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“The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things” In the vein of Lewis Carroll's popular work, *Through the Looking Glass*, this is one of my favourite quotes. In any case it leads me into a call for someone with a little time and too much to say to set up a seismic blog. There must be some young and up-and-comer with too much of an opinion that could build and host this thing? You know .. the secrets of the industry, the politically incorrect ramblings and so on. We, as Associations, are relegated to being neutral bodies in order to maintain relationships and some semblance of rationality.

This last year and the issues that have arisen have really allowed us to focus on an identity for ourselves. In some manner we have become more separated from Big Oil. As Oil Company economics have soared; ours have not changed. We are still faced with a static pot of money, which is eroded over time by inflation. Our biggest constraints of timing and economics pale in comparison to Big Oil's concern with the “right of access”. Cases in point were the BC MOU's signed with the Aboriginals when the OGC was created. The concept of Big Oil at that time was that throwing money at the issue would ensure the right of access remained. This to some extent may have proven true but it comes today with its own set of challenges. We, as the seismic community, failed in my opinion, as we did not show up to represent ourselves separately. We ended up under a consultation regime today that mirrors that of Big Oil's reflecting their stature as a large and powerful economic engine. We flounder with our smaller-minded constraints of timing and economics in the face of a larger process focused to other ideals.

As we look outwards it seems clear that our biggest concern is and will remain the environment. Clearly leaving the right of access to Big Oil, we must continue to be focused on the one issue that will allow us to work or not. This is the message we are delivering to our stakeholder tables. It is important in many of these cases to allow for separate yet parallel streams of engagement between Big Oil and ourselves. In such a manner we are able to ensure continuity between the groups without sacrificing one set of issues for the others. I believe this will continue to be the most important rule of engagement for our sub-sector of the Oil and Gas Industry.

We live in a world of high commodity prices, which in turn drive up consumer prices. As Oil went over \$30 a barrel last fall and then \$40 the ire of the consumer rose and the economists' warnings of a global economic recession mounted. Today we sit somewhere north of \$50 and the murmurings have lessened to a dull background din. It is interesting how quickly we all seem to get used to the rising tide and reset our thresholds of expectations.

In the face of these commodity challenges we live in a world of conflicting perception pressures. Most of us have heard of NIMBY – Not In My BackYard, well recently I read another acronym in a CERI publication that used BANANA – Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anybody. This is truly the conflicted world that we exist in – we lack in our political leaders the big picture mentality that clearly sees, defines and deals with the

conflict between the need for energy, the price we are willing to pay, and the sustainability of the environment.

I like to tell a story of sitting at a Federal Government roundtable on Energy a couple of years ago here in Calgary. The room was full of government types – both from Alberta and the Federal Government. A gentleman from the Alberta Government provided the gov't-think for electricity in the future. It was clear that the use of clean coal would tail off in the very immediate future and continue on a steep slope towards zero over the next couple of decades. Eco-friendly sources would quickly supplement coal. I questioned the fellow on what Alberta's current percentage of electricity was generated by clean coal to which he mumbled somewhere north of 75 %. I challenged his theory then citing Ontario's recent move (at that time) to throw out electricity deregulation and Ernie Eves's further move to lower the electricity price to the consumer to 4 cents – in fact taking the price back a number of years. What good could this do? - a short-term political solution that would have to be paid for in the future. How then could this translate to the use of eco-friendly energy sources in our province? Coal plants are built in the foothills next to the source. We, as urban environmentalists, never see them but they deliver electricity at amazingly cheap rates – mere pennies. And to my knowledge other than through government subsidization (i.e. buying wind power to run the Calgary LRT) I was unaware of any model that supported a 2 times or 5 times price increase to meet some other objective at the consumer level. One other government type informed me that his teenage daughters would never allow for the use of such energy sources in the future – the upcoming generations were true environmentalists. Ah the true idealism of our youth, those that live at home with Mom and Dad and/or at university that can afford such noble pursuits. What are they prepared to give up, I asked, their high standard of living?

Take it for what it is worth – fossil fuels have clearly accelerated the development of mankind. They have allowed for man to move off our hourly pursuits – whether it was farming for food, hunting for food, or even in hourly jobs for the currency of the day. They have raised the general standard of living to unprecedented levels – our houses are filled with technology, we shower ourselves with items of enjoyment that have no particular necessary use, we travel the world, and in fact it might be said that we enjoy life. Perhaps all of this accelerates us to the cliff quicker – who knows but suffice it to say that mankind is a pretty resilient creature (picture some naked caveman surviving against much more powerful animals in his day) and one hopes those youth of today and tomorrow will transform their idealism into working solutions for the world.

From the Thursday Files:

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.

- Corrie Ten Boom