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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

Conservative bill for transparency and accountability on Indian Reserves passes at 2nd reading

For Immediate Release

March 3, 2011

OTTAWA – Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin) voted yesterday for Bill C-575, which passed the 2nd Reading vote. Bill C-575 is the First Nations Financial Transparency Act. It will strengthen effective government for all First Nations communities by creating legislation to disclose the salaries and benefits paid to councillors and chiefs who are subject to the Indian Act. The bill was introduced in Parliament by Vellacott's Saskatoon colleague, Kelly Block.

Block, Conservative MP for Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar, commented on members of First Nations across the country coming one step closer to enhanced accountability and transparency from their elected officials:

“First Nation citizens deserve to know what their leadership receives in salaries and benefits and I commend some Members of the House for voting in favour of this bill and supporting First Nation communities. This is a serious and important issue and I am glad that my Conservative colleagues and some members of the opposition have voted in favour of giving the right to more effective governance to all First Nation Communities. Sending this bill to committee will ensure that there is open dialogue and engagement on this issue.”

Vellacott was disappointed that most of the Liberals, Bloc Québécois and NDP voted against Block's proposal to increase transparency and accountability. He said, "I am disappointed, but not completely surprised, that most of the opposition MPs voted against transparency and accountability on reserves. Indian band members should have the same information as other Canadians to hold their band government representatives to account."

If passed, Bill C-575 will be another important tool to support First Nations elected officials in delivering transparency and accountability to their constituents.

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For further comment, call (613) 992-1966 or (613) 297-2249