

Prentice failing in his duty to the North

OTTAWA, DECEMBER 11, 2006 – NDP Northern Development Critic, Dennis Bevington today laid out how Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Jim Prentice is failing the North.

“We have a minister who is not neutral on the pipeline, though he is the final judge; has worked to eliminate Northern voices from environmental regulatory decisions, by failing to make appointments; and has only used devolution as an excuse to find a job for a Mulroney-era cabinet minister,” said Bevington. “It is clear that the interests of this Alberta minister, like Ann McClelland, the previous Alberta Liberal minister are to support the Alberta oil Patch and the multi-national oil companies that are heading this project”

Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Prentice has failed the North by:

- clearly taking the oil company’s side in the pipeline debate;
- not making vital appointments to environmental regulatory boards which give Northerners a voice in how their lands and waters are used, while clearly distaining the very existence of these boards in speeches; and
- not taking meaningful action on the issue of the transfer of resource ownership to the territories.

“The minister has said in speech after speech as to how he was going to ensure the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline was built,” said Bevington. “These statements combined with his distain for the environmental regulatory process and his lack of action on the resource ownership file can only lead one to conclude this Minister has no concern for what is best for the ordinary Canadians who live in the North.”

“I have repeatedly asked for meetings and raised these issues in the House and the Minister has yet to give a satisfactory response,” said Bevington. “It’s clear, that though the North wants a fair deal from Canada’s New Conservative Government, they, just like the old Liberal Government, have no intention of being fair. Ottawa is once again more concerned with the needs of multi-national corporations than the average Canadians living north of the 60th parallel.”

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