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**Western Arctic**

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**NDP**  **NPD**



## **Standing up for Northerners in 2007**

### **Dear Constituents,**

Members of Parliament from across the country headed back to the House of Commons this month. By the time you receive this newsletter in the mail, we should be well engaged in Parliamentary business, and the Government Throne Speech will have been introduced and voted on. This may or may not result in a general election in Canada, which would be the fourth one in seven years. In this day and age, when majorities are less likely, parliamentarians have to learn to share power and compromise on decision-making in our national government.

I have had a very interesting summer break, traveling from the Arctic Ocean to the Alberta border to hear from all of you. I have had the privilege to attend a number of great community events, however there were many more that I wasn't able to attend this year. But wherever I did travel, Northerners were making the best of the summer season, building the strength of their communities, cultures and lifestyles.

The North has been a hotspot of political attention throughout the past few months. National attention has been intensive in the face of growing evidence of the massive nature of climate change in the far North. The debate about Canada's Arctic sovereignty is highlighted in this newsletter, and I hope to see it as a major debate in Parliament this fall.

Last year when I proposed that we change Canada's Motto to include the Arctic Ocean, I received a lot of negative commentary from the southern media. This year, the Russian's symbolic planting of their flag on the Arctic Ocean floor was called a public relations coup by the same southern media.

You can be sure that I will continue to push for a motto that reflects Canada from "Sea to Sea to Sea". Through the Yellowknife constituency office, we have been working on an analysis of the Diamond Mining industry in the NWT (see page 3).

We have traveled to a mine site, met with industry, labour and government, and have heard from many constituents. This industry is a huge part of our economy right now. We must ensure that it continues to thrive and provides maximum benefit for all Northerners. Until some day in the future when we achieve devolution, the Government of Canada **MUST** represent our interests in the industry. As your representative in Ottawa, I will do my utmost to ensure that happens.

Please keep sending the letters and comments that you have been providing over the past year. They truly are helpful and inspiring.

Dennis



***Dennis congratulates Mohammad Khan, one of 68 proud, new Canadians sworn in on September 28 in Yellowknife. Welcome to all the new Canadians!***



***Dennis played hand games to the delight of onlookers in Fort Smith during the Water Conference in August.***

***During the Poverty Forum in Yellowknife, Tony Martin (second from right), NDP Human Resources Critic, and Dennis met with local community groups in Yellowknife who offer help to the poor and homeless.***



***Dennis with youth from the Tlicho Communities who participated in the canoe regatta at the start of the Dene Assembly in Behchoko in July.***

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## **MP Bevington's 2007 Summer Round-up**

June 21: National Aboriginal Day– Yellowknife

June 27: tour of Diavik mine site

June 28: Deh Cho Assembly in Ft Simpson

June 29-30: Ft Good Hope and Norman Wells graduation ceremonies

July 1: Canada Day in Yellowknife

July 9-12: Assembly of First Nations assembly in Halifax; spoke about government's plans for Arctic military spending, and the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples

July 14: Folk on the Rocks, Yellowknife

July 16-17: Behchoko, combined Tlicho assembly and Dene National assembly—took part in the canoe regatta

July 24: Hay River community visit

August 9-10: Deline community visit

August 15-16: Gwich'in Assembly in Tsiigehtchic, detailed presentations from all Gwich'in working agencies. It also honored the work of President Fred Carmichael

August 17: Poverty Forum in Yellowknife, NDP Human Resources Critic, Tony Martin joined me to meet with community groups who provide support to the needy.

August 20-23: Water Conference in Fort Smith, there were people from Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan

August 26-28: NDP Caucus Retreat in Montreal, set priorities for the fall session of Parliament

August 29-31: With NDP Leader Jack Layton and NDP Aboriginal Affairs Critic Jean Crowder, I toured six communities in Nunavut and Yellowknife

September 1-3: Sahtu Assembly wind up weekend celebration in Tulita

September 3: Labour Day BBQ in Yellowknife

September 8: Visit to Hay River, took in the Fall Fair and Trade Show

September 19-20: Prospects North conference, Yellowknife—spoke on the future of the Natural Gas Industry in the NWT. Check my website for details of the presentation.



**Dennis shakes hands with Gwich'in President Fred Carmichael at the Gwich'in Assembly in August.**

### ***NWT Diamond Mining: The Gateway to Economic Security for Northerners***

In November, I will be releasing a discussion paper on the state of the thriving NWT diamond industry. This project began six months ago, in May 2007. Faced with numerous issues brought forward by constituents involved in the diamond mining industry, and recognizing the importance of this billion-dollar industry to the Northern economy, I decided it was time to take a close look at how it had evolved over the past 10 years.

Diamonds are a booming industry which provide excellent earning potential for Northern workers. However, not all is perfect in the industry. The following issues were brought to the forefront during extensive consultations with BHP, Diavik, DeBeers, the Union of Northern Workers, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, Mine Training Society, and the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines:

- Not enough Northerners hold permanent skilled positions with mines operating in the North
- 1,400 workers will be required over the next few years
- Competition for hiring skilled workers is fierce as a result of the booming oil and gas industry in Western Canada
- the high cost of living in the North is discouraging southern trades people from relocating to the North
- the absence of an industrial strategy for the Northern diamond industry is an obstacle for maximizing benefits to the Northern economy

The people of the Northwest Territories **MUST** have control over the direction of the mining industry.

# NDP, in consultation with Northerners, develop Arctic Sovereignty Plan

This summer, NDP Leader Jack Layton, our Aboriginal Affairs Critic Jean Crowder, and I consulted with community leaders, and ordinary Northerners on how best to protect the Arctic. I have continued these consultations and will be putting forward the NDP's plan for Arctic Sovereignty this fall.

The NDP sees the best way to protect Arctic Sovereignty is to build the North and to make better lives for Ordinary Northerners.

Under the Liberals we saw Canada's ability to protect its Arctic sovereignty cut back to nearly nothing. For example the Liberals undercut Arctic Sovereignty by:

- Cutting back on the military including ending surveillance flights over the Arctic and reducing the size of the important units like 440 Squadron;
- Cutting back on the capacity of Canada to enforce its laws in the Arctic; and
- took billions of dollars in royalty payments from the North while ignoring pleas for increased funding from the three territories, creating a social and infrastructure deficit.

Stephen Harper and the Conservatives have continued to undercut Arctic Sovereignty by:

- eliminating our Arctic Ambassador so Canada has no one to speak for our interests in the Arctic on the international stage;

**Your thoughts are important! Thank you for providing me with your feedback.**

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- downgrading the importance of the Arctic Council by sending a back bench MP to a ministers level meeting discussing the future of the council; and
- cutting funding to programs, such as literacy programs, which have had a positive impact on the lives of Northerners.

**The NDP's holistic plan will be based on four pillars:**

- **State our sovereignty;** The NDP would take immediate action to increase Canada's diplomatic efforts to have other nations recognize our sovereignty over the Arctic.
- **Sustain our sovereignty;** The NDP would build the North so that it is an equal part of a vibrant Canada.
- **Secure our sovereignty;** The NDP would take immediate and ongoing action to correct the damage the Liberals have done to Canada's ability to secure the sovereignty of the Arctic thorough the peaceful enforcement of Canada's laws mainly through civilian means.
- **Support our sovereignty;** The NDP would develop national programs which build a better life for average Canadians which will also help build a better North, enhancing Canada's Arctic Sovereignty.

Once we have released our plan I would like to hear your thoughts on it. You can write to me at the House of Commons free of charge.

**Send your comments to the address below;  
No Postage Required**

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