

Ralph Goodale's [Predictable] Rain on Live 8

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Monday, July 04, 2005

<https://politicsrespun.org/2005/07/ralph-goodales-predictable-rain-on-live-8/>

I would have had to pinch myself if Canada's Finance Minister Ralph Goodale did not rain on the Live8 momentum to eradicate poverty.

Not only has Canada completely ignored its early 1990s pledge to eliminate child poverty in Canada by 2000, but our finance minister cannot be seen to buckle to the pressure of actual citizens getting together to push for political change. That would certainly make the politicians--leaders, decision-makers, beacons of hope and direction--look like they are being driven around by the electorate motivated by the latest rock star whim...regardless of the prime minister's eagerness to have Bono speak at a federal Liberal convention before blowing off the promise to actually fulfil Canada's 0.7% aid pledge by actually providing the cash for foreign aid to the level we pledged.

Finance Minister Ralph Goodale, in his post Live8 spin, blew a great big number out of his bum to scare us into the depth of crushing poverty it would thrust us if we actually spent 0.7% of our GDP on foreign aid. Forget for a minute that so much of our foreign aid is tied aid, where recipient nations must spend the money on Canadian companies to provide services and products, thus enriching our own economy. Forget also about all we aren't doing to address corrupt governments in recipient nations and we can look at Goodale's number for what it is: fearmongering in the only G8 nation with a current government budget surplus.

"The numbers involved are very, very large," Goodale http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050617/wl_canada_nm/canada_group_canada_aid_col told reporters. He said it would cost Canada C\$41 billion in new spending over the next decade if Ottawa were to start boosting funding this year.

"Now, that is in the order of magnitude of our (new) investment in health care over the next 10 years ... Those are very large numbers to be able to absorb within the fiscal framework," he said.

\$41b over 10 years is just \$4.1b per year on average, but let's deal with a big big big number over 10 years. So to improve our already [virtually] universal health care of the next decade, the government plans to [spend](#) \$41.3b over those ten years:

On September 16, 2004, Canada's First Ministers signed the 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care. Under this plan, the Government of Canada will provide \$41.3 billion in new health care funding over the next 10 years.

This leaves Canadians with the bitter, selfish task of deciding if a decade of improvements to our universal health care is worth the same to us as doing our part--taking a lead even--in helping a child not die from severe poverty every three seconds.

My sad fear is that too many Canadians will not feel those two \$41b items are worth the same. Way to go, Ralph.

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