

Dennis Bevington MP Western Arctic Question on Arctic Council

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Mr. Speaker, with the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, it looks like the Conservatives may once again tarnish Canada's reputation on the world stage. The effects of climate change and the massive loss of Arctic sea ice are creating urgent issues in the Arctic, which require international co-operation. However, last week in Norway the Arctic minister said Canada's focus will be on business.

Why is the government wasting the world's time by using this important forum to advance corporate interests?

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a member who openly mused last week in Yellowknife, where I was, that the Northwest Territories did not need any more jobs.

Canada's north is home to world-class reserves of natural resources. This represents tremendous economic potential, not just for northerners but for all Canadians. That is why we are working with aboriginal groups, the territorial governments and the private sector to ensure those resources are developed in a sustainable manner.

We have strong laws and regulatory frameworks to protect our environment in the north. We want northerners to be able to benefit today and for generations to come from jobs and economic growth in the north.