

a national sell-out *****

construction projects associated with oil and gas exploration and transportation give Canadians badly-needed jobs?

But does Canada really need northern energy reserves - at least within the next decade?

Observers and critics, such as economist John Helliwell and Political Science professor James Laxer, seriously question whether we do. If existing reserves are used for Canadians exclusively, if the government gives incentives to Alberta oil men to keep their drilling rigs in Canada (there has been an actual decrease of exploration activity in Alberta in recent years), if exploration is accelerated in the areas already under production, if Canadians make an effort to conserve energy and develop alternate sources, then it would be quite feasible to postpone northern oil and gas development for several years. This would give more than enough time for a thorough and badly needed rethinking of northern development and energy policies in general.

Well, even if Canada doesn't really need the energy reserves in the north for a few years, wouldn't northern development activities still give a badly-needed boost to the Canadian economy? Not really.

work. So if one of the goals of constructing the pipeline is to create jobs, the money would be better invested in the manufacturing sector.

Not only will the Canadian economy receive little benefit from oil and gas-related activities in the north, it could be seriously damaged by them. If the Mackenzie Valley pipeline is financed largely by Canadian funds (and that is highly unlikely), it will make capital scarce for other investments. If, on the other hand, the project is financed with foreign money, the influx of funds (particularly with the James Bay, project being built at the same time) will drive up the value of the Canadian dollar. Canada's export goods will become expensive and uncompetitive in the foreign market, and imports will compete unfavorably with Canadian manufactured goods. Canada's manufacturing sector will be damaged and unemployment will increase.

Canada is becoming ever more dependent on outside interests and ever more vulnerable to decisions made in foreign countries. Many economists are concerned that Canada today is economically weaker than it has been in any other time this century.

In the north, the pattern is repeated. The decision-making

process has largely been weighted in favour of business interests, with federal participation from time to time. At least until 1968, the north was largely ruled in a policy vacuum. Whatever development took place was generally determined by business. Since the discovery of Alaskan oil, the federal government has played a much more dynamic role, but corporate concerns have remained a priority.

The government and its corporate partners have been able to develop policy for the north with little concern for a largely-absent public opinion. "Relations with business, particularly the multi-national corporations and Washington, rather than public debate or consultation with the northerners set the pattern of development that is now being pursued in the north," states Edgar Dosman in his book, *The National Interest*. Native northerners are not the only group that has been excluded from decision-making.

It is time that all Canadians started asking themselves some serious questions about the form of development that has been decreed for Canada's north. Does it benefit all Canadians? Do Canadians really need the energy reserves, at least in the short term? Should Native northerners have more of

a say in determining the type of development which takes place in their homeland?

Canada's north is no longer an isolated, remote "wasteland". The future of Canada will be shaped by decisions that are now being made in Ottawa. The Canadian public can no longer afford to leave such crucial decisions in the hands of corporate officials

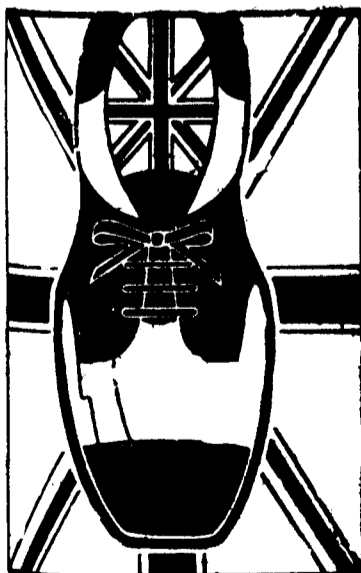
and a small "inner circle" of senior federal civil servants.

Now is the time for southern Canadians to take action. Now is the time to become informed about our precious northland. Now is the time to give utmost support to the Native organizations. In the end, the only one who can answer the question "who will fight for the north?" is you.

Economy weakened - across nation and north

John Helliwell has suggested that the revenues from export sales and delivery systems will not offset the economic costs (the costs associated with the transportation and support structure, paid for largely by the Canadian taxpayer), the social costs and the environmental costs to Canada of building a Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

The construction of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, along with other oil and gas-related developments, would undoubtedly create jobs. But the resource sector is what is referred to as "capital intensive" in nature. The number of jobs created per dollar invested is extremely small when compared to the manufactured sector of the economy. And the jobs which are created provide mostly short-term, unskilled



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SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH