



Happy Birthday, Mr. Bush!

What more could we possibly give you?

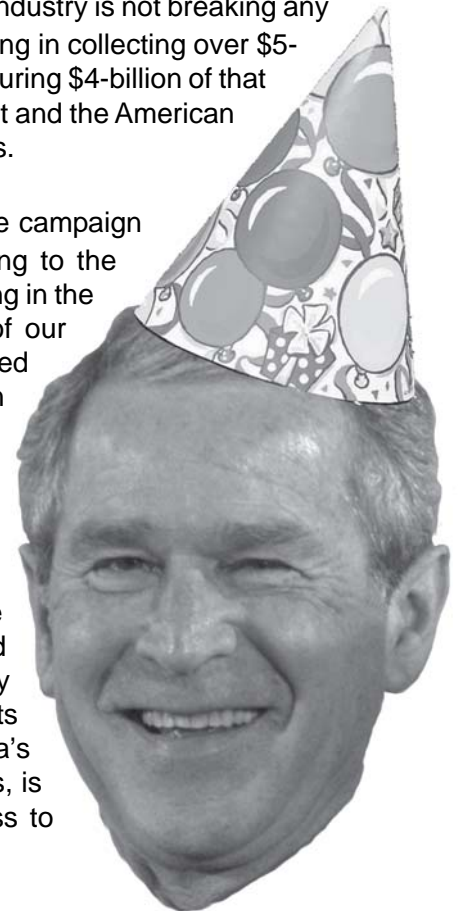
Stephen Harper will be in Washington today for George W. Bush's birthday. Having watched our government go to great lengths to please the U.S. president, we're wondering what our Prime Minister could possibly give him that he hasn't already got.

Our Energy: Mexico and the United States are both promoting energy independence – a smart move in times of rising energy costs. Canada, on the other hand, is happy to sell off our energy supplies to the lowest bidder. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein boasted on a recent trip to Washington that “U.S. investment totals 50 per cent of Alberta's petroleum assets.” But at only 1 per cent of profits, those U.S. companies are paying some of the lowest royalties in the world. According to the Parkland Institute, the Klein government collected more revenues from gambling than from royalties on the tar sands between 2004 and 2005. Not only that, thanks to NAFTA, Canada now exports 70 per cent of the oil and 61 per cent of the natural gas we produce each year to the United States. NAFTA also prevents us from ever cutting back on the proportion of energy we produce and sell to the U.S., even in times when our country runs short.

Our Wood: Three separate tribunals have ruled that Canada's softwood lumber industry is not breaking any free trade rules. And yet the U.S. government refuses to admit it did anything wrong in collecting over \$5-billion in illegal tariffs. Harper has told Canadians we're getting a good deal by securing \$4-billion of that stolen money from Bush. But the real winners in this deal are the U.S. government and the American lumber lobby because the message is clear – they don't have to play by the rules.

Our Troops: After 9/11, Canada “made a significant military commitment to the campaign against terrorism” in order to “demonstrate solidarity with our allies,” according to the Department of National Defence. We have 2,300 troops in Afghanistan participating in the American-led “Operation Enduring Freedom.” That gobbles up 68 per cent of our spending on missions abroad, and leaves us with only 59 military personnel devoted to traditional peacekeeping missions. Canada also just bought over \$17-billion worth of new military equipment for future missions – a purchase that made Bush very happy according to Michael Wilson, Canadian Ambassador to the United States.

Our Water: Canada is under a lot of pressure to send its water to the U.S., through diversions and bulk water exports. This leaves Canada's supply vulnerable to environmental depletion and to international trade challenges that could permanently open the floodgates. The lack of an up-to-date federal water policy means that Canada has few options when the U.S. ignores international agreements designed to settle water conflicts. Bush has said the U.S. has a right to Canada's water. Harper, in failing to clarify his government's position on bulk water exports, is signaling that the president won't have to make much of a fuss to gain access to Canadian fresh water supplies.



If you are concerned about how much of Canada is being handed over to the United States, visit our website at www.canadians.org or call 1-800-387-7177 for more information.