

Friday, November 25. 2005

Thieves and other opponents of property rights lament ETR ruling

I was driving to an appointment last night listening to talk radio and heard whiner after whiner complaining about recent court decision that empowers the operators of the privately owned and operated ETR (express toll route) to prevent toll route debtors from having their license plates renewed until they pay up.

This is a new turn of events and people who owe the ETR money are plenty steamed about it. Calls were coming in from people who owed upwards of \$4,000 and \$5,000. They're upset. They assumed they would be able to continue stealing services forever. Now that they've been caught out they're all armchair experts on why the ETR is a bad idea and should never have been allowed to happen in the first place.

Here's a newsflash: if it's a bad idea, if you think privately owned and operated roads are such a bad thing then don't drive on them. Could it be any simpler?

Now here's a few facts of life: oil is getting more expensive, not cheaper. Mark my words, the days of three-digit oil prices aren't far off and when they get here, they'll be here to stay.

The same people today who complain about the end of their ability to steal services from the ETR will be the same people tomorrow complaining about the price of gas when it heads north of \$2/litre and more. They will argue for government price caps.

At the same time, these people have lives of their own, they work, they own businesses, and when they start demanding their right to steal services from private property owners or demanding government imposed price caps on gas I will say "why don't we put a government imposed cap on your wages too, then?" If they own a candy store, I will start demanding the right to walk in, help myself to the finest chocolate they have, and walk right out.

How will these people justify having other people's property rights stricken down and their own upheld in the same breath?

Toll roads are good and gas prices must rise according to the laws of supply-and-demand. Why? Because that's the natural and fair way to reign in consumption in a future where demand would otherwise outstrip supply.

Environmentalists should be all over privately owned toll roads and market dictated gas prices.

Complainers should go join the communist party, because that's what they're arguing for.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Armchair Analysis at 11:23