

- Ed Driscoll - <http://pajamasmedia.com/eddriscoll> -

Click [here](#) to print.

## The Forgotten Fan

Posted By Ed Driscoll On May 4, 2011 @ 1:17 am In [Capitalism](#), [the Unknown Ideal](#), [Liberal Fascism](#), [The Future and its Enemies](#), [The New Puritans](#), [The Return of the Primitive](#) | [No Comments](#)

Among the many anecdotes collected in Amity Shlaes' [The Forgotten Man](#), was the story of Depression-era farmers who were paid money to destroy their own crops, in order to artificially inflate prices, as the [newly reprimativized system](#) of Keynesian economics replaced its tried and true *laissez faire*-oriented predecessor. As she told [Reason's Nick Gillespie](#) in early 2008, "Roosevelt was elected in part by the farm vote. They wanted the kind of high prices they had had before World War I."

And the New Deal went to extraordinary — and at times destructive — lengths to appease that constituency by tamping down production, as an article by Chris Edwards of the Cato Institute that appeared in [USA Today](#) back in 2005 neatly summarizes:

The centerpiece of FDR's New Deal was the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. It created "codes" or cartels in more than 500 industries in order to limit competition. Businesses were told to cut output and maintain high prices and wages. Businessmen who cut prices were cajoled, fined, and sometimes arrested. Fortunately for the country, NIRA was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1935. The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 similarly restricted production to keep prices high. "Excess" output was destroyed or dumped abroad. While millions of Americans were going hungry, the government plowed under 10,000,000 acres of crops, slaughtered 6,000,000 pigs, and left fruit to rot.

Today in Scotland, as the Great Recession rolls on, and as newly reprimativized "wind farms" replace more tried and true — and apparently *predictable* — methods of electricity generation, history rhymes rather nicely. The BBC reports, ["Six Scottish windfarms were paid up to £300,000 to stop producing energy"](#), it has emerged:"

Hadyardhill in South Ayrshire, which is owned by SSE Renewables, was given £140,000 to stop producing energy, while Blacklaw windfarm in Lanarkshire — also owned by Scottish Power — was given £130,000.

The Millennium windfarm in the Highlands and Beinn Tharsuin, just north of Aness, each received £33,000 and £11,500 respectively.

Dr Lee Moroney, planning director for the REF, which has criticised subsidies to the renewable sector in the past, said: "The variability of wind power poses grid management problems for which there are no cheap solutions.

"However, throwing the energy away, and paying wind farms handsomely for doing so, is not only costly but obviously very wasteful.

"Government must rethink the scale and pace of wind power development before the costs of managing it become intolerable and the scale of the waste scandalous."

The National Grid said the network had overloaded because high winds and heavy rain in Scotland overnight on 5 and 6 April produced more wind energy than it could use.

Spokesman Stewart Larque said: "One of our key roles is to balance supply and demand for energy."

He added: "On the evening of the 5th into the 6th of April, the wind in Scotland was high, it was raining heavily, which also created more hydro energy than normal."

Mr Larque said a transmission fault in the system meant the surplus energy could not be transferred to England and so generation had to be cut.

The above article quotes an electricity spokesman who says, "One of our key roles is to balance

supply and demand for energy." Another electricity spokesman in the UK has a rather unique approach to that. Steve Holliday is the CEO of [National Grid plc](#), "one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the world," as the all-knowing and even occasionally accurate Wikipedia notes. He made headlines around the world in March when he was quoted [by the London Telegraph](#) as saying that [the era of reliable energy is over](#):

The days of permanently available electricity may be coming to an end, the head of the power network said yesterday.

Families would have to get used to only using power when it was available, rather than constantly, said Steve Holliday, chief executive of National Grid. Mr Holliday was challenged over how the country would "keep the lights on" when it relied more on wind turbines as supplies of gas dwindled. Electricity provided by wind farms will increase six-fold by 2020 but critics complain they only generate on windy days.

Mr Holliday told Radio 4's Today programme that people would have to "change their behaviour". "The grid is going to be a very different system in 2020, 2030," he said. "We keep thinking that we want it to be there and provide power when we need it. It is going to be much smarter than that.

"We are going to change our own behaviour and consume it when it is available and available cheaply."

Mr Holliday was speaking ahead of a speech last night to the Royal Academy of Engineering, in which he warned that the government was "looking more to communities and individuals to take power into their hands".

He also warned that pylons would still be used to carry power cables across the countryside because it was 10 times more expensive to bury them.

"As a society, we all need to be clear about what we can and cannot afford," he said.

Ahh, good ol' [Depression Lust](#) — though something tells me that no matter how the future plays out, there will still be a few in the UK who will never lack [an unlimited electricity supply](#):

---

Article printed from Ed Driscoll: <http://pajamasmedia.com/eddriscoll>

URL to article: <http://pajamasmedia.com/eddriscoll/2011/05/04/the-forgotten-fan/>

Copyright © 2011 Pajamas Media. All rights reserved.