

PUBLICATION: **The Toronto Star**  
DATE: **2007.07.16**  
EDITION: Met  
SECTION: News  
PAGE: A15  
BYLINE: Richard Brennan  
SOURCE: Toronto Star  
WORD COUNT: 238

---

### **Ottawa, B.C., dangling cash to get treaty signed, MP says**

---

A Vancouver-area Conservative MP has caused a stir by accusing federal Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice and his provincial counterpart of bribing natives into accepting a controversial provincial treaty.

Tory MP John Cummins (Delta-Richmond East) says Prentice and B.C. Aboriginal Relations Minister Mike de Jong are knowingly manipulating the Tsawwassen treaty ratification vote by throwing money at the band.

"They are unfit for office," Cummins told the Toronto Star last week.

"If we in this country had a referendum and another nation was interfering in our referendum, we'd be rightfully outraged," he said, recalling the firestorm of controversy after the federal Liberal government got involved in the 1995 Quebec referendum.

"The government of Canada and the province of British Columbia are actively interfering on a referendum of this First Nation."

A Prentice spokesperson said there "is no wrongdoing on the part of the federal government," and described allegations of wrongdoing, contained in a letter Bertha Williams, a Tsawwassen band member opposed to the treaty, as "unsubstantiated."

While the federal government keeps a low profile, the B.C. government is not hiding the fact that it will do what it must to convince the aboriginal band's 350 members - half of whom live on the reserve - that it is in their best interests to accept the treaty.

It doesn't want a repeat of the rejection earlier this year by the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation in Prince George of a \$76 million treaty.

Williams alleges that the monetary incentives being dangled include \$15,000 for each band member aged 60 and older upon approval of the treaty.