

?Losers? and ?suckers?



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By Nate Smelle

Anyone paying attention to the news the past few months knows what is at stake in the 2020 U.S. election. Despite the overwhelming amount of information being delivered to us regarding COVID-19, whether opening a newspaper, turning on the television, surfing online, or tuning in the radio to get our news, one cannot avoid the political insanity unfolding south of the border.

As usual with every election, we are hearing that this will be "the most important election in our life-time." And, while considering the issues on the table during every election - health-care, education, income inequality, the environment, etc. - this may always be a true, there is something about this statement in 2020 which seems to be resonating with people more effectively.

Considering that the vast majority of the people reading this column are not American, you might be asking, what do you mean by the most important election in "our life-time?" Shouldn't we be focusing on Canadian politics? Well, unfortunately what happens in American politics, does not stay in the United States.

As a Canadian, this concerns me greatly. Looking back on our political leanings in the past, we have a tendency to follow the U.S. when it comes to the ideological views of the officials we elect.

Evidence that the awareness of the great importance of this election seems to be sinking into our collective consciousness can be found in the early voter turnout in this year's battle for the White House. As of Nov. 2, The New York Times reported that some 97 million Americans had already cast their ballots. The fact that two thirds of the total number of ballots cast during the entire 2016 U.S election were already in prior to Nov. 3 suggests that the U.S. is either ready for change or eager to self-destruct. Certainly the pandemic has played a part in compelling more people to exercise their right to participate in the democratic process. However, looking at the big picture I think a greater portion of gratitude for this sudden interest in democracy is owed to none other than U.S. president Donald Trump.

Rest assured, by no means is this an endorsement of the washed-up reality TV star turned politician. He is and always has been no more than a spoiled rich kid and a racist bully. The reason I say we owe him our thanks, is for exposing the systemic corruption and racism at the root of the greed-based ideology to which he and his followers subscribe.

If it weren't for Trump's ignorance and hubris - the same ignorance and hubris which permitted him to order white supremacist

organizations to "stand back and stand by" on election day - it is fair to say that there would not be as many people so passionately engaged in the political process this time around. It is the same ignorance and hubris compelling the Commander in Chief to persuade Americans to ignore science when it comes to the climate crisis or the COVID-19 pandemic. The same ignorance and hubris that made it acceptable in the president's mind to refer to Americans who died in war as "losers" and "suckers."

By the time this paper goes to press, election day will have come and gone. Yet, unless one of the candidates surprises nearly all the experts following the campaign, it will still be some time before the world knows who will lead our neighbouring nation to the south for the next four years.

Whether the results of the election have been announced by the time you read this column or not, with Remembrance Day just around the corner it is an ideal time to take a look at what it is that the ideology of Trump and his supporters represents. In asking this question, it is also worth contemplating how this political faction defines patriotism, service, and sacrifice; as well as who they consider to be "losers" and "suckers."