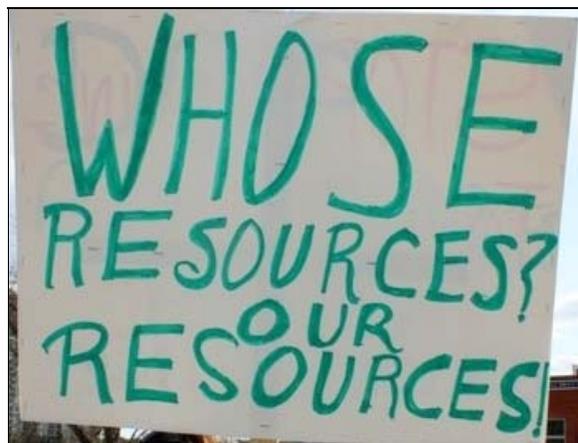


Atlookan said the "betrayal" happened in August 2017 when Wynne announced separate all-weather road deals with Marten Falls, Webequie and Nibinamik. "We did not know they were doing that," she said.

Wayne Moonias, Chief of Neskantaga First Nation, which also has not agreed to the construction of a road through its territory said: "Do you respect the rights of our people, the ties, the positions we have towards our lands, the way decisions have to be made?"

The Ontario Government and the Noront Resources monopoly have a narrow view of consultations and negotiations. They want Indigenous peoples to agree to the broad thrust of development on the monopoly's terms and aim of making as much money as possible from mining the minerals and leaving little if anything behind for the coming generations. They expect only quibbling over a few details and blame the Indigenous peoples for wanting something quite different and substantive and delaying the project. Immediate employment and a spurt of "economic development" as the minerals are removed are used as an inducement to force the Indigenous peoples to agree.

The Matawa Tribal Council of First Nations has every reason to refuse to negotiate based on what the Ontario government and Noront want. The direct experience of the development of mining in Northern Ontario, from Bruce Mines to Sudbury, to Cobalt, to the Porcupine, to Elliot Lake and to Attiwapiskat shows that the interests of the mining monopolies, whether Canadian or foreign, is to extract the natural resources of Northern Ontario and remove the social value from the region. The social value is not used to build the communities of the North and their economies. Too often, Indigenous communities have been left devastated and the interests of mining workers ignored and communities left abandoned when the mines close with the environment destroyed.



Minerals can only be mined once. If the working and Indigenous peoples of Northern Ontario are to benefit from mining development, it is essential they have the political power and control necessary to determine its direction. A new aim for mining to serve the needs and development of the peoples of the North and to guarantee their future must control the process and any negotiations.

(With files from Dave Starbuck)

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