

**GLEANINGS II - 740  
Thursday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Alabama's Special Election** - What a slap in the face for President Trump! This is the fourth time in three months he has backed a losing candidate<sup>1</sup>. In the end the score was Jones - 49.9%, Moore - 48.4% & Write-ins - 1.7%. While I had engaged in wishful thinking that write-ins might syphon off enough GOP votes to beat Moore, what really beat him was a much higher than expected turnout of registered voters (38% vs 20-25%) & the massive Afro-American turnout for Jones, who won by just 21,000 votes (out of the nearly 1.4MM cast) while Republican candidates in Alabama typically win by over half a million. He had 54-43 support among college grads & Moore 52-47 support among non-grads. The older the voter, the more likely he/she was to vote for Moore (30-44 years 38%, 45-64 years 51%, and 65 years & over 59%). Afro-Americans voted overwhelmingly for Jones : 93% of the men & 98% of the women (who were 11% & 17% respectively of the registered voters. Jones' eventual win came after the initial vote count had looked bad for him; for with 30% of votes counted he had trailed Moore 41-57 (suggesting that his voter support strength lay in the suburbs & beyond).

**Cost of wind power has dropped by two-thirds in the past eight years & now, even in natural gas-rich Alberta, is competitive with natural gas-generated power** - The Alberta government has ambitious plans to have the private sector sink C\$10BN in 5,000MW renewable energy-fueled power generating facilities by 2030.. As part thereof it had an auction this week of 20-year 400MW contracts for wind-powered new capacity to come online in 2019 (much of it to replace existing coal-powered capacity that it wants to see retired). In the end it picked three winners from the 29 bidders to supply about 600MW, one a local firm, Capital Power, for 201MW, and two others from Spain & Portugal for the rest, at an average price of C\$0.0375. This caused the Edmonton-based Pembina Institute's Binnu Jeyakummar to comment "the low auction price has blown old renewable energy prices out of the water" - *in 2016 Alberta's 16,525MW installed electricity-generating capacity by fuel source was natural gas - 7,324.3MW, coal - 6,273.0MW, wind - 1,490.8MW, hydro - 916.4MW, biogas/mass - 423.7MW & other (oil, diesel & waste heat) - 96.8MW* .

*Capital may well have an edge on the other two; for wind blows only intermittently, even in wind-prone regions areas like Southern Alberta. So wind power requires back-up generating capacity to pick up the slack when it doesn't (blow). And just outside Edmonton Capital has had, for a decade or so, had a natural gas-fired plant that can be turned on-, & off-, at a flick of a switch.*

**Edmonton the living proof climate change is for real?** - One of you recently was kind enough to inquire about life in Edmonton's "deep freeze". Unfortunately his timing was bad; for we have been having a sort of 'heat wave' for the past two weeks, with daytime highs well above freezing, & as high as +10° Celsius, & they are expected to remain so for at least another couple of days. And last week the high in Calgary hit +15° Celsius & further South in Alberta +20°. By comparison, back in the winter of 1971 there was a stretch of six weeks during which the daytime highs **never** went above "10 below" on the Fahrenheit scale (i.e -23° Celsius).

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<sup>1</sup> In September he backed Luther Strange in the Alabama GOP primary & Roy Moore won. On November 7<sup>th</sup> he backed Ed Gillespie & Kim Guadagno in the races for Governor of Virginia & New Jersey respectively and both were 'handed their head by their Democrat opponents. And on Tuesday it was Roy Moore's turn to illustrate Trump's grass roots' political impotence.

**Rumour has it there is no Nativity Scene in Washington this year** – For they couldn't find three wise men!

**US new job creation** - President Trump often rails about "fake news". But he too plays fast & loose with the facts when it suits him; thus, when he brags about the "solid job creation" since he came into office, he ignores the BLS statistics that show that the rate of job creation during the first ten months of the following years, as shown by the following numbers: 1,921,000 in the year earlier period, and 2,202,000, 2,431,000 & 1,971,000 in the first ten months of 2015, 2014 & 2013