still-bleak situation.

This month, the Edmonton Sun visited several Alberta communities to see if things have changed here. Today we look at the people of the Driftpile First Nation, who after 10 years of boil-water advisories are learning to trust their taps again.

### [Rig workers rewarded for making the grade](#)

Drilling hands that make the grade for their new occupational title as rig technicians are hitting a wage gusher. Hourly pay jumped about nine per cent for veterans who quickly passed exams set by the province's apprenticeship system.

Increases average about five per cent for workers who have not yet completed the program begun last winter by oilfield employers, trade schools and the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board.

### [EPA Expected to Issue Million-Year-Long Regulation](#)

"This will be the only rule that applies for such a long duration into the future," says Elizabeth Cotsworth, the EPA director of radiation and indoor air. "Most EPA rules apply for the foreseeable future -- five or six generations. This rule is for basically 25,000 generations."

In 2002, after Congress and President Bush approved plans to store power plant nuclear waste material inside Yucca Mountain, Nevada, the EPA was placed in charge of laying out the repository's building codes, designed to last 10,000 years.

"We thought that [10,000 years] was generally the limit of scientific certainty in our ability to predict with confidence," says Cotsworth.

But opponents of the Yucca Mountain plan filed a lawsuit which argued that the regulation did not extend far enough into the future. After the courts agreed, the EPA extended the regulation by 100 times, to 1 million years.

### [The greening of air travel](#)

Canadian air travellers may soon be able to buy a clearer conscience over their massive contribution to climate change.

Airlines are looking at emission-offsets that let passengers pay a voluntary fee based on the carbon emissions attributed to their flight.

The money goes to projects that cut emissions elsewhere, in theory, neutralizing the harmful impact of the trip.

### [Global warming's huddled masses](#)

Last month the British government released a detailed and pessimistic report about the future impacts of climate change. One of the more worrying statements was that rising sea levels, floods and drought could displace more than 200 million people worldwide within the next 50 years.

This is not the first time such alarming predictions have been made. Last year the UN University's Institute for Environment and Human Security warned that we should expect 50 million environmental refugees within the next five years. Similar forecasts have appeared in recent years in publications of environmental groups and on the editorial pages of many of the world's leading newspapers.

How reliable are these predictions? Should Canada brace to receive waves of environmental refugees as a result?

### [Auto sales projected to slump in 2007: WSJ](#)

Auto sales already on track to decline this year could face their lowest level in nearly a decade in 2007 because of slowing growth in the economy and the housing-industry slump, according to a media report Monday....

....The impact of the housing slump is likely to be hard on the Big Three because slower housing starts cause builders to defer purchases of pickup trucks, which are Detroit's most profitable models, The Journal said.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).