

Feb 26, 2020

CREE LEADERS WORK TO CALM FEARS OVER SURPRISING \$4.7B INFRASTRUCTURE DEAL

CBC News – Feb 20

The deal came as a surprise to many Cree and had people expressing suspicion, worry and support for the deal on social media. People raised questions about what it will mean, how the land and animals would be affected, and how they will be consulted moving forward. "I think people are still concerned about what happened [in the] 1970s [when] Quebec started building dams without Cree consent or even clear acknowledgement of our rights. But times have changed," said Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Cree Nation Government. He was referring to the unannounced attempt by Quebec to construct a massive hydro-electric dam in the 1970s — known as the James Bay Project, which led to the ensuing legal battle and eventual court-ordered signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which is considered the first modern treaty in Canada. Namagoose said the Cree are now in the driver's seat with Quebec as a partner. "There were no projects decided on Monday. When there are projects there will be total community consultation," said Namagoose. On Facebook, Cree Grand Chief Bosum sent the same message. "Every project will still be subjected to an environmental and social assessment as set out [in] Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement where consultations are mandatory and projects must meet social acceptance," wrote Bosum <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-grande-alliance-lithium-infrastructure-environment-quebec-1.5469210>

ONTARIO ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR SKILLED TRADES TRAINING FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

CBC News – Feb 24

The Ontario government on Thursday announced \$2 million in funding for programs aimed at training Indigenous people for careers in the skilled trades. The province has given \$500,000 to Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS) to fund pre-apprenticeship training in carpentry for 15 people and in drywall, acoustics and lathing for 20 people. Participants will have the option to receive welding training as a secondary trade, according to a news release issued by AETS. In addition to the money for the pre-apprenticeship programs, the province is also giving AETS \$250,000 from its Indigenous Economic Development Fund to provide clients with job readiness training – such as math refreshers – level one construction and carpentry training and wage subsidies for work placements. "This wage subsidy is like an extended interview time that employers will have to see if our client is the right fit for them," DeGiacomo said. Also on Thursday the province announced \$1.5 million in funding over three years for Supercom Industries, the partnership between six Lake Superior First Nations – including Fort William First Nation and the Red Rock Indian Band – that is training community members to build the East-West Tie Transmission Line and future energy projects.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/ontario-funds-indigenous-skills-training-1.5470603>

OSGOODE ENVIRONMENTAL CLINIC TO HELP FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ASSESS PROPOSED MINING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Law Times – Feb 24

Osgoode Hall Law School's Environmental Justice and Sustainability Clinic has received the go signal to assist the federal government in assessing the mining and road infrastructure possibilities in the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario. According to Scott, who is also York University's research chairperson in environmental law and justice in the green economy, as well as an associate professor in the university, the need for a regional assessment became apparent when the clinic had been involved in a project-level environmental assessment for one of the remote First Nations in the area. Despite initial apprehensions regarding the proper request procedure, owing to the novel nature of the federal Impact Assessment Act, the request was accepted. Scott said that the regional assessment would be an exciting step toward a meaningful collaboration between the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and the Indigenous governing authorities. This way, she said, they can avoid a situation in which the affected communities are "being merely 'consulted on' the proponents' proposals."

<https://www.lawtimesnews.com/resources/legal-education/osgoode-environmental-clinic-to-help-federal-government-assess-proposed-mining-in-northern-ontario/326622>

HISTORIAN SAYS CANADA USES POLICE FORCE TO ‘PROTECT THE ECONOMY’ INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH INDIGENOUS CONCERNS

CTV News – Feb 24

In the wake of Ontario Provincial Police moving in to arrest Mohawk protesters at a railway near Belleville, Ont., Monday morning, a historian who studies colonial violence says that this latest use of police force is a sign that Canada, despite its goals of reconciliation, looks like it is repeating the mistakes of its past. “As a historian, I’m disappointed,” Sean Carleton told CTV News. “We often talk about learning from the lessons of the past, so that we don’t make the same mistakes, and here we are.” He added that if things continue in the direction of more police intervention, he’s “really concerned that reconciliation, if it’s not dead already, is certainly on life support.”

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/historian-says-canada-uses-police-force-to-protect-the-economy-instead-of-dealing-with-indigenous-concerns-1.4826206>

ALBERTA’S BILL 1 A STEP TOWARDS POLICE STATE, SAYS CHIEF

Windspeaker – Feb 25

The first and only bill introduced by the United Conservative government as the Alberta Legislature began its spring sitting on Feb. 25 is aimed at stopping any more such actions as the Wet’suwet’en solidarity demonstrations that shut down rail lines and roadways.

Bill 1, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act, comes only five days after a group calling themselves Cuzzins for Wet’suwet’en blockaded CN tracks in west Edmonton. If the bill becomes law those taking part in similar protests will each face minimum fines of \$10,000 for the first day of action and then \$25,000 for each subsequent day. They also face the possibility of six months jail time. Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam is calling the government’s action over-the-top. “I think Premier Kenney should settle down,” said Adam. “Looking at all the issues and concerns that First Nations people have regardless of where they’re living, major cities or reserves, they’re all living the same conditions. Nothing has improved so you’re going to probably see more demonstrations in that regards.”

<https://windspeaker.com/news/windspeaker-news/albertas-bill-1-step-towards-police-state-says-chief>

CANADA LOSES TOP SPOT FOR MOST ATTRACTIVE MINING ENVIRONMENT – FRASER INSTITUTE

Kitco – Feb 25

<https://www.kitco.com/news/2020-02-25/Canada-loses-top-stop-for-most-attractive-mining-environment-Fraser-Institute.html>

NORTH-WESTERN ONTARIO COALITION SEEKS SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF EAST-WEST ROUTE TO THE RING OF FIRE

Environmental Communications Options – Feb 26 (Media Advisory)

The Media Conference attendees will travel from north-western Ontario to participate in the media event and attend the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) conference. The East-West Ring of Fire Road Coalition (EWRFC) seeks provincial and federal government support for an EA process focused on road access to the Ring of Fire (see orange route on attached map). The EWRFC contends this route benefits the greatest number of Ontario communities and has the least environmental impact. The route will provide all-season road access and enhance the economic opportunities associated with the Ring of Fire (a massive deposit of chromite and other strategic minerals). A media conference will be held on Monday, March 2, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. in the Media Studio, Legislative Building Room 148, Queen's Park, Toronto, ON.

<http://www.huffstrategy.com/MediaManager/release/EAST-WEST-RING-OF-FIRE-ROAD-COALITION-/26-2-20/North-western-Ontario-Coalition-seeks-support-for-Environmental-A/3657.html>