

DENNIS BEVINGTON

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT-WESTERN ARCTIC

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2010

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to correspond with you again on a number of issues from Ottawa. As well, we have an emphasis on the many young people from the north that have visited Ottawa. Parliament has been up and running pretty steadily since the beginning of March after the regrettable prorogation initiated by Prime Minister Harper at the end of December. The New Democrats brought forward a motion in March to limit the power of the Prime Minister to do this again, without the support of the majority of MP's in a vote in the House of Commons and this was passed with the support of the Liberals and the Bloc.

The 2010 Budget was tabled and passed in March as well. I stood in opposition to it for many reasons. This budget continued tax giveaways to large corporations while not helping low income Canadians. The budget also failed to deal with important issues like pension reform, job creation, or renewable energy while weakening environmental protection. The recent tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico demonstrates how important it is to protect the water, earth and air.

Please stay tuned to www.dennisbevington.ca and www.ndp.ca for updates on the latest work we have been doing. As well, feel free to add me as a friend on Facebook. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Have a great spring season,

Dennis



Dennis and Olympian Brendan Green in Ottawa. Brendan is a well known northern athlete who participated in biathlon at the 2010 Winter Olympic games in Vancouver.

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The 2010 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships were held in Ottawa on May 2-8, 2010. This is an annual event which features both Bantam and Midget age male and female hockey players. First Nations, Métis and Inuit hockey players come from the provinces and all three territories.

Hockey players from the Northwest Territories took time to pose for a photo with Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington.

The hockey jersey worn by Dennis was a gift from the players.

Northern students visit Parliament Hill.



Left to right: Forum for Young Canadians students, Jenson Hu, Pooja Chugh, Ashley Mulders, Hanna Wilson, Belinda Breadmore, Dennis, Brittany Scott, and Caitlin Seymour in Ottawa on April 21, 2010.

Left to right: Cheniel Shen, Sarah Linton, Jasper Hudierez, Lisa Ngo and Zoe Pacunayen with Dennis in Ottawa on March 25, 2010. The students took part in the Forum for Young Canadians program.

Forum for Young Canadians is a national program for anyone aged 15 to 18!

1. Participants gain better understanding of the national decision-making process in Canada;
2. Get inside Canadian politics and public affairs;
3. Share their ideas and acquire tools for community engagement;
4. Enhance leadership and second official language skills;
5. Network with other youth from across Canada;
6. Represent their schools and communities at a national youth forum;
7. Travel to Ottawa and experience the richness of Parliament Hill; and
8. Live a rewarding, exceptional and memorable experience.
9. You can find out the dates for the next forum, and details on how to apply.

Visit the website at www.forum.ca

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Students from Moose Kerr School in Akalvik enjoyed their visit to Parliament Hill on May 5. They were part of the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC). The reciprocal exchange was with students from Immaculata high school in Ottawa. SEVEC, a national charity for more than 70 years, works to create youth programs which build self-confidence, leadership skills and most importantly respect and understanding of Canada's diversity.

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Dennis questions the Minister of Environment, Jim Prentice, on Oil and Gas, in the House of Commons on April 30, 2010.

“Mr. Speaker, today the United States is facing an environmental disaster of epic proportions as the massive oil slick from the sinking of the Deepwater Horizon oil platform strikes land. These same oil companies want an exemption from having to drill relief wells for their operations in the Beaufort Sea. With this clear evidence that the most stringent environmental protections must be applied to offshore drilling, will the government stand up to the oil companies, enforce drilling relief wells and come up with a real plan to deal with disasters in our Arctic waters?”

Hon. Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment:

“Mr. Speaker, I am sure everyone in the House is saddened and worried by what is happening in the Gulf of Mexico and the possible ecological damage. Canadians can take confidence from three facts. First, we have among the most robust offshore drilling policies anywhere in the world that applies in Canadian waters. Second, there are currently no authorizations for exploratory wells anywhere in the outer Beaufort Sea. Third, the National Energy Board is, in any event, reviewing its relief well policy and it obviously will be attentive to how this develops”.

Dennis Bevington, MP Western Arctic:

“Mr. Speaker, the Environment Minister, might also be interested to know that we problems on the other side of the Arctic. Denmark has issued drilling permits in Davis Strait, right up against our maritime border in the Arctic. Davis Strait is also known as “iceberg alley”. All we have protecting us is a non-binding agreement on oil pollution. What is the government doing to ensure Denmark is taking all the steps necessary to protect the environment in the strait, or are we going to wait until oil is washing up on the shores of Nunavut?”

Hon Jim Prentice, Minister of Environment:

“Mr. Speaker, the honorable member goes too far. In light of what is happening in Louisiana and the concern the entire world has about the possibility of ecological damage, I think he should be somewhat measured in his comments. The Government of Canada has an excellent relationship with the recently elected Home Rule Government in Greenland. In fact, the Canadian government has signed the very first agreement with that new government in Greenland, which was to protect the polar bears. We have an excellent relationship. We have discussed these very issues with that government and Canadians can be assured that the environment will be protected”.

Working to improve Aviation Safety

In the North flying is not a luxury but a fact of life. Because of this I have been working to improve aviation safety across Canada, since becoming the New Democratic Party’s Transport Critic.

I have hosted a round table discussion of aviation safety on Parliament Hill, asked many questions in the House of Commons and pushed the Transport Committee to begin studying the issue. At first the Conservative government mocked the issues I raised and even told me I should apologize for even asking about safety for Canadians who fly.

However, as evidence from the Transportation Safety Board began to mount the government began to see that the concerns I was raising were real and could not be solved by their partisan attacks and dismissal statements.

Since I began the Conservative government has made important changes to aviation safety. The Minister of Transport has ordered that Transport Canada return to its role of oversight and administration of safety for business aircraft. Previous governments had handed oversight and administration safety of business jets to a business association. The Harper government has also decided to delay the implementation for new a safety system for small airlines and for helicopters. I have also been successful in getting the Transport Committee to conduct a study of aviation safety.

The government has also agreed to begin a small level of actual hands on inspections rather than having inspectors just check paperwork. I believe safety is the responsibility of all in the aviation industry and that Transport Canada must play a role of ensuring regulations are complied with. Having inspectors just checking paperwork is akin to the police standing at the side of the road with a sign reading, “Honk if you committed a crime.”

Have your say, your thoughts are important:



Dennis and Leocardio Juracan of Guatemala at the Java Roma in Yellowknife.



Francois Paulette of Fort Fitzgerald speaking at a rally held in Yellowknife about the importance of continued funding for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Dennis and Fred Sangris of Dettah are standing in the background.

Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP) speaks in the House of Commons on the Norman Wells oil field, March 30, 2010.

“Madam Speaker, recent news reports about the Conservative government’s plans to sell off its share of the Norman Wells oil field as a way of balancing the books have my constituents greatly concerned.

In September 1988, Canada signed an enabling agreement with the Government of the Northwest Territories that all oil and gas resource revenues from the onshore NWT, except those committed to Aboriginal claim settlements, shall be reserved for the NWT.

In the 1999 Federal Court ruled that payments to Canada from Norman Wells oil field are resource revenues. Based on that decision, any revenues, including those from a sale of the oil field, belong to the NWT. This oil field is being held in trust for the people of the Northwest Territories and should be treated as such. It is high time the Conservative government recognized its responsibility to its northern territories”.



Dennis with Chief Louis Balsillie of Fort Resolution.

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required

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