Funding the Future

When millions face fuel poverty we must redistribute mo...

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As the Guardian is reporting this morning:

More than 2 million people across the UK will be cut off from their gas and electricity this winter because they cannot afford to top up their prepayment meters, according to Citizens Advice.

The charity said it had made the estimate for what is expected to be its busiest winter ever for helping people who cannot afford to top up, after last year 1.7 million people were disconnected at least once a month.

They added:

In addition, more than 5 million people who are billed by their supplier are in debt, putting them at risk of debt collection or being forced to fit a prepay meter.

These are real measures of a country out of ease with itself. Some within it - our energy companies - are clearly trying to extract more for a basic commodity that is essential to well-being than those who are in need of it can afford. The state is clearly not doing enough to help those in need when figures on disconnections and debt reach the levels noted in that report.

And yet, we hear this morning that the Chancellor has sufficient fiscal headroom (an utterly meaningless term) to consider tax cuts in March.

Those in fuel poverty will not gain much from any tax cut; the poorest never do.

What this country needs is a massive redistribution of wealth so that everyone has a chance to thrive within it. If the country is in trouble - and it is - it is because we systematically deny that opportunity to millions, as this data shows.

That is why the £146 billion that I now suggest that the Taxing Wealth Report might raise - or some part of it - must not be used to pay for the transition that our economy needs to sustainability or to provide better public services but to simply redistribute

income and wealth in this country so that all have a chance of flourishing within it.

I will never understand those who might disagree. Why do they hate those without the means to meet basic needs so much?