

Northern Development

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development misled this House when he said a vote against the budget bill is a vote against increasing the borrowing limits of the three territories.

The minister needs to do his homework, because in no way would the bill set borrowing limits. What the Trojan Horse budget bill would do is change the three northern constitutions to increase federal control.

Is the minister completely out of touch with what his government is trying to do, or was he trying to mislead the House?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, our government is taking steps to improve the economy in the north and in the Northwest Territories by cutting red tape for mineral exploration project approvals. We want northerners to benefit from economic development opportunities that major resource projects can offer.

Despite the efforts of the NDP and Liberal members, who vote against progress and development in the north, our government is working hard with northerners to ensure they have full, vital, dynamic and strong economic futures.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, on the one hand the government is cutting regulations on the environment and on the other it is increasing regulations on the territorial governments.

Last year, testimony before the aboriginal affairs committee from a senior official with the Government of the Northwest Territories made it clear they do not want federal control over borrowing. Instead of listening to the people in the north, the government wants to increase control by changing the northern constitutions without publicly consulting northerners.

Why will the government not respect the political rights of northerners by allowing their legislatures to control their financial affairs, just like the provinces?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency is supporting a host of economic development organizations throughout the north to be more efficient and reflective of the real needs of northerners over the long term. Canadian

taxpayers' dollars will benefit youth by implementing sound business models in the north that will make a better use of technology and whatnot.

The territorial governments asked for increased borrowing limits; that member voted against that idea. The territorial governments asked for a highway between Inuvik and Tuk; that member voted against it. The territorial governments asked for devolution; that member voted against it.

“Editor’s note: the House of Commons has not had a vote on increasing the territorial borrowing limit nor has it voted on devolution”