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Challenge of northern development Canada's second priority

The need for increased development, raised by the energy crisis, and native aspirations have combined to confront Canadians with a challenge second only to the national unity problem, stated Northern Development Minister Jake Epp on November 16.

The Minister told the eighth National Northern Development Conference in Edmonton, Alberta that it was his responsibility to move forward simultaneously with land claims negotiations as well as economic and political development.

"As you know native people see land claims as a means of securing their future. But the settlements of claims requires hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds and carries irrevocable ramifications for the future of, not just the native population, but of all Canadians. My duty is clear."

In his address, Mr. Epp proposed:

- New initiatives to break the "log jam" of recent years and reach settlements in various land claims negotiations;

- a procedure to develop a comprehensive energy policy for the North, related to a national policy;
- measures to alleviate the high costs of power to small businessmen;
- the transfer of the existing power subsidy for residential consumers to the territorial governments;
- incentives to small business in both territories;
- a new northern roads policy based on the transfer of roads responsibilities to the territories.

The turning point

"As we prepare for the new decade of the 1980s, it is appropriate that the central theme of this conference is at the turning point, said Mr. Epp.

"Let me make two other salient points," he continued. "I draw a firm distinction between responsible government and provincial status. I believe in the first as a matter of principle. As for provincehood, that is entirely up to the people of Yukon. Our position is simple. There is little significant difference in the relationship between Ottawa and the Territories and that of a nineteenth century mother country and her colonies. We who have rejoiced in the generally peaceful evolution from the colonial to the modern era cannot remain indifferent to colonialism at home...."

He said that the Federal Government was "sufficiently innovative" to reach a new financial arrangement that would be more acceptable to all than the present high rate of dependency on the central treasury. "As a start I am open-minded about expanding the revenue base of both territorial governments through a transfer at the appropriate time of additional federal responsibilities," he continued.

Land claims

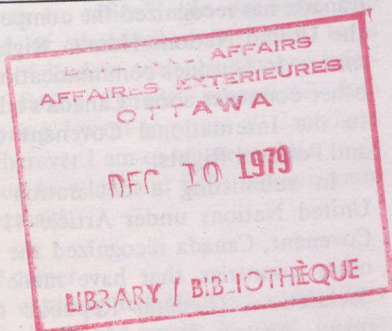
"We are encouraging new initiatives with native groups in an attempt to break the log jam of recent years and to move deliberately to achieve equitable land claims



An Inuk woman repairs a leather moccasin. Northern Affairs Minister Epp has proposed measures for economic and political development of the North.

Seventy-two years ago this week...

The first Canadian flight of a passenger-carrying, heavier-than-air machine (Dr. Graham Bell's tetrahedral kite, *Cygnets*) was recorded.



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