Devolution: Nunavut-style

Ottawa and Iqaluit appoint negotiator for transfer of powers

Formal negotiations to devolve federal powers to Nunavut from Ottawa took a major step forward in October, when the federal and territorial governments appointed chief negotiators for talks to develop an agreement in principal.

Brian Dominique, a Toronto-based corporate lawyer who led the federal negotiating team in the NWT devolution talks, will represent Ottawa at the new table. Leading the Nunavut team is Simon Awa, the territory's former deputy minister of Family Services. Awa will be joined by Nunavut businessman Alex Buchan and long-term public servant Robert Carson as deputy negotiators.

The federal government's announcement of Dominique's appointment, which followed Awa's, was welcomed in Nunavut as an important set towards gaining greater control over land and resources. Cathy Towtongie, president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the organization that oversees the Nunavut land claim, said future devolution will "provide the opportunity to fully participate in our economy. We look forward to starting negotiations right away."

Working in harmony for a stronger community

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From Northern Mines to Electric Cars

Fortune Minerals poised to benefit from Tesla Motors new battery factory

Electric car-maker Tesla Motor Inc. generated headlines in September when it announced Nevada would be home to its new $5-billion "gigafactory," where it will make batteries for its line of electric cars. That was music to the ears at Fortune Minerals Ltd., which recently received approvals and permits to develop its NICO gold-cobalt-bismuth-copper mine in the NWT.

The reason? Cobalt. Tesla aims to be producing battery-powered cars at a rate of 500,000 vehicles annually by 2020. Those batteries will need chemicals based on cobalt. And that happens to be one of the products Fortune plans to sell. Between its shovel-ready mine project, near Whati in the NWT's North Slave region, and its proposed mineral processing plant at Langham, Sask., Fortune will be in prime position to do business with Tesla.

"We are the only company in North America that is specifically pursuing the battery market," Fortune CEO Robin Goad told the London Free Press in an interview earlier this year. "We have made preliminary contact [with Tesla] and there is a symbiotic opportunity."

Making the potential that much better for Fortune is Tesla's decision to source as much of its supply chain within North America as possible to reduce its environmental footprint.