It’s hard to believe that January 23rd was only a few months ago, it seems much longer. These last few months have been one of the busiest and most exciting times in my life. It makes me so proud and happy to represent the people of the Northwest Territories in the House of Commons.

During this session much was accomplished. Along with my colleagues in the NDP Environment Caucus we unveiled our five point Agenda for a Green Canada. The Agenda includes initiatives for Greener Homes, Communities, Transportation, Industry, Canada and the World. These initiatives will create thousands of jobs and more than meet Canada’s Kyoto commitments.

Bill C-2 the Federal Accountability Act was passed by the House and is now off to the Senate. C-2 contains many of the ethics initiatives that Ed Broadbent brought forward during the last Parliament.

This summer I’ll be travelling throughout the NWT and look forward to meeting with as many constituents as possible. It is important for me to hear everyone’s concerns so that I can bring them up in the House of Commons.

I hope everyone has a great summer.

Dennis

Member’s Statement on Territorial Funding

Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Minister of Finance took delivery of report on the Territorial Formula Financing produced by the Expert Panel mandated to review these programs. On Monday the Minister said he was going to review the report. The people of Canada’s North need immediate changes to how their governments are financed.

Importantly, the report calls for a reduction in the amount Ottawa clawback from the territories own source revenue each year. It also calls for resource revenues to be excluded from the calculation of own source revenues. However, I cannot agree with the report’s recommendation for the continuation of using population as the basis for determining territorial funding. In the submission from the three territories they called this approach inadequate and inappropriate.

I hope the Minister will heed the views of the three territories when he reviews this report. The Territories are only asking for a fair shake from Ottawa that will allow them to achieve their great promise.

Thank you Mr. Speaker

Message from Dennis

Dear friend,

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Dennis

“It was really important to me to begin serving the people of the Western Arctic as soon as possible, because of this one of the first things I did after getting elected was to have my Constituency Office open.”

- Dennis Bevington, MP Western Arctic

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Your thoughts

I want to hear back from you. If you have any comments or concerns you would like me to be aware of please write them down and mail them to my Ottawa office. Remember, letters to your MP’s Parliament Hill office do not need a stamp.

Dennis serves up some cake during the Grand Opening of his new Constituency Office in the Donald Cooper Building in Yellowknife.
Mackenzie Valley Gas Pipeline

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about an important issue in my constituency in the north.

Today the Mackenzie gas pipeline is in front of two federal assessment panels. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development met with leaders from the Northwest Territories last week and indicated that his government was willing to support this project without the unanimous approval of northern aboriginal leaders and the results of the two assessment panels.

How can the minister take such a stand before the assessments have been completed and aboriginal leaders have had their input?

Mr. Rod Bruijnonge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is so much the minister can do for our communities, for the working families, and for aboriginal people. We need to work with all people to prepare the ground for such an important project.

The minister needs to take immediate action to deal with the D inbound land claims, financing the protected areas strategy, supporting land use plans, negotiating resource revenue sharing, and establishing a cumulative environmental impact assessment process.

Will the minister commit to work with the people of the north on these issues immediately?

Mr. Rod Bruijnonge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has committed to the people of the north including the D inbound. In fact, his first trip was throughout the north. He met with these groups and he has ensured all parties that he is going to be working with all stakeholders to provide the best solution to this situation.

Energy

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): The people of the Northwest Territories need action from Ottawa on their political development. The law outlining the authorities of the Government of the Northwest Territories is outdated but this is just the tip of the iceberg. For too many years the federal government has dragged its heels in the negotiations of self-government and land claims. Further, for those claims that have been settled, Ottawa has failed to properly implement them.

Until Ottawa settles all outstanding claims, truly recognizes the inherent right to Aboriginal self-government and the charter right of public government, the political development of the NWT will remain stagnant.

Resource Development

The high cost of living is a reality for Northerners. The Northwest Territories needs a fair financing agreement with Canada. Right now the federal government claw backs nearly 50% and to further index increases the deduction to the consumer price index for the north.

Residents Tax Deduction

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about an important issue in my constituency in the north. When the federal government first introduced the Northern Resident’s Tax Deduction in 1989, the deduction was 50% and was higher in smaller communities in the North.

The Northwest Territories is outdated but this is just the tip of the iceberg. For too many years the federal government has dragged its heels in the negotiations of self-government and land claims. Further, for those claims that have been settled, Ottawa has failed to properly implement them.

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Territorial Financing

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NDP only party with environment plan

Bevington & NDP Environment caucus launch plan

This June the New Democratic Party launched its Green Agenda for Canada; a five point set of realistic proposals that will conserve energy, attract green investments, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% megatonnes and create close to 600,000 jobs with a total annual cost to the Federal government of $40 billion.

The agenda focuses on five key areas:

- Greener Homes;
- Greener Communities;
- Greener Transportation; and
- Greener Industry; and
- Greener Canada and World

“While Northerners continue to wait for the Conservative government to scratch together the ‘made in Canada’ solution promised months ago, the NDP is taking action,” said Dennis Bevington the NDP’s Energy Critic. Bevington added: “This government has no plan to invest in a green economy and their inaction is allowing other nations to bypass Canada on the road to providing productive, environmentally sustainable Northern communities.”

In a speech June 7th Conservative Environment Minister Rona Ambrose said that those who are fighting for real action on climate change in this country are driven by ‘self-serving politics’ and ‘self righteousness’. “Its time that this minister stop wasting time attacking the people who care about this issue and start attacking the issue itself”, said NDP Environment Critic Nathan Cullen. Mr. Cullen later in June called for the Minister’s resignation, but the Conservatives and Liberals teamed up to use procedural tricks to block the motion.

“Four 12 years, while the Liberals did nothing to stop rising pollution, the Conservatives said they had a better plan. Unfortunately, Canadians are learning that their plan was just hot air,” said NDP Leader Jack Layton. “This government has no plan to deal with rising pollution in our air and water or to invest in a green economy and their inaction has become an international embarrassment.”

“Northerners are the first Canadians to feel the affects of Climate Change,” said Bevington. “We have seen dramatic changes to our weather with warmer winters and summers. These changes are also having serious impacts on our wildlife such as polar bears and caribou. We can’t wait any longer for action.”

Highlights from my response to the throne speech

Political Development

The people of the Northwest Territories need action from Ottawa on their political development. The law outlining the authorities of the Government of the Northwest Territories is outdated but this is just the tip of the iceberg. For too many years the federal government has dragged its heels in the negotiations of self-government and land claims. Further, for those claims that have been settled, Ottawa has failed to properly implement them.

Resource Development

After the lack of strategic direction provided by the federal government in the development of our diamonds, Northerners are concerned about how future resource development will be handled by the federal government. We are all aware of the ongoing hearings into the Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline. The process is taking too long a focus on the scope and impact of the development.

I ask the government to heed the voice of northerners and increase this deduction.

Climate Change

On the issue of climate change, the North is already experiencing changes in the climate, we see evidence of this by observing wildlife, such as the declining numbers of caribou.