

Subject:

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To: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST;

As stated previously, I was informed early yesterday by Mr. Zerr that Mrs. Bragg's concern re garbage in Lynn Valley will be addressed immediately.

I should have mentioned that Mr. Zerr, while telling me this, also used the occasion to complain about the lack of manpower and money to do his job, he being in charge of keeping our municipality clean. But the problem, as I see it, is that we have more staff then ever - not staff at the street level I admit but as the workers say to "boost the number of paper pushers". Needless to say events such as the Northlands scandal, which Don Bell accused me of divulging to the press, did little to boost staff morale. As one worker said, when a previous scandal came to light, "if they can play golf during company time, why should we break our backs". Some of you may remember that when I exposed such shortcomings, before they became headlines, his worship Mayor DON BELL and his erstwhile loyal elected subjects, including the highest vote getter, criticized me in public for being ANTI STAFF.

The descent into incompetence in the District started when a past Council turned the hiring of staff over to "Management". The results were predictable. The first indicator of incompetence in a corporation is when, in response to simple problems, the corporation starts to hire more managers.

When I started to work at Burrard in 1972 we had 4000 men working. We had a president, 5 foremen with 2 or 3 assistants each and the rest were workers, mostly tradesmen. We built good ships and made money. When I retired in 1991 we had 50 foremen 150 assistants and our work compliment was down to 300. That is when the company went bankrupt.

When I was first elected to District Council our streets were clean, the grass was cut, we had a low tax rate and our reserve funds were high. Now we have more manpower then ever, our streets are a disgrace, the taxes are close to the highest in the region and our reserve funds are virtually gone, not to speak of the Heritage Fund. But when I made a motion that Council seize control of the staff hiring, as was the case before the decline into incompetence began, there was no seconder to my motion. Indeed in line with "Mayor Bell's and his loyal subjects' concept of democracy", I was not even allowed to explain my motion.

But back to Mr. Zerr - He also told me that since I had voted for a zero budget back IN 1999 I was responsible for the lack of money at his disposal. Last year too, I had voted for a zero percent increase in the budget, he said.

All this is true I admit - yet with the second highest taxes in the region and, with the exception of the District Fire Department, more staff then ever, I have difficulties in pleading guilty. The problem as I see it is at a different level. When we have a Mayor who has abdicated his responsibility, he being busy providing "leadership at Translink" while muzzling criticism at home, it is not surprising that there is not enough money to keep our streets clean. YES, I did vote against any tax increase for the last three years but the reason is not that I like dirty streets and raw sewage going into the ocean but because I KNOW TOO MUCH, including about the subsidy to the City which, as of this moment, seems to have escaped the attention of District taxpayers.

Ernie Crist



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