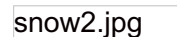


Snow Joke: Why can't Britain bear a blizzard?

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2009/02/02/snow-joke-why-cant-britain-bear-a-blizzard/

2009-2-2

 Students at the LSE from Russia, Sweden, Canada (or even Scotland) can't understand why London has shut down today. A bit of snow and the place grinds to a halt. The media has also demanded to know why the capital and the transport systems of eastern Britain collapsed.

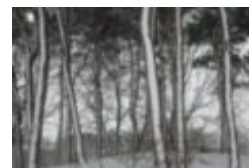



My former colleagues on Channel 4 News, for example, thought that a much bigger effort could have been made to keep the road and railways open. Why were no buses running? Business leaders told us that we 'lost' £1 Billion from the economy.

This is all cliched nonsense. 'Something should have been done/be done' is the most common cry in the wake of these disasters. It's the question Polis is asking about the world economic crash at our debate on February 23rd. But in the case of this extreme and rare weather event I think the answer is, 'not a lot'.



It was much more sensible to give everyone a day off than to spend hundreds of millions on getting everyone to work. So what if a lot of work gets done at home or on the next working day? Do we really want to spend vast amounts creating fleets of gritters and heated railway tracks on the off-chance of a once-every-twenty year snow storm?



 And anyway, my kids have had a brilliant morning on Hampstead Heath in the snow. It was a schoolchild's dream. Heavy snowfall on a Sunday night so that school is out – probably until Wednesday. Perhaps missing those lessons means they won't make Oxford or Yale after all, but it was stunning out there and for 24 hours it has transformed grimy London into a magical winter wonderland.

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science