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RICK BELL

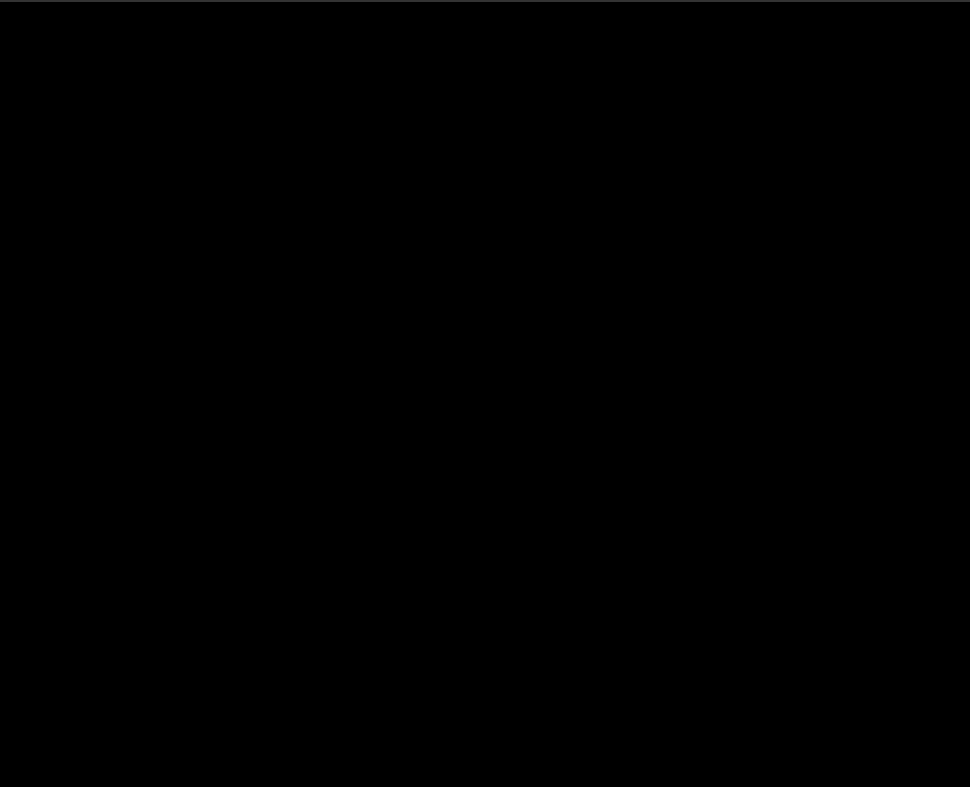
# Rick Bell: Alberta justice minister 'pissed off' Idle No More blocking roadways 311

BY RICK BELL, QMI AGENCY

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idle no more edmonton

IMAGE: 1 OF 24



3 sec.

Protesters affiliated with Idle No More try unsuccessfully to stop a truck from breaking through their blockade as they block Highway 2 North near Gateway Park in Edmonton, Alta., on Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2013. Codie McLachlan/Edmonton Sun/QMI Agency

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Pissed off.

He says the words two times.

He says them when a lot of people in authority wouldn't go there.

"I am pissed off with the tactics," he says.

"I drive that road a lot. It's one of the busiest roads in Canada. If I was there right now I'd be pissed off too," he also says just before the protesters are on the highway at the capital city.



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The man doing the speaking is Alberta's top cop Jonathan Denis.

He is talking about the blockading of roadways by Idle No More protesters or anybody else.

Denis says the act of blockading "crosses the line."

He is talking Wednesday as traffic is blocked, diverted and then finally vehicles crawl in one northbound lane on the QEII highway at the entrance to Edmonton.

It is said to be all done in the name of getting justice or something like that.

The province's minister of justice wants to make it crystal clear it is the tactic of blocking traffic not the people and not the content of their message causing him to be "pissed off."

After all, other First Nations groups express their discontent with the federal government but do not block traffic.

Denis takes great pains to say he cannot order the cops to go in and lay down the law.

They have their authority. There can be no political interference, he says. This is not the Third World.

But the justice boss meets this coming Monday with the police chiefs from Calgary and Edmonton as well as the Mounties about handling blockades, including what to do about a vow by some protesters to shut down Hwy. 63.

As you know, that road goes to the oilsands. It is the highway to our golden goose.

Denis, a lawyer, says the constitution guarantees the right to peaceful assembly "no matter what a person has to say"

He points out section 1 of the Charter guarantees rights and freedoms subject to "reasonable limits ... as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society."

"When you start blockading a major roadway, to me that's going too far. You're affecting the rights of others," says Denis.

"I think they're going beyond the reasonable limits in a free and democratic society. We have the rule of law and I think everybody should be treated the same, aboriginal and non-aboriginal."

"My personal view is you can protest on the side of the road, outside my office, wave signs, hand out leaflets. That's within your rights to peaceful assembly and the key is peaceful."

Denis says if and when police make arrests it's going to end up in the courts where "it's not up to me to define the constitution."

The justice minister is also "worried about things going too far" possibly endangering both protesters and other members of the public.

"It's not unreasonable we would see an altercation, physical harm, people trying to run a blockade. This is Alberta."

"I'm worried about riots that could happen," he adds.

Denis makes these remarks before the first news report tells us a truck does run the QEII blockade.

The top cop urges everyone to be "measured and reasonable."

He says a lot of people have already contacted his office and told him to shut down the protests.

Again, Denis says it's up to police.

A final point. Denis points out he grew up in Regina "near several reserves."

"I understand a lot of the concerns," but "I'm really hoping the aboriginal people here stick to a very peaceful message."

You won't hear a Kumbaya coming on in the provincial political trenches, but this is a rare occasion where the opposition Wildrose is onside with a Progressive Conservative cabinet minister though their spokesman uses somewhat less colourful lingo.

"Look, there's nothing wrong with a good protest, that's what democracy is all about. But once you start trampling on the rights of other people, that's a problem," says Wildrose MLA Rob Anderson.

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Like Denis, Anderson doesn't want any argy-bargy.

"When rules aren't enforced some people take the law into their own hands and that's not something we want to see."

Denis is well aware his "pissed off" remarks will cause some pushback in certain circles.

"I'm a citizen in this province," he replies.

"I'm entitled to an opinion too."

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## POLL

### Should police break up Idle No More protests blocking roads?

Yes

No

All depends on how much traffic is getting through

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jackpontiac

This is going to far! Should NOT be allowed to Block Roads. That goes for EVERYBODY! Whitey, Purple, Native, etc. RCMP need to stop this or it will ESCALATE(ESCALADE) into Trouble.

(Edited by author 9 hours ago)

14 hours ago 50 Likes F Flag

Like Reply



KickinWingNoMore

I cant believe they where on the hood even and trying to hold back the truck. First stupid thing was holding up traffic on the duece.Second stupid thing is trying to stop a woman from her daily duties or anyone else for that matter.The third stupid thing is that wasnt even a legit band with a legit land claim.One more stupid thing is all that happend and all Police could do was deal with traffic.The whole thing was stupid.I personally know a lot of people who travel highway 63 and i know there attitudes are the same as the woman in the blue truck.If this doesnt get nipped in the bud soon , we might be at war jack.I hope that never happens but people are not gonna let this protest interfer with there daily lives.Since Police wont do anything , as usual ,the public will probably have to deal with this one.

13 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac 40 Likes F Flag

Like Reply



jackpontiac

If the Police won't do anything, then we have to Take 'The Law Into Our Own Hands'

It's that Simple !



**B\_Rad1**

Good call Jack! As you will see below Wayne says you should read why the natives are protesting. He should read the bill and see that they are flawed in their understanding. The environmental act has not been changed. Nobody can build a pipeline across the river anymore than they could before. The change is to "Navigation of waters". Its about permitting of docks and boathouses that could cause Nav problems. All waters once needed permits from the feds which costs millions and was a waste of time. Now some cottage owner up north can go ahead and build a dock following local Zoning laws. In the words of WAYNE "harper wants to kill the environment" Uneducated followers believe him.

11 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac 19 Likes F Flag

Like



**Wayne**

Wow... what country are you from? Seriously get real!  
I am in total agreement that these blockades should not be happening but how about you leave this too others that understand the whole situation. Not just the "poor you" part where your life is a little disrupted because of a belief some believe is worth fighting for.  
Also it wouldn't hurt for you to actually read why the "Idle No More" protests are going on. These people are fighting not just for themselves but for every Canadian that loves our lakes and rights!  
It isn't just a "Native" thing, it is a Canadian thing... Read up on it then come back here with whatever comments you might want to bring.  
"A little knowledge can go a long way!"

12 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac 7 Likes F Flag

Like



**ashboring**

Actually Rightflanking, B\_Rad1 summed it up pretty well. Pipelines and Transmission lines are still covered by the NEB Act, unless they are considered minor works. Also why is no one talking about how the NPAs increasing the penalty for failure to comply from 5000-50000? Essentially the purpose of changing the NWP to NPAs save tax payers money with forced approvals on minor works. Under the NWP a municipality cannot even install a culvert without serious time energy and money. OUR MONEY!!! If the aboriginals are so opposed then maybe they should start paying the bill for all of the administrative leg work. The Environmental Protection/Fisheries/Marine/NEB/Municipality Development Acts all supercede the NPA. Also our right to Navigation still cedes all else, we have the right to oppose any works that take place in a body of water, albeit at a price but we have the right to legally oppose it, and in turn stop it if it is deemed detrimental to our navigational right. Get YOUR facts straight. Happy Canoeing!!

10 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac 6 Likes F Flag

Like



**iyiniwok**

Pretty sure the protesters aren't afraid of that.

12 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac 2 Likes F Flag

Like



**stonethrow**

Two wrongs don't make a right.

10 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac 1 Like F Flag

Like



**Rightflanking**

To Ashboring,  
The duty of protecting Canada's navigational waterways falls to the Federal government not provinces or municipalities, bill C-45, shifts responsibility to prosecute offenses unto citizens as defined by common law. This makes the protection of waterways a reactive process rather than a proactive one. Meaning damage to a waterway will have already be done before any action is taken and only then if a citizen pays to do something about it. However, it is the Federal governments job to do it, not yours and not mine.

3 hours ago in reply to jackpontiac F Flag

Like



Rightflanking

To B Rad 1. You should do more research, your facts are not correct.

11 hours ago in reply to jackpontiacc F Flag

Like

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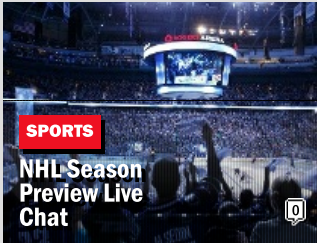
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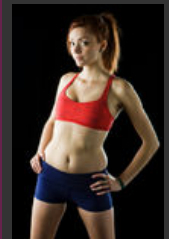
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