Canada deserves big thinking [CA] [1]

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EXCERPTS

In the lead up to the throne speech, the Harper government discussed allocating $725 million for a tax cut that would work out to a $30 refund for every Canadian. This PR gesture is irritating for its emptiness. But more importantly, it hints at a profoundly limited vision of the country.

The refund echoes the government's response to child care, when it opted to give parents with preschool-aged children $100 a month. This doesn't even begin to cover the real costs of daycare, and God knows how much Ottawa is spending to administer these hundreds of thousands of cheques every month.

The larger message is that Ottawa has left us to figure out our child-care problems on our own. This would be fine if there were personal solutions to what is truly a communal problem. As always, those with more money will have far more choices.

So with child care and the tax refund, Harper avoids acting on a national scale. Compare what would have happened if our previous prime ministers had acted with a similar mindset.

If Sir John A. Macdonald had thought like Harper, he never would have built a national railway. Instead, Macdonald would have given Canadians a voucher to sort out their own travel arrangements from sea to sea.

R.B. Bennett would not have brought in a national broadcaster. He might have given us free movie tickets.

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Mr. Prime Minister, don't nickel and dime us on the nation we're creating together.

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