

REES' Pieces

Be prepared: Get Less, Pay More

The spat between Alberta and British Columbia, unless solved soon, will affect all Canadians and Nova Scotians should get prepared. It might evolve into a Constitutional crisis, or the break-up of Canada as we know it today.

If the three Green party members, who are keeping the British Columbia NDP party governing the province aren't convinced to back off there could be a 2018 BC provincial election, less than a year since the Liberals gave up governing.

We might not realize two provinces squabbling over an approved pipeline to carry Alberta bitumen through the Rockies to a BC port for shipment overseas will have much of an impact on the east coast. However, it would have a significant impact and sooner than we want to think about it.

As I see it one of two things will happen, maybe both and a whole lot more. If the two provinces can't find a solution harmony between other provinces could be adversely affected. Instead of a "mostly unified" working relationship between provinces, we might be facing a lack of co-operation with provinces or regions setting up barriers and refusing to co-operate on trade across provincial borders.

I realize "pipelines" are a contentious issue, and there are many here in Colchester and Cumberland Counties who are against them. Canada has the highest concentration of natural resource assets including oil, natural gas and bitumen. It's a global commodity which the world needs. Although we might not like how it's done, or how it gets to market, we must insist all government ensure there is "responsible natural resource development".

If Alberta is not able to get oil products to market, its economy will suffer even more than it has during the energy price slump. If that happens they will be angry and not inclined to work with other provinces or regions. The result would be a breakdown in coast to coast provincial co-operation.

How would you feel if a provincial passport was required to travel outside a region of cooperating provinces, should you wish to travel to the Pacific Coast? Probably never required, but the hatred would amount to the same.

How could this affect Nova Scotians so we had to pay more and get less? This is the easiest to explain. Canada's "have" provinces contribute large amounts of money to the Federal Treasury, which is then distributed to less wealthy Canadian provinces to equalize the provinces' "fiscal capacity" — their ability to generate tax revenues. The program began in 1972. In 2008–2009, six provinces received \$13.6-Billion in equalization payments from the federal government. Until the 2009–2010 fiscal year, Ontario was the only province to have never received equalization payments; in 2009–2010 Ontario received \$347-Million, while Newfoundland, which has received payments since the program's creation, because of offshore oil and gas success is now a so-called "have" province, and is now a net contributor and does not receive payments.

British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland have contributed to the program so that in 2017–2018 year, the following provinces received the following equalization payments: Quebec, \$11.081-Billion; Manitoba, \$1.820-Billion; Nova Scotia, \$1.779-Billion; New Brunswick, \$1.760-Billion; Ontario, \$1.424-Billion and Prince Edward Island, \$390-Million. Canada's territories are not included in the equalization program. The federal government addresses territorial fiscal needs through the Territorial Formula Financing (TFF) program.

If an expansion of the turf warfare continues and provinces not contributing, a lot of things will change. Looking at oil rich Alberta, if they are not permitted to get bitumen to market, their economy will nosedive and they will not be sending gobs of money to Ottawa. That would directly affect how much money available to send to good ole Nova Scotia in the way of transfer payments.

With the recent Nova Scotia Atlas suggesting there might be \$\$\$-Billions in onshore gas, other provinces might force us into development. Consequently it might be prudent for the province to first enact "responsible" natural resource development programs. We might not like it, but we could be forced into fracking just to keep ourselves afloat. Within a couple of decades we might become a "have" province and send some money to Alberta.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear editor,

I have recently learned Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR) is promoting mineral exploration in the Wentworth Valley-Warwick Mountain area. Not only is this exploration being considered but it is being done so without public consultation. The fact residents of the area are not able to obtain information on this proposed exploration (for which an RFP is to be issued shortly) is, quite simply, outrageous.

The people who will be affected cannot find out what is being proposed that will forever alter their lives. How can this be in a democracy?

Mining in the Wentworth area will destroy any hope that this area has of establishing

economic security for the decades to come. Not only will land and water sources be destroyed but the potential for a year round tourist industry to thrive will be decimated. Ski Wentworth already hosts three seasons of events and attractions and could add a fourth if the investors and developers knew their investment would be secure. Mining operations in the area would abolish that security and bring an end to any further economic growth in the area. It may indeed destroy what is already there.

Nova Scotia has been extracting and selling its resources for centuries until our forests are weak, our trees are becoming puny and we have great gaping slashes in our landscape that speak elo-

quently of beauty past. These extractive industries no longer provide Nova Scotia with jobs and prosperity. The mechanization of the processes involved requires very few actual paid workers. In short, we get no substantial return and lose whatever hope we now have of creating a new economy for the province.

We desperately need new ways to provide career potential to retain our young people in this province. The beauty of the province could be our next great export and by that I mean that we could be bringing tourists here, year round, to enjoy our forests, our mountains, and our seascapes. Restaurants, boutique hotels, B&Bs, art shops, museums, vineyards and craft shops

draw people to our province. Our seaside towns are packed with tourists in the summer. We have some of the best musicians on the continent here in our own province. This is our future.

We can be bringing people here for many more months than we do now if we put our time, effort and tax money into developing this potential instead of letting all the financial benefit be drained off by offshore mega-corporations who give nothing back. And take everything we have into the bargain.

Yours truly
Mary Ellen Stevenson
Oxford, Nova Scotia

2018 Woodland Conference Series

The schedule for the 2018 Woodland Conferences has been announced and will be held in the Forties, Port Hawkesbury and New Glasgow. Each venue is a conference where professionals and woodland owners talk about issues and resources to help manage land sustainably and keep it healthy. The conferences are being held as follows: **Western Woodland Conference:** Forties Community Centre, 1787 Forties Road, Forties Saturday, March 3, 2018. **Maritime Forest Carbon Opportunity Conference:** Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, 606 Reeves Street, Port

Hawkesbury, Wednesday and Thursday, March 7-8, 2018 and **Central Woodland Conference:** Summer Street Industries, 72 Park Street, New Glasgow, Saturday, April 7, 2018.

In Eastern Nova Scotia, landowners are invited to attend the **Maritime Forest Carbon Opportunity Conference** hosted by the Nova Scotia Landowners and Forest Fibre Producers Association on Wednesday, March 7, and Thursday, March 8. The cost is \$60 and pre-registration is required. For more information and to register, visit: www.maritimeforestcarbon.info

Casey Introduces Bill to Repatriate Aboriginal Property

Bill Casey, Cumberland-Colchester MP introduced the Aboriginal Cultural Property Repatriation Act in the House of Commons on February 1st. "The idea came from the Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre," said Casey. "I visited and saw a photo of regalia made in the 1840s for a Mi'kmaq Chief, and the guide told me the real thing is in a museum in Australia."

Indeed, the intricate ceremonial garment had been kept far from home in a Melbourne museum for the past 126 years. After hearing about the significant challenges faced by the Centre in trying to borrow or buy it back, Casey decided to spearhead the creation of a national strategy for the repatriation of Indigenous cultural property.

Dr. Donald M. Julien, Executive Director of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, supports

the initiative. "Repatriating Indigenous cultural property can have immeasurable positive psychological, educational and economic benefits for Indigenous communities. We see a need for a national strategy that is sensitive to the differences among communities and cultures but that ultimately brings this issue to the forefront for all Canadians."

Casey added, "The bill is really about getting governments, museums and collectors to reorient their thinking; to respect traditional knowledge; and to work as equals with Indigenous peoples to ensure that cultural property is repatriated when possible."

Casey looks forward to working with his parliamentary colleagues and debating this bill in the House of Commons, expected later this spring.

Asset Management Program gets \$11,020

By Maurice Rees

Council approved \$11,020 toward the costs of The Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP) at its committee meeting on February 8th. The program is a 5-year, \$50 million program funded by Infrastructure Canada and delivered by FCM. The program provides funding to municipalities to help improve their skills in asset management; Eligible activities include the creation of asset management plans and policies, data collection, reporting, and training and Projects are eligible for 80% funding, and any funding applications must be supported by a resolution of Council.

Staff developed a five part program totaling \$55,100 through the MAMP Program, which included: Conference attendance, Canadian Net-

work of Asset Managers: \$5,300; Technical training in sewer pipe video inspection: \$6,800; Two summers students for data collection: \$16,600; Purchase of specialized sewer video software \$21,800 and Staff salary - asset management component \$4,600.

Should the \$55,100 application receive 80% funding, the remaining \$11,080 will be funded by the operating budgets for sewers, roads and sidewalks.

Council directed staff to apply for a grant opportunity from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Municipal Asset Management Program for Asset Management and committed to conducting the activities in the proposed project.

The
Shoreline
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