Hungry Hungry Humans

By Ally Botten-Mizzaro

This source is taken from a Cree Indian Prophecy. An appropriate title for this source would be ‘The Irreplaceable World,” because this prophecy is describing how money cannot be consumed and gone forever but consumes the world to the point where wildlife and nature is no longer replaceable. This author is speaking negatively against economic prosperity for he is describing how only after nature is destroyed and used, after all the wildlife is dead and earth’s nature is corrupt, will people come to realize that money that cannot be completely destroyed for it is the destroyer. The author is implying that consumers, investors and business owners over value their money, seeing it as being something that can be “eaten” and gone, so they focus on the buying and spending, on using earth’s resources without considering environmental impacts. The chapters relating to this source would be chapters eleven through to twelve for they focus on economic globalization and the toll that it takes on the Earth. These chapters also develop the many meanings of sustainable prosperity and what it means to sustain the environment. An individual who would disagree with this prophecy would support economic growth and only see the economic side of sustainable prosperity, without giving thought to the environment. Some people believe that we should embrace economic growth but also maintain environmental stewardship to find the balance between the two. Others would agree with this prophecy, people like David Suzuki, would argue that economic growth and development leads to the destruction and ruin of the world and that more needs to be done to prevent this damage. Growing economic prosperity leads to the destruction of wildlife and nature, so therefore we must to do more to help sustain the environment. It is vital that governments and individuals recognize the many dangers that are presented to the environment things like: shipbuilding and taking the flag of convenience, as well as shipwrecking irresponsibly, or other negative aspects of the growing economy like how many countries growing ecological footprints are leading to climate change. The world isn’t just ours for the taking, consumers and producers alike need to take action.

Shipbuilding and breaking are both leading causes of pollution. Shipping and ship building has increased in popularity over the years for numerous reasons, the biggest being the greater demand to meet consumers’ needs and that containerization has made shipping more efficient and cheap. The ship building industry grew and moved from the Americas and Europe to areas like South Korea and Japan where labor and work is cheaper. But ship building takes from the environment day by day. Ship building requires a large amount of nonrenewable resources and also large amounts of water. These factories are huge and therefore release more gases and carbon dioxide into the air as well as creating toxic wastes. Many ship owners take the flag of convenience, which is registering the ship in another country simply because flagging out is cheaper and easier; these countries have less environment regulations and less paperwork. Ships use bunker fuel, a dirty fuel that causes as much pollution as 2000 diesel trucks. The ships ballast tanks that release and take in water can introduce new species to new areas, having a significant impact on the native wildlife in the area. Introducing alien species can lead to food loss and the death of many animals, insect and plants because this foreign creature has imposed on their food chain and life cycle. When a ship’s life ends many ship owners choose to destroy the ships in foreign countries where shipbreaking does not require any regulations or responsibilities. In Canada you are required to break ships in a certain manner that is less harmful to people and the environment, but in places such as Bangladesh there aren’t any of these regulations. Ballast tank water, toxic wastes, old fuel, and gasses are released onto the beaches and land where these ships are taken apart. The metal scraps and dangerous chemicals not only make it impossible to farm near shipbreaking yards but also lead to the deaths of many poorly paid workers. Governments need to crack down on these ship owners and factories; more rules and regulations need to be made as well as constant monitoring to ensure they are being followed through. Governments are allowing these ship owners to slip through the cracks and not take up the responsibility that they have to protect the environment. Ships are a leading cause to pollution, and this could be significantly changed if people took the time to make this difference. Shipbuilders and owners are not the only ones with negative impacts on the environment, in fact every individual in Canada, the US and other first world countries need for wealth also plays a key role in the destruction of the environment.

Individuals and countries as a whole are increasing their ecological footprints due to growing economic globalization. Sustainable prosperity of the economy is the focus of many individuals and government leaders when sustainable prosperity of the environment should also be taken into account. The more we consume the more we waste and the larger and larger our impact on the environment grows. The amount of land needed to sustain each individual not the earth should be 1.89 hectares, but in Canada alone each person is using up 7.25 hectares. We would need four earths to sustain everyone if everyone consumed as Canada does. This is the result of the growing needs of people and the expanding of transnational corporations. 70 percent of the world gets less of their share of resources while 30 percent uses up around 90 percent of the global resources. The world is being eaten up at a rate that it cannot sustain, consumers are borrowing from the future and one day this debt needs to be paid. The growing consumption and need for merchandise and natural resources has led to a daily increase of .5 degrees C. This climate change has great effects on natural systems and people. In Bolivia the glacier that is their main water source is melting. All around the world water levels are rising and wildlife is being destroyed. Trade liberalization is another cause for the growing economy, and another cause for the harm against the environment. Many governments have met up to set up Millennium Goals for the future and the Kyoto Protocol is another way governments have tried to accomplish environmental stewardship. The problem is that not everyone is trying to do their parts; the goals set for the Kyoto Protocol in Canada are nowhere near being met. Some provinces such as Alberta, which are focused so much on the money and economic prosperity of the oil fields and gas that consumption rates have risen and the province is reluctant to make these changes that would benefit the environment. These environmental changes must be acknowledged and individuals need to start doing their part to help accomplish environmental sustainability.

The big issue at hand is to what extent we should embrace growing economic prosperity without regarding the effects on the environment. The environment is being destroyed because of growing economic prosperity and we should embrace environmental stewardship to do all we can to achieve environmental sustainability. Shipbuilding and wrecking are becoming increasingly hazardous to the environment and workers. Ship owners are slipping behind rules and regulations for safe shipping and breaking by flagging out in different countries. People are steadily using more and more, taking away from others and away from the Earth. As said in the Dancing Rabbit video “the party is over,” we must shift our focus from the economy onto the environment. How long will it take for us to realize that money cannot be eaten but wildlife and natural resources can be consumed so quickly? If we do not acknowledge the fact that environmental health is steadily decreasing, the future will be a bleak one. Imagine a world without green plants, healthy animals, soft dirt, and bright sunshine. If the world continues at this pace we will soon be living in a gray dark world, with poisoned rivers and dead trees, clouds won’t be distinguished from the haze and smog produced by factories that are run to sustain our growing needs. It is a dangerous thing, it is the human need to devour and it is time to stop eating up the world before it is too late.