

Table of Contents

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

Introduction	32
A Change of Heart	33
Pipeline Facts and Figures	34
The Historical Significance of the Berger Inquiry.....	36
Culture as a Dynamic Entity	39
A Contextual Issue.....	41
A Question of Perspective	43
Discussion, Research, and Essay Questions	45

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

Introduction

In some ways, when promoting the development of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, Premier Stephen Kakfwi of the Northwest Territories, a pragmatic and pro-business leader, sounds like any other political leader championing a pet project: “The eyes of the world are upon us and we are busy preparing for our future. A Mackenzie Valley pipeline that moves Northwest Territories gas to southern markets will form the cornerstone to develop a long-term oil and gas industry for the Northwest Territories.” What is so unusual about Kakfwi’s promotion of the project is that, 25 years ago, he was one of its most vehement critics.

But things have changed since the 1970s. When the pipeline from the Beaufort Sea, under which lie vast reserves of natural gas, was first proposed, Aboriginal citizens of the North were a marginalized people struggling for recognition of their rights. The pipeline was seen as an imposition from southern Canada that would not benefit northern residents, but actually harm them. These fears were well-founded: since most Aboriginal groups had not negotiated any formal claims with federal, territorial, or provincial governments, they had no way of stopping oil and gas companies from bringing in highly skilled southerners to develop industries potentially damaging to the environment and the traditional economy. But now, most northern groups have settled land claims, which go a long way in ensuring they have administrative and economic rights to any development in the region. And because

Aboriginal cultural and educational practices have changed over 25 years, many young Aboriginals now welcome the opportunity to take positions in industrial and professional fields rather than follow their ancestors’ traditional hunting and fishing lifestyles.

The key event that delayed pipeline development and at the same time fostered northern autonomy was the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry of 1975-76, headed by Justice Thomas Berger. Over the course of several months, Berger held hearings in communities in the North to hear from local residents and other experts. On the whole, the people who testified before the inquiry presented eloquent, rational arguments against the construction of the pipeline. In the end, Berger recommended a 10-year moratorium on northern energy development in order to resolve issues such as land claims. His findings, published by the federal government, became a bestseller, and as a result of the process Canadians became more interested in issues related to northern culture, Aboriginal rights, and environmental values.

As in northern society, cultural and educational values have also changed in southern Canada. Today, Canadians in many different parts of the country are sensitive to minority rights and environmental issues. As a result, debates that have emerged about the current pipeline proposals have not necessarily been divided along lines of culture or geography as much as along lines of belief about what constitutes progress and development.

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

► *A Change of Heart*

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

— Playwright George Bernard Shaw

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” — U.S. President John F. Kennedy

Some people might say that all things change over time, or that change is an inevitable part of life. Certainly, from a biological perspective, change is the essence of life. Organisms that exhibit development through metabolism and reproduction and that are able to adapt to their environment through internal processes are classified as being “alive.” Different types of changes, though, occur at different rates. Largely due to advances in modern technology, 21st-century Canada is a place in which change takes place very rapidly. Do you think it is possible for change to take place too quickly? Keep this question in mind as you prepare to watch this report.

The Geographical Context

Before viewing, consult atlases and encyclopedias to familiarize yourself with the geography and wildlife of the Northwest Territories. You may also consult the Web site of the Northwest Territories government (www.gov.nt.ca). Can you find any examples of changes that have taken place in recent times in the land, the vegetation, or the animal population of the area? What has caused these changes? How quickly have they occurred? How have attitudes toward the land changed?

The Cultural Context

Next, consider the cultural changes that are taking place in Aboriginal communities in northern Canada. At first glance, it may seem that change is occurring rather slowly in the Mackenzie Valley of the Northwest Territories. Over two decades have passed since big oil companies originally proposed to build a pipeline in the area, and still no pipeline exists. A 1970s federal government inquiry into residents’ opinions about a pipeline found that they were not ready to give up their traditional ways of life. Since that time, however, many cultural transformations have taken place in the Northwest Territories, including changes in how the land, resources, and population are governed.

In your opinion, are Aboriginal political leaders rushing too quickly into new opportunities the pipeline represents in an attempt to “catch up” with lifestyles enjoyed by southern communities? As you watch this report, consider the opinions and attitudes of the different leaders represented in the video. Compare their views with the sentiments expressed in the quotations above.

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

► *Pipeline Facts and Figures*

In the past, residents of Canada's North were not well informed about the proposed pipeline project. This has been attributed in part to culturally biased attitudes toward Aborigines. Decisions were often made for Aborigines without consulting them first. Many Northern people were not comfortable speaking English, and not conversant with the technical terms of energy resource development. But with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, Northern residents quickly became very familiar with the realities.

Natural Gas and Oil

Natural gas and petroleum (crude oil) develop naturally in pockets in the earth as the combined effects of high pressure and intense temperature turn the ancient remains of animals and plants into sources of energy (fossil fuels). Natural gas is an odourless and colourless fuel, while petroleum is a thick, dark-coloured fuel. Although the processing of petroleum into gasoline, kerosene, and other products has historically been more profitable than the development of natural gas, this is rapidly changing. Natural gas is now the most widely used fuel in Canadian homes, and demand continues to grow. As a result, it constitutes an expanding sector of the Canadian economy.

Pipeline Infrastructure

Pipelines are conduits usually buried about 1.5 metres underground that use pumps and valves to move liquids or gasses over long distances. While most pipelines are constructed by fusing short pieces of steel into a continuous line, some pipelines are made of aluminum or plastic. To ensure safety, all tubes are inspected before they are used in a network, and newly installed lines are tested for leaks or defects by pumping water through them at high pressure. To prevent corrosion, pipeline companies apply a protective material to the tubes and install electrochemical systems in the ground that alter the soil's electric currents. Pipelines that are in operation are monitored electronically by computers designed to spot any unusual pressure or leaks.

Pipeline networks are made up of three parts: gathering systems, main trunk lines, and distribution systems. Gathering systems convey petroleum and natural gas from the point of extraction to processing plants. Trunk lines, wide pipelines that have pumping or compressor stations at roughly every 100 kilometres to help keep the product moving, transport oil or gas from processing facilities to market centres. The final section of the pipeline network, the distribution system, delivers the fuel to consumers. Market demands determine the transportation capacity of a pipeline network. If demand increases, new pumps or compressors and parallel lines must be built so that the network can move more fuel. Because of this, construction on a pipeline may continue for years or even decades.

Pipeline Superstructure

Pipelines are complex engineering structures, and they are perhaps no less complicated from political, economic, and environmental perspectives. Canada's existing 242 000-kilometre pipeline systems are collectively the second-longest network of their kind in the world, and it is the National Energy Board that manages the many complex issues relating to pipelines, such as the regulation of interprovincial or international lines and the allocation of export

permits. When a project is particularly controversial, such as the Mackenzie Valley pipeline was, a commission may be established to further study the issue.

Economically, although pipelines are the most cost-efficient way to ship fuel, they do constitute a major investment. Gas pipelines are especially expensive. For this reason, Canada's system of gas pipelines was established to carry natural gas not only throughout Canada but also to the United States, which is a large energy consumer and source of revenue. As the third-largest producer of natural gas in the world, Canada supplies the United States with approximately 15 per cent of its natural gas needs. In all, exporting oil and gas to the U.S. is a \$39-billion-a-year business for Canada.

As it became very clear during the inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, such projects may affect and disrupt many aspects of life along the proposed route. According to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEA Act), the potential environmental effects of a pipeline are to be considered with reference to health and socio-economic conditions; physical and cultural heritage; traditional Aboriginal use of lands and resources; and historical, archaeological, paleontological, or architectural significance.

Where Will the Northern Pipeline Go?

There are two principal off-shore reserves of natural gas in the Beaufort Sea: in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and in the Mackenzie Delta in the Northwest Territories. There have also been two principal proposals for a northern pipeline route: from Prudhoe Bay along the Alaska Highway, through Yukon and into Alberta; or from the Mackenzie Delta south to Alberta. The consortium of companies backing the Alaska Highway route announced in September 2001 that the route was too expensive, but a more recent report says that the members of the consortium have come back to the table and will present Alaskan producers with a viable proposal by the end of the year. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, however, has publicly endorsed the Mackenzie Valley route. Mike Sawyer, an environmental analyst with the Citizens Oil and Gas Council deemed Chrétien's statement "inappropriate." Yukon leader Pat Duncan has expressed a preference for an Alaska Highway route, while Northwest Territories leader Stephen Kakfwi endorses the Mackenzie Valley route. Alaska Governor Tony Knowles has indicated that he is not opposed to a second pipeline down the Mackenzie but supports the Alaska Highway route.

You may wish to consult the online map and TransCanada Pipeline's position on the issue at www.transcanada.com/company_profile/northern_development/our_position.htm.

Assessment

1. Working with a partner, brainstorm a list of all the activities that must be performed and factors that must be taken into account before a pipeline is operational. Based on what you know about the economy and environment of the area where you live, discuss which factors, if any, would pose the most obstacles to pipeline development in your region. Compare your findings with those of others.
2. Considering the possible routes of such a pipeline or pipelines what areas of the North—states, provinces, or territories—would tend to benefit most from its construction? How might this create competition that would have an impact on a pipeline being built?

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

The Historical Significance of the Berger Inquiry

In the late 1960s, vast reserves of oil and gas were discovered in the northern regions of Canada and the United States. A flurry of excitement over these newly found resources resulted, recalling the fervour of the Klondike Gold Rush decades earlier in Yukon. Whereas the discovery of gold in the Klondike enticed individuals from all parts of the world to try their luck in the area, the later discovery of natural energy resources in the North promised huge profits only for large organizations able to finance and run a complex pipeline system that would transport oil and gas from northern territories to the rest of North America. Two companies proposed two different lines. Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd. planned a “Maple Leaf Line” running directly south from Prudhoe Bay in Alaska and then east, connecting with existing pipes in Alberta and British Columbia. Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline Ltd., a powerful alliance of 27 companies that included energy giants Exxon and Shell, laid the framework for the most ambitious gas pipeline project in the world, stretching from Prudhoe Bay in Alaska across northern Yukon to the Mackenzie Delta, then south to Alberta. This proposal particularly concerned environmentalists and northern Aboriginals, who questioned the impact such a huge project would have on the northern environment and culture.

Because of pressure from these two groups, Jean Chrétien, then Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, established a Royal Commission to analyze the potential impact of the proposed pipelines. The government chose British Columbia Supreme Court Judge Thomas Berger to head the commission. In 1975 and 1976, Berger considered evidence from over 1000 residents of Canada’s northern territories as well as over 300 experts on the region. The inquiry was significant in several respects. By the time it concluded, many southern Canadians had watched on television as witnesses testified in hearings held in cabins and tents in remote northern communities. As a result, southern Canada became much more aware of and interested in issues such as northern subsistence, Aboriginal sovereignty claims, and environmental protection. When the government released Berger’s report, it became a bestseller.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The 400-page Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry report was published in two volumes. Among its conclusions on the probable environmental, cultural, economic, and social consequences of the construction of a gas pipeline were the following:

- The large expanses of land in the North include various relatively small zones that are ecologically significant to the entire population of specific animal species at certain times of the year. Interfering with these critical areas will cause severe environmental harm.
- The Porcupine caribou herd of northern Yukon and Alaska is one of the last great caribou herds in the world only because it exists in a remote area. Building a gas pipeline will lead to industrial development in the region and therefore cause harm to the herd.

- The population of Canada's territories is made up of various groups of Aboriginals as well as people of European descent. Many members of the non-Aboriginal population, however, are only in the Canadian North temporarily, as employees of the government, mining companies, or oil and gas companies.
- Aboriginal culture includes certain values about the individual's relationship to family, community, and land that are often not understood by non-Aboriginals.
- Aboriginal culture, like other cultures, has changed and will continue to change over the years. It is important, however, that transformations in the culture be determined by Aboriginals themselves, not by outsiders.
- The pipeline will not be an economic cure-all. While some Aboriginal residents of the North will gain employment through industrial development, many others will lose their traditional means of support through hunting, trapping, and fishing.
- The benefits of pipeline construction will be short-term. The northern economy must be developed from more than just one angle if it is to remain vibrant.
- Some of the North's existing social problems are linked to industrialization. As industry developed, the population's links to their culture become weaker. Faced with these changes, people increasingly turned to alcoholism and crime. A large-scale pipeline project will only worsen this process and the resultant problems.

Berger's report made it clear that the debate about the construction of a gas pipeline was part of a much larger debate about the future of an intricately interconnected system of people, animals, and land. In northern Yukon, Berger determined, the establishment of a pipeline would forever disturb the delicate balance of the local ecosystem. Because of this, he vetoed pipeline development in that area. However, he stated that a pipeline could eventually be constructed along the Mackenzie Valley, provided land claims were settled and thorough assessments were conducted on the social and economic effects of the pipeline. To ensure these conditions could be fulfilled, Berger proposed a 10-year moratorium on pipeline development in the region.

Discussion

1. Justice Berger gave his report the title *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland*. In your opinion, what does this title mean? How does it summarize the opposing views of the companies hoping to develop a northern pipeline and the Aboriginal peoples fighting against the pipeline?
2. Allan Fotheringham, a columnist for *The Vancouver Sun* at the time of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, suggested that the decision-making power placed in the hands of Judge Thomas Berger was comparable to granting one

person the authority to “make his own pronouncements on the social, environmental, and economic impact of the building of the CPR.” Explain the comparison that Fotheringham is making. Do you agree or disagree with it?

3. Read aloud and examine the following excerpt from *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland*. How does this rationale sum up issues still relevant today? Are there issues implied in the excerpt that you feel are no longer relevant?

This Inquiry was appointed to consider the social, environmental and economic impact of a gas pipeline and an energy corridor across our northern territories . . . The Inquiry was also empowered to recommend terms and conditions that ought to be imposed to protect the people of the North, their environment, and their economy, if the pipeline were to be built.

Today, we realize more fully what was always implicit in the Inquiry’s mandate: this is not simply a debate about a gas pipeline and an energy corridor, it is a debate about the future of the North and its peoples.

There are two distinct views of the North: one as frontier, the other as homeland.

We look upon the North as our last frontier. It is natural for us to think of developing it, of subduing the land and extracting its resources to fuel Canada’s industry and heat our homes. Our whole inclination is to think of expanding our industrial machine to the limit of our country’s frontiers. In this view, the construction of a gas pipeline is seen as the next advance in a series of frontier advances that have been intimately bound up with Canadian history. But the Native people say the North is their homeland. They have lived there for thousands of years. They claim it is their land, and they believe they have a right to say what its future ought to be.

The question whether a pipeline shall be built has become the occasion for the joining of these issues.

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

Culture as a Dynamic Entity

How and why do cultures change? How is change integral to culture? How can cultural traditions be maintained or integrated into resource development plans?

Valuing the Past

During the course of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, many different opinions were heard on the proposed development of the region. While not everybody who testified before the inquiry was opposed to the construction of a gas and oil pipeline, most people did express strong misgivings about the project. Here is a small sampling of views shared at the hearings. Read them aloud and then proceed to the discussion question.

“I strongly believe that we do have something to offer your nation, something other than our minerals. I believe it is in the self-interest of your own nation to allow the Indian nation to survive and develop in our own way, on our own land. For thousands of years, we have lived with the land, we have taken care of the land, and the land has taken care of us. We did not believe that our society has to grow and to expand and conquer new areas in order that we could fulfil our destiny as Indian people. . . . We have lived with the land, not tried to conquer or control it or rob it of its riches. We have not tried to get more and more riches and power, we have not tried to conquer new frontiers or outdo our parents or make sure that every year we are richer than the year before. . . . I believe that your nation might wish to see us, not as a relic from the past, but as a way of life, a system of values by which you may survive in the future. This we are willing to share.” — Phillip Blake, a Treaty Indian and social worker from Fort McPherson, July 9, 1975

“The love of the Dene for the land is in their tone of voice, a touch, the care for plants, the life of the people, and their knowledge that life as a people stems directly from the land. The land is seen as mother because she gives life, because she is the provider, the protector, the comforter. She is constant in a changing world, yet changing in regular cycles. She is a storyteller, a listener, a traveller, yet she is still, and when she suffers we all suffer with her; and very often in many parts of the world, whether they believe this or not, many people suffer because they have abused their land. She is a teacher, a teacher who punishes swiftly when we err, yet a benefactress who blesses abundantly when we live with integrity, respect her, and love the life she gives. We cannot stand on her with integrity and respect and claim to love the life she gives and allow her to be ravaged.” — René Lamothe, the Dene representative, Fort Simpson, September 9, 1975

“We know that our grandchildren will speak a language that is their heritage, that has been passed on from before time. We know they will share their wealth and not hoard it or keep it to themselves. We know they will look after their old people and respect them for their wisdom. We know they will look after this land and protect it and that five hundred years from now someone with skin my colour and moccasins on his feet will climb up the Ramparts [near Good Hope] and rest and look over the river and feel that he too has a place in the universe; and he will thank the same spirits that I thank, that his ancestors have looked after his land well, and he will be proud to be a Dene. . . . It is for this unborn child, Mr. Berger,

that my nation will stop the pipeline. It is so that this unborn child knows the freedom of this land that I am willing to lay down my life.” — Dene Chief Frank T’Seleie, Fort Good Hope, August 5, 1975

Looking to Tomorrow

Today, many people who were vehemently opposed to the establishment of a pipeline in the Canadian North in the 1970s are now championing its construction. Here are some comments made by northern Aboriginal leaders at the beginning of the 21st century.

“I think there’s a whole series of opportunities [in the construction of a pipeline]. We can start with basic employment opportunities, the idea of training for long-term jobs. Not just the construction initiatives, but the other aspect, of course, is the issue of spinoff opportunities that really result from any kind of revitalization of the economy.” — Richard Nerysoo, president of the Gwich’in Tribal Council

“It’s really a necessity to try to draw people into an ownership, a feeling about a project. . . . Sometimes you can talk all you want or have theories or say this is good or that’s not good. But to me this is just one involvement that will create all kinds of other opportunities.”
— Nellie Cournoyer, head of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

“If we’re there with our own people, then we can protect our interests and the environment, we can go beyond what has happened in the past when the industry came and ignored Aboriginals.” — Doug Cardinal, representative for the Aboriginal Pipeline Working Group

Discussion

What kind of relationship to the past and the future is expressed or implied in the statements made in the 1970s? Is the same relationship evident in the statements made more recently? Do these statements represent two opposing or complementary visions? A collective mode of behaviour is part of a people’s culture. Do these statements indicate a change in the mode of behaviour or in the collective value system of Aboriginal people in the north?

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

A Contextual Issue

Many circumstances affecting the North and its peoples have changed since the Berger inquiry of the mid-1970s. Developments at the local level as well as the national or international level have led to a different social, political, and economic context in which the issues surrounding a northern pipeline may need to be examined.

Land Claims

Many of the Aboriginal people who voiced their opposition to a northern pipeline did so because they felt it represented the exploitation of their people by money-hungry outsiders. They felt that if a pipeline were built, the developers would not only hoard all the profits, but would also intrude upon traditional ways of life. With nothing to gain and so much to lose, it made sense for northern Aboriginals to oppose the pipeline. The resolution of many land claims has changed much of that. Land claims, agreements between Aboriginals and federal, provincial, or territorial governments, have enabled groups such as the Inuit to regain control of land that was colonized by European settlers. This means that these groups are now in a position to benefit from any development in the region. They can manage the range and direction of projects, ensure that stable employment opportunities result, and, of course, take advantage of pipeline income.

Because not all land claims have been settled, however, not all Aboriginal groups are eager to jump on the pipeline bandwagon. In the fall of 2001, representatives of the Deh Cho First Nations of the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories (an area rich in migrating birds and wildlife through which one third of the proposed pipeline will run), who have yet to negotiate a land claims agreement, declared that they would back a pipeline project only under certain conditions. Leaders of other Aboriginal groups did not support the Deh Cho's demands, and called on that group to soften their stance. The Premier of the Northwest Territories, Stephen Kakfwi, promised the Deh Cho that their claims would be resolved before the pipeline was operational.

REFLECTION: *Why is the resolution of land claims such an important prerequisite to the development of a northern pipeline? Do you think the Deh Cho have good reason to challenge the project?*

Education and Training

Another significant change in modern northern Aboriginal culture is in the opportunities available to Aboriginals. Twenty years ago, most northern residents did not have the expertise necessary to take on jobs requiring specialized technical skills. As a result, any development in the energy sector would have relied on workers from outside the region to fill highly lucrative positions. Today, however, many Aboriginals have post-secondary training in a variety of fields that would allow them to participate in all stages of a pipeline project. In fact, as Doug Cardinal commented in *The Toronto Star*, most young Aboriginals are probably better prepared to work in technical fields than they are to follow their ancestors' ways of life: "Younger people today will not go back to living off the land."

REFLECTION: *To what extent do you think the northern pipeline proposal is a generational issue?*

Technology and Environment

One of the most persuasive arguments against the construction of a pipeline was the environmental damage that would likely result from such an undertaking in what is considered one of the world's last frontiers. Many people who testified before the Berger Inquiry explained how the North was an ecologically sensitive area that could be harmed by even the slightest disturbance to natural patterns. Clearly, this has not changed: the region is still an environmentally significant and delicate area. But, according to current advocates of a northern pipeline, the oil and gas industry has changed. They explain that advances in fuel exploration and transportation technologies mean that oil and gas extraction interfere with nature only slightly. Fuel extraction facilities take up far less space than they used to. Computerized imaging of earth layers allows companies to identify very precisely where they should drill for fuel. Mud brought to the surface during drilling is returned to deep underground cavities, and all additional waste is disposed of through incineration or other processing. Even the roadways that bring workers and supplies to the facility are only temporary routes built from ice. It is possible, supporters of gas development say, to make use of resources from the depths of the earth without disrupting its cycles and systems.

Many critics do not have such a positive view of oil and gas development. They say that no matter how much extraction, processing, and transportation methods have improved over the past few decades, these procedures remain highly damaging. The transformation of deposits from the earth into useful sources of energy still requires massive, noisy machinery. It is not possible, they argue, to merely pluck resources from soil and rock without spoiling the terrain. Studies on the potential environmental impacts of different pipeline routes show that a whole range of natural features and wildlife would be put at risk by development. For example, building a pipeline through permafrost could result in erosion; operating pumps, compressors, and other equipment could result in a reduction in air quality; and clearing land could alter animal habitats. Moreover, critics remind us of the ever-present potential for disasters such as oil spills.

REFLECTION: *From what you have learned in this News in Review story, are you satisfied that environmental concerns expressed in the 1970s have been addressed?*

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

A Question of Perspective

Although many people who previously objected to pipeline development in the North now support the idea, numerous individuals and groups still oppose the current proposals for northern oil and gas development. Support of or resistance to the pipeline seems to depend on whether one approaches the issue from an economic or an environmental perspective. As you read about these two outlooks, consider whether or not the two perspectives are fundamentally incompatible. Can one believe in both economic growth and environmental conservation?

The Economic Growth Perspective

Historically, the United States, the largest customer of a northern pipeline, has relied on inexpensive sources of energy to fuel its economy and to maintain its high standard of living. By the 20th century, the U.S.—now a superpower—was extracting and processing more oil than any other country. The seemingly unlimited stores of energy it controlled were an important factor in the United States' ability to prevail over Japan and Germany in the Second World War. In the post-war period, the country's prosperity grew as oil revolutionized and vitalized everything from transportation to agriculture. In the past few years, however, the United States has been faced with energy shortages and price escalations. Whereas the country used to produce half the oil consumed in the world, it now does not produce even half the oil required to meet its own energy needs.

When George W. Bush was elected U.S. president in the fall of 2000, he quickly began to revise the United States' energy policy. Bush appointed Vice President Dick Cheney to chair a task force on energy. The duo's support for development in previously protected wildlife areas and in the nuclear energy sector has elicited criticism from some observers, who have pointed out that both Bush and Cheney have links to the oil business. One of Bush's main objectives is to reduce the United States' dependence on foreign oil by developing a continental energy policy. This goal has become even more important since the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. The U.S. administration fears that anti-U.S. forces in certain foreign oil-producing nations could disrupt the country's energy supply.

What Bush has termed an energy crisis for the United States could end up being an economic boon for Canada. Although some critics say that only the rich stockholders of energy companies will benefit from gas and oil sales to U.S. consumers, not everyone shares that opinion. Northern citizens who hope their communities will gain long-term economic advantages from pipeline development see other winners in the deal. Of course, wealthy industrialists will certainly benefit. Canadian sales of various forms of energy to the United States already make up 12 per cent of our total exports and generate \$1-billion in earnings each week. If northern gas and oil lines are opened up to our southern neighbours, these numbers will only increase.

The Environmental Protectionist Perspective

Those who consider gas and oil development from an environmental perspective point to other numbers that will increase if Canada runs another pipeline to the United States.

Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have increased 15 per cent over the past decade. If oil and gas developers go through with the proposed northern pipeline project, the country's emissions will rise even further. This runs counter to Canada's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, which Bush's government has abandoned. The Protocol requires industrialized nations to achieve a 5.2 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. Scientists estimate that global emissions must decrease by 50 to 60 per cent if environmental disaster is to be averted.

John D. Correnti, the CEO of Birmingham Steel Corporation, suggests that environmental concerns are held by unrealistic idealists whose goals are far removed from those of other citizens: "You've got to make a decision between the environmentalists and what's good for the country." Critics say that comments like these assume that a nation's wellbeing has little to do with global ecological concerns. Environmentalists, however, assert that ignoring issues such as greenhouse gas emissions will ultimately be catastrophic for the economy. They say that although pipeline development could bring more money into the Canadian economy in the short term, the amount is insignificant compared with the damage that will be sustained in the long term.

Environmentalists also point out that our "need" for gas and oil is exaggerated by our wasteful lifestyles. North Americans use more energy than anywhere else in the world. The United States, with a population that accounts for less than 5 per cent of the earth's inhabitants, consumes 25 per cent of global energy totals. The Canadian record is no better: each year, Canada's approximately 30 million residents consume as much energy as the one billion citizens of India. There are many ways we could reduce the amount of fuel on which we rely. For instance, research suggests that simple changes such as using energy-efficient light bulbs and improving the insulation of our homes and offices could offset the need for much of the power we use. Saving energy, environmentalists say, is as good as producing energy.

Follow-up Discussion

1. In comments made to *The Washington Post*, Harvie Andre, a former Conservative Cabinet minister who now works for a company hoping to bring northern gas to southern Canada and the United States, dismisses environmental concerns by stating, "Mr. Sierra Club cannot say to Mr. Inuvialuit, 'You guys don't understand nature.'" Discuss the implications of his statement.
- 2. Why do Canadians use so much energy? Make a list of the ways that you and your family rely on gas and oil during a typical week. Can you separate the list into essential and non-essential uses?

NORTHERN PIPELINE: COMPETING VISIONS

Discussion, Research, and Essay Questions

- 1. Learn more about the geography of the Beaufort Sea and Mackenzie Delta area, including the prosperous town of Inuvik, and present your findings in a poster format. A useful place to begin your research is the Web site of the Beaufort-Mackenzie Mineral Development Area (BMMDA) at www.bmmda.nt.ca.
- 2. Obtain a copy of Thomas Berger's *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland: The Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry*, or read another book on the topic, such as *Dene Nation: The Colony Within* by Mel Watkins; *The Past and Future Land: An Account of the Berger Inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline* by Martin O'Malley; or *The Mackenzie Pipeline* by P.H. Pearse. Write a review of one of these publications, and comment on whether you think the issues it addresses are as relevant today as when it was first written.
- 3. Research the different avenues, such as task forces and Royal Commissions, that the government may take to examine and rule on issues of national importance. Based on your findings, do you think that these forms of inquiry are productive? Are they necessary? In your opinion, was the Berger inquiry into the northern pipeline useful? Write an essay that justifies your answers to these questions.
- 4. Starting with a source such as *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, find out about major land claims in Canada. Why are these claims so important, both for the Aboriginal groups involved and for Canada as a whole? Why is it so difficult to negotiate these agreements? Discuss as a class.
- 5. A central theme in Canadian novelist Rudy Wiebe's essays collected under the title *Playing Dead* is that the Arctic is an essential part of our Canadianism. Write your own essay based on this theme. You may wish to read a relevant essay from the book and comment on Wiebe's observations.
- 6. Some of the newspaper and magazine articles written about the proposed northern pipeline carried headlines that used the term *pipe dream*. Research the meaning and derivation of this expression. In groups of two or three, discuss what these headlines implied about the project. Was this an appropriate use of language?
- 7. Many pipeline projects, both proposed and operational, have elicited much controversy. Find out more about one of these projects, such as the Sable Offshore Energy Project in Nova Scotia or the West African Gas Pipeline in Nigeria. What is or was so contentious about the project?
- 8. Research the Kyoto Protocol, either in newspaper and magazine articles or on the Internet. Why is it so difficult to reach an accord on cutting gas emissions? Write a paper based on your findings.