

Letters to the editor in response to Randy Burton's article (Tougher times for Tories in Saskatchewan, The StarPhoenix - October 9, 2008), calling Maurice Vellacott's election talk about amendments to the Divorce Act as simply the MP's "hobby horse": "... In the meantime, [the Conservatives] continue to trot out their personal hobby horses. Standing on the brink of a recession, one of Maurice Vellacott's priorities is to amend the Divorce Act...."

To: 'spnews@SP.canwest.com'

RE: Tougher Times for Tories in Saskatchewan (October 9, 2008)

Why is it that our Commonwealth Australian neighbour can conclude as a matter of public policy that the state is only as strong as the family, and enact sweeping family law changes, while Randy Burton declares himself fit to accuse MPs like Maurice Vellacott, who share this concern, of playing the fiddle while Rome supposedly burns?

Yes, we are indeed in a global economic credit crisis. But as any farmer will tell you, just because your neighbour has had to shoot a few horses, is no reason for you to do the same. Our economic horse is relatively healthy, although precautionary moves such as those being taken by the government are well advised.

And thankfully, this government can walk and chew gum at the same time, so MPs can also address other important issues facing society, including the long term deterioration of the family unit in Canada. If Mr. Burton were to stand taller, he would perhaps notice that the State of the Family has been a major issue in all other western nations save for Canada, where previous governments have seen fit to dismiss the Family as being ideologically inconvenient.

In economic terms, divorce costs our economy \$ 7 Billion annually. The capitalized amount corresponds to about \$ 200 Billion, or about the size of the annual federal budget. Mr. Burton is undoubtedly an intelligent man. Perhaps this economic perspective on the issue will serve to give him a better appreciation for the issues Saskatchewan MPs are tackling.

GP, Niagara Falls, ON

Re your column,

The economic price I paid in ransom to get my ex to let me see my two boys more than 4 hours a month put me into debt \$30,000.00 Shared parenting isn't an issue? Well, it's not sexy, and goes contrary to political correctness. When my two boys grow up and ask why the justice system treated them this way, maybe you could provide them with some answers.

MW, Edmonton, AB

Dear Mr. Vellacott:

Thank you for your efforts. Please disregard Mr. Burton's ignorance of an issue he obviously has no regard for due to his lack of understanding and empathy for the children of this country. A change in the Divorce Act will have a major positive impact on the lives of more than 50% of the children in this country who happen to be the future of this country. As for Mr. Burton's notion of an economic crisis, he should start paying attention to his own country as opposed to all the "doom and gloom" he is hearing out of the USA. Last I checked my bank and all others across this country just seem to be fine and I haven't heard of any need for a government bailout for Mr. Burton's self proclaimed "economic crisis".

I applaud you for listening and taking a stand for the people of your province and this country for whom you are the voice of.

If you would be so kind to forward me Mr. Burton's e-mail address I would be happy to fill him in on the incredible injustice our divorce act forces upon the children of our country. I will fill him in on the fact that it has caused my son's education to suffer to the point of having to take special education classes. I will fill him in on how the system, between both myself and my former wife, extorted over \$300,000.00 from our family assets. That \$300,000.00 would have gone a long way to providing both my son's endless opportunities in their adult lives. I will fill him in on how the current system leads to devastating outcomes for the children. I will fill him in on how so much pain, suffering and loss can be avoided with a system that truly considers "the best interests of the children".

Mr. Burton is quite fortunate to not have had the personal experience of our current Divorce Act. On that note he should refrain from belittling an issue he obviously has no experience with or knowledge of. If he did understand the issues children face as a result of our current Divorce Act he would realize your stance and efforts are a reflection of a character he can only envy.

Many thanks Mr. Vellacott.

Kind regards,

TP

RE: Tougher Times for Tories in Saskatchewan (October 9, 2008)

Mr. Burton can claim anything he wants and try to spin the story anyway he wants. I claim that the voters in Saskatchewan are the really smart ones. They understand that a strong economy is possible only when there is a strong family unit and a strong family is only possible if the current Divorce Act is drastically re-vamped. In its current state it is the cause of many a family destruction. It also promotes wealth transfer to Lawyers from the poor unsuspecting and innocent people of this country.

Is Mr. Burton implying that Saskatchewan electorate don't understand the issues? Or is it that Mr. Burton does not understand? The answer will be revealed on October 14th.

VS

My letter to the editor:

Randy Burton belittles Vellacott's equal parenting amendments to the Divorce Act as a "personal hobby horse", (Thursday in the StarPhoenix) but I beg to differ. As a Saskatoon-born married man living in Ottawa, I share Vellacott's sense that reforms are needed, although neither he nor I personally could benefit from such reforms. Surveys show no other issues have such overwhelming public support (80+%) yet few other issues have been undemocratically blocked for over a decade by the small group of ideological, vested interests –the adversarial, gender-biased lawyers of Justice. Lawyers make billions each year from the pain and suffering of parents and children – that's the real hobby horse. Current divorce practice systematically profits from removing children from parents, like the native residential schools, only on a much larger scale. I think Vellacott is a hero for standing up for powerless children against greedy vested interests.

G, Ottawa, ON

To whom it may concern.

Your reporter Randy Burton needs to pull his head out of the sand and recognize that:

- 1) Part of our financial difficulties is because of the ever-increasing number of divorce families squandering their family wealth and savings on lawyers in a system designed to bankrupt the parties.
- 2) Part of our financial difficulties is because we have sole custody mothers who are having difficulty balancing being a sole custody mother and having a productive career.
- 3) Part of our financial difficulties is because our men are suffering physical and psychological symptoms because of losing their children, rendering many incapable of efficiently functioning in the work force.
- 4) Part of the reason many students cannot afford post secondary education is because of the diminishment of their family wealth and savings because of divorce.
- 5) Part of the reason we are in this financial difficulty is the need for so many two home households financed on credit because divorced families have no money!
- 6) Part of the reason we are having financial difficulties is because seniors are also spending their savings to help their grown children and grandchildren through divorce. And if that's not enough to be concerned about,
- 7) The divorce rate is known to rise dramatically during times of recession.

In my opinion, Mr. Vellacott is a man who sees that strong family units, pre and post separation, make for a stronger economy.

I saw on Canada AM this morning a group of concerned citizens asking questions of banking specialists, and one with great concerns was a woman who works with those who divorce.

80% of the population supports what Mr. Vellacott proposes. I guess Randy Burton and the Star Phoenix only represent the opinions of 20%.

Sincerely;

KT, Ontario

Dear editor:

I find it interesting your columnist thinks Supreme Court Justices are above criticism by an MP or any judge for that matter. Does that mean he thinks newspapers ought not to criticize them as well - or are they above suspicion? (Tougher times for Tories in Saskatchewan Randy Burton, The StarPhoenix, October 9/08)

Mr. Vellacott is not afraid to act on principle and he knows thousands upon thousands of Canadian Fathers have been marginalized by Family Courts in Saskatoon and across this vast nation. He apparently has a vision much broader than Burton's.

Mr. Burton can feel comfortable in his criticism as long as he is 1) Not married 2) thinks he is happily married and his wife doesn't get a restraining order against him based on false accusations of abuse 3) Has no children 4) has children but doesn't care if the wife takes off with them and then gets the family home, half or more of his income and pension contributions, complete legal and physical custody of the children and puts him on the street looking for a place to stay...there is more but it can fill a book.

All I can say to Burton and his ilk - look further into the seamy underbelly of the family court system in your community and the take home pay of family law lawyers who have a vested interest in the current status quo then you will know what it is like right across this country.