



# Newsletter Winter 2008

## *Dennis BEVINGTON MP Western Arctic*

Dear Constituents,

The year 2008 promises to be full of politics and issues in the House of Commons. Leading into the New Year, the Harper government made some very idealistic and foolhardy decisions in November's mini budget. They have embarked on a **mission of tax cuts, most of which are aimed at highly profitable banks and oil companies.** They were supported by the Liberals in this effort, who refused to cast their votes and let the legislation pass through the House. These cuts, amounting to **40 billion a year by 2012,** will effectively limit the ability of future governments to create new programs that could be of real value to Canadians. For Northerners who are facing more increases in their cost of living, skyrocketing housing prices, inflated energy costs, under-funded health care, and cuts in GNWT services, this means **NO** additional federal assistance. If our national economy gets worse, dragged down by a failing American economy, we will likely see a deficit in federal revenues and a move from the Conservatives to cut programs. The NDP sees that tax relief should go to the parts of our economy that really need help.

That is why our caucus, led by Jack Layton, has said **enough** to this Conservative government, **enough** to their failure to deal with climate change, **enough** to a government that does not care about working families across this country.

Northerners still need fairness within the tax system. After 20 years of being eroded by inflation and the GST, our call to raise the **Northern Residents Tax Deduction** is garnering more support all the time. Thousands of Northerners have signed petitions that we have presented in Parliament; and many presentations were made by different groups (from Chambers of Commerce to labour organizations) during the consultation process on the Federal budget. This fight will continue until we get a fair deal for Northerners.

When it comes to the complex issues of **devolution and resource revenue sharing,** I join with many other leaders across the North who recognize that progress on these issues will be difficult until we come together as Northerners and find unity on shared jurisdiction between NWT public and aboriginal governments. In the report on the diamond mining industry in the NWT, we discuss the potential for **incremental division,** where authority over mineral development in the NWT is transferred as a first step. The mining industry is well established in the NWT and Northerners need to achieve more from this resource base. The Conservatives made encouraging comments in the Throne speech about Northerners achieving more jurisdiction and control. But at the same time they have plans to run development from a new "**Big Projects Office,**" firmly under the control of Ottawa.

In my role as Energy Critic for the NDP, I hold responsibility to work on a variety of bills that come in front of Parliament and in front of the Natural Resources Committee. This includes C-5 Nuclear Liability Act and C-33, The Renewable Fuels Bill.

Thanks for your support and encouragement over the past two years that I have been representing you here in Ottawa. It is an honour and a privilege every day to represent a great place like the Northwest Territories in the House of Commons.



Dennis and Norma French-Heslep at Foxy's Den, the 2008 Arctic Winter Games store on January 18th in Yellowknife. It's the 20th Anniversary of the Arctic Winter Games, Yellowknife hosted the first games in 1970. Now twenty years later, the city will once again host the games from March 9 to 15th, 2008.

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# Question on Water Pollution

Dennis questions the government on trans-boundary water pollution in the House of Commons on December 7, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, a recent report done by the Alberta community of Fort Chipewyan, downstream from the oil sands, found elevated cancer causing chemicals in the water of the Athabasca River. Other reports have shown a clear link between the oil sands development and water pollution. The federal government is responsible for trans-boundary water pollution. Rather than encouraging even more oil sands development, when will it work to protect the people of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories?

The federal government is responsible for trans-boundary water pollution. Rather than encouraging even more oil sands development, when will it work to protect the people of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories?

## Response from Mr. Mark Warawa, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment:

“Mr. Speaker, the Hon. member knows very well that this government is committed to cleaning up the environment.

After 13 long years of Liberal inaction, we now have a \$1.5 billion fund to work with the provinces.

We are doing that. We are working with B.C. We are working with Alberta. We are working with every province to clean up the environmental messes left by those people over there”.

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Dennis and Monique Dolittle-Romas, Executive Director of the Canadian Aids Society, during the launch of Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Week in Ottawa in November 2007.

Recent statistics reveal that over 58,000 Canadians are living with HIV/AIDS.

Northwest Territories HIV/AIDS Hotline number:

**1-800-661-0844**

## LAND AND SEA TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

As of January 31, 2008, Canadians entering the United States by land and marine ports of entry will be required to present:

- a government issued photo ID, such as a driver's licence AND a birth certificate or a citizenship card; OR
- for youth under 18, a birth certificate; OR
- a valid passport

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit the CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY'S WEBSITE: [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca)**

## NAHANNI EXPANSION GOOD FOR DEH CHO

The most recent process for expansion of the park began in 1999 with the beginning of the Deh Cho Process negotiations where Deh Cho representatives proposed expanding the park.

Parks Canada has provided detailed briefings at the consultation sessions about the park expansion. Participants in the sessions received information on the mineral potential of the proposed expansion area. Much work has been done to recognize and understand all third party interests around the boundaries, including existing and potential mineral interests, hunting concerns, and other activities.

Working with all the people in the Deh Cho region will ensure that co-management agreements for the expansion of the park will create significant economic opportunities for the region.

An example of the economic potential is the Town of Banff, Alberta. A study done by the town found the Banff National Park generates \$1.24 billion dollars in economic development and provides more than \$500 million to all levels of government each year.

Like the town of Banff, thousands of people from all over the world visit Wood Buffalo National Park each year with most passing through Fort Smith.

I grew up in Fort Smith, and the key is to ensure the co-management agreements struck for the expanded park will deliver long term economic benefits, including business opportunities within its boundaries for the people of the Deh Cho.

## NDP caucus called Canada's best

**"My nomination this year [for most significant political player] would be the NDP caucus ... pound for pound, I think they have the highest quality of MP right now in representation."**

—Andrew Coyne, CBC "The National," 26 December 2007

By the end of Parliament's fall session, many pundits were calling Jack Layton and the NDP the "effective" opposition to Harper's Conservatives.

The vote-skipping Liberals left the NDP to oppose the Harper agenda. And in tough conditions, NDP MPs delivered results for working families—including final passage of a law protecting workers' wages when employers go bankrupt. We also moved forward on initiatives ranging from national child care to universal drug coverage, from a restored federal minimum wage to post-Kyoto greenhouse gas emissions targets.

At the end of the day, this caucus simply outworks the other parties—not just opposing bad ideas, but consistently putting positive alternatives on the table. Parliamentarians of all stripes recognized this when they voted this year to award NDP MPs four out of six *Maclean's* Parliamentarian of the Year awards.



Dennis with delegates from the Akaitcho Territory Government in Ottawa on November 21, 2007 for the Interim land withdrawals announcement made by Minister of Environment, Hon. John Baird and Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs.

The interim land withdrawal is in the East Arm area of Great Slave Lake.

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# Diamonds are Forever; Our Mines are Not

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, I released a report on the Northwest Territories diamond mining industry: **Diamonds are Forever; Our Mines are Not**. It speaks to the many common objectives that we all share in the North in regards to this multi-billion dollar resource extraction. Whether it's employment or business opportunities, the length of time the mines stay open will make a tremendous difference to their value. Ensuring that benefits from the finite supply of diamonds remain in the North is a commonly supported goal of all northerners.

The people of the Northwest Territories must have control over the direction of the mining industry. We must ensure that extraction of this resource is done in such a manner as to ensure long-term sustainability, economic security, and the creation of a Northern skilled workforce.

This report does not presume to have all the answers. It represents a first step in reviewing our interests in this driving force to our economy. I have received a lot of positive feedback on the report thus far. It has been tabled in the NWT Legislative Assembly and our territorial government is reviewing it. You can view the report on my website, [www.dennisbevington.ca](http://www.dennisbevington.ca). Please feel free to send me any comments that you would like to share.

Here is a brief summary of the 10 recommendations which conclude the report:

- 1) Establish a Northern Mining Employment Commission. The goal would be to work towards developing a stable, well-trained, long-term Northern workforce for the Northern mining industry.
- 2) The mines should review their policies on contracting out of services. Employers are using the contracting method to retain employees in low-paying, entry-level positions, which destabilizes the Northern workforce.
- 3) The mining companies reconsider subsidizing and/or providing free employee travel between Edmonton/Calgary and the mine site.
- 4) The mining companies establish **all** NWT communities as

## “You Just Blink and It Can Happen: A Study of Women’s Homelessness North of 60”.

A pan-territorial study on homelessness were carried out in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. The report was released last November in Ottawa. The report is based on interviews with 205 homeless women from all three Territories and their situations.

The report sets out 16 recommendations for all levels of government to implement.

For more information, contact the YWCA in Yellowknife at 867-920-2777.

pick-up points for employees travelling to work at the mine sites. This will give more Northerners access to stable, high-income jobs and much-needed training opportunities.

- 5) The Northern Residents Tax Deduction must be increased by at least 50 per cent.
- 6) New Housing Policies need to be developed between the GNWT and the mining companies to improve housing conditions and availability for employees.
- 7) We must improve the efficiency of the diamond mining industry through the development of an electrical transmission system from Northern hydro resources, and innovative opportunities in underground mining.
- 8) We need to see delegated authority for the mining sector to the Government of the Northwest Territories. With support from the Aboriginal governments and claimant groups, the GNWT should negotiate with the INAC minister to make this a reality.
- 9) The responsible authority must ensure that rate or extraction of the diamond resource is considered and heavily weighed to ensure the mines are sustainable for a long period of time.
- 10) We must develop a National Diamond Strategy to maximize benefits from an emerging diamond industry for Northerners and all Canadians.



Dennis with Laura Rose at the Hay River Soup Kitchen on January 25. Laura has worked as a volunteer for the past 12 years, since the soup kitchen opened its doors in 1995.

The soup kitchen is open three days a week for lunch between 11 am and 1:30 pm. They also provide full course dinners for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

The need for this service is evident by the number of clientele, approximately 90 people come on a regular basis. The soup kitchen provides more than a hot meal, its homey atmosphere is appreciated by those who rely on this valuable service.

The Soup Kitchen relies on donations from the public as well as local businesses.

When it comes to federal budgeting, my family has more important priorities than tax cuts. Yes ( ) no ( )

I want to see the federal government invest in today’s families and our communities. Yes ( ) no ( )

Jack Layton and the NDP are on the right track for everyday Canadians. Yes ( ) no ( )

## Comments:

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