

## **Becoming the 51<sup>st</sup> state**

The Cranky Professor

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Social, economic, and political union with the United States—it might well be coming, and soon. Perhaps the only question left is whether it will come as a result of decisions taken in Ottawa or through the exercise of American military power.

As the world warms, hot air from the equator will travel further north and south before meeting cool air and producing rain. For us in the northern hemisphere, that means that the world-wide band of desert currently mostly below the tropic of cancer will expand northward. The American southwest, already dry, will become even more arid. The American Midwest, right now not prone to drought, will begin to look the way the southwest does today. The United States as a whole will begin to suffer massive water shortages.

Canada, on the other hand, is blessed with abundant reserves of fresh water. Global warming won't change that fact. The deserts and the dry grasslands will move north, but not this far north.

What will the Americans do when they begin to run out of water? Water, remember, is absolutely essential for life—not even oil is as precious. The Americans will do what people throughout history have done in face of life-threatening scarcity. They will go where they have to go, killing or displacing who they have to kill or displace, to get what they need.

“But Canada is America's best friend and ally. Surely the Americans will respect our sovereignty.” The Americans are not keen today to respect Canadian sovereignty in our Arctic—it's a sure bet that in the social collapse brought on by ecological catastrophe, the Americans won't be the last to migrate and plunder.

And so it might be in our current interest to try to discover the best terms on which to be absorbed peacefully into the United States. Either way, of course, we lose, which isn't to say that global warming will create any winners. Yet some ways of losing are much worse than others.