

Dennis Bevington

Member of Parliament Western Arctic

Winter 2013 Newsletter

Friends,

The House of Commons has seen and heard a lot about the Northwest Territories this winter season. You will see many photos in this householder from NWT Days in Ottawa. Not only did our Premier and Legislative Assembly attend many meetings on the Hill on January 30 & 31st, with many politicians and Standing Committees, they celebrated our Territory with one of the impressive receptions that I have attended in Ottawa, over the past seven years. Later that weekend the NWT had a three day extravaganza in conjunction with Ottawa's Winterlude.

Well done NWT! With your exhibits, performers, and your efforts on the Hill, you have done us all proud. A special mention must go to our Northern Ambassadors, dressed in traditional garb; the two dozen young people were all over the Capital.

The NWT and Arctic has been a subject of scrutiny by Parliamentary Standing Committees over the winter. The Foreign Affairs Committee has been conducting an in-depth study on Canada's role in the Arctic and our upcoming Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. As Critic for arctic issues, I have been engaged in the process of developing the study and a report on the findings of the many witnesses that have appeared in front of the committee. Full transcripts are available on the Parliamentary website with the following link; www.parl.gc.ca/CommitteeBusiness. At a time when the most profound changes are taking pace to the Arctic Ocean, there is no question of the importance of this region in Canada's future.

The other major item in front of Parliament has been Bill C-47, which established a Surface Rights Board for the NWT. This Bill came out of requirements of the Gwich'n and Sahtu Land Claims for such a Board. The Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Committee had reviewed Bill C-47, heard testimony from a number of interested groups from the NWT. The Bill has gone from there to the House of Commons where it will likely be passed by the time this newsletter is distributed.

I was pleased to host Thomas Mulcair for a two day visit to Yellowknife on February 18th. The Leader of the Official Opposition had an opportunity to meet with many northerners and looks forward to visiting again.

Have a great Easter with family and friends.

Dennis



MP Dennis Bevington, Pascal Erasmus, Taylor Pagotto and Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition in Yellowknife during his visit on February 18, 2013.

Photo Credit: Joy Newton



Standing left to right: Shayla Snowshoe, Hannah Taniton, James Williams, Karis Gruben, Dang Dang, Peter Taptoona, Tara Greenland, Alannis McKee, Chelsea Raddi, Garred Taniton, Alyssa Carpenter. Sitting front row: James Day Jr., Daniel Tutcho, Vanessa Kimiksana and Dakota Orlias.

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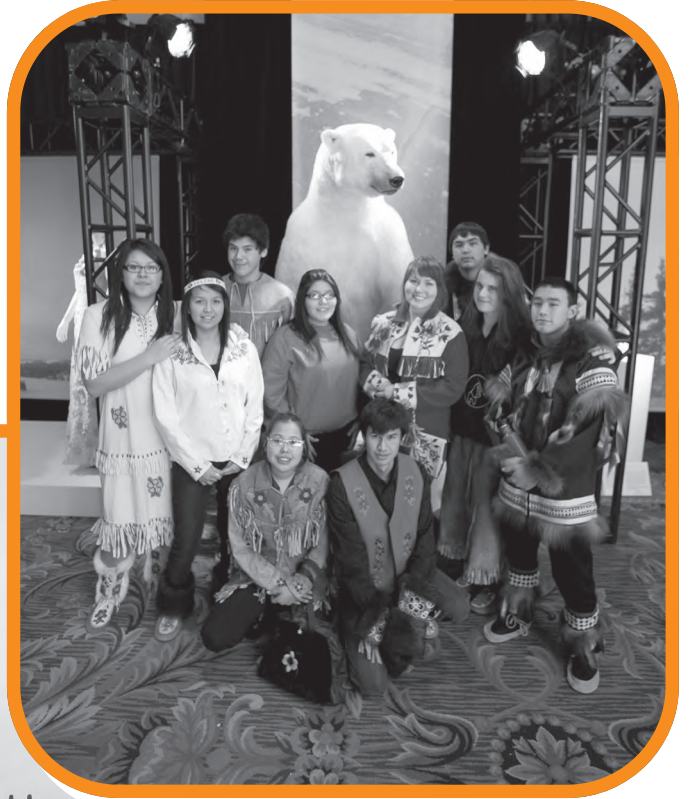
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Spectacular NWT Days 2013. Young people, artists, and musicians proudly displayed their talents, and gave a Northern flavor to the annual Winterlude festivities. These photos reflect some of the people who took part in the daily events.





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New Democrats are pressuring the Conservatives to cancel devastating changes to employment insurance

Disturbing information was revealed this month concerning Service Canada's application of 'denial quotas', which underscores the importance of defending innocent unemployed Northerners against these relentless Conservative attacks.

On February 5th, the House of Commons debated a NDP motion tabled by New Democrat Employment Insurance critic, Anne-Marie Day. The motion read, "That the House call on the Government to reverse devastating changes it has made to Employment Insurance which restrict access and benefits, depress wages, push vulnerable Canadians into poverty and download costs to the provinces; and reinstate the Extra Five Weeks pilot project to avoid the impending 'black hole' of financial insecurity facing workers in seasonal industries and the regional economies they support."

New Democrats have mounted a strong opposition to devastating Conservative changes to the EI program, including most recently:

- ⇒ Condemning the elimination of the Extra Five Weeks pilot program which will create a 'black hole' of income insecurity, hurting workers in seasonal industries and the regional economies that depend on them.
- ⇒ Fighting to reverse the changes to the Working While on Claim pilot project which will hurt the most vulnerable Canadians who are trying to improve their incomes while on EI.
- ⇒ Opposing the scrapping of EI appeal tribunals and their replacement with less adequate and under-resourced Social Security Tribunals.
- ⇒ Demanding the reversal of changes to definitions of "Reasonable Search" and "Suitable Employment" that will force workers to travel great distances for work and accept less-skilled jobs at lower pay, or face being cut off from benefits.

⇒ Demanding a reduction of wait times for processing of EI claims caused by Conservative cuts to Service Canada.

Many Northerners work seasonally, relying on EI to cover the times when jobs are unavailable; the Conservatives are changing EI so that those who have accessed EI in the past will find it more difficult to get benefits and that these benefits will be lower and not as long lasting.

Qualifying for Employment insurance was already hard-even before the Conservatives meddled with the program again this year. *Since 1995*, eligibility rule changes disqualified six in 10 of us from EI benefits. Now the Conservatives 'omnibus budget makes it *even harder* to collect EI to support you through a job search.

You should have a reasonable opportunity to find a job on your chosen career path. But that's changing. The Conservative Cabinet has given itself the power to decide what "suitable job" for you will be. Even if that means abandoning your career to take a low-wage job.

If you don't agree? You'll lose your EI.

That's not fair to you. And it's no way to build the skilled and confident workforce we need.

Employment insurance isn't a *gift* from Ottawa. It's *insurance* that you pay for-and it's there to help you build your career over the long-term. *That* is the program New Democrats are committed to protecting.

Information on how to file your 2012 Income Tax Return:

It's that time of year when Canadians file their income tax and benefit return. If you need help with this, Canada Revenue Agency has a website which lists the different ways to file your income tax and benefit return. Whichever way you choose to file, information is available on www.cra.gc.ca.

It includes the most frequently asked questions about filing your income tax and benefit return. A few tax tips are also available on this website. Deadline to file your return is April 30., 2013.

Service Canada offices and Canada Post outlets have the T1 General Income Tax and Benefit Package for 2012.
