



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**1st Session**

**Day 1**

**12<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1991**

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**The Honourable Michael Ballantyne, Speaker**

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HANSARD

### 12th ASSEMBLY

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#### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Arngna'naaq, Mr. Arvaluk, Mr. Ballantyne, Mr. Bernhardt, Ms. Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Mr. Gargan, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Marie-Jewell, Ms. Mike, Mr. Morin, Mr. Nerysoo, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Pudluk, Mr. Todd, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Zoe

#### ITEM 1: PRAYER

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE** (Mr. Hamilton):

I would request Canon Buckle to lead us in prayer, which will be followed with a drum prayer.

#### CANON TERRY BUCKLE:

Let us pray. Oh God, may Your Spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people, for peace and justice in our land, and for constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

---Drum Prayer

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE** (Mr. Hamilton):

Please be seated. I am required to inform the House that His Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is not prepared to address this House until a Speaker has been chosen from among you. Are you prepared to proceed with the election of a Speaker at this time? Are you agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE** (Mr. Hamilton): Motion on the Speaker. Mr. Pudluk.

#### ITEM 2: ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Motion 1-12(1): Election Of Speaker, Carried

**MR. PUDLUK:** Mr. Clerk, **I MOVE**, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River, that Mr. Michael A. Ballantyne, of the electoral district of Yellowknife North, do take the chair of this House as Speaker.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE** (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mr. Pudluk. Are there any further motions? To the motion.

---Carried

---Applause

I therefore declare Mr. Michael A. Ballantyne, the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, Speaker of the House.

---Applause

I would request the mover of the motion, the Member for High Arctic, and the seconder, the Member for Hay River, to escort the Speaker to the chair.

#### Speaker's Opening Remarks

**SPEAKER** (Hon. Michael Ballantyne): I would like to express to the Legislative Assembly my gratitude for the honour which you have afforded me by choosing me as your Speaker. It is with great pride, honour and humility that I graciously accept your trust to be your Speaker for the 12th Legislative Assembly of this wonderful Northwest Territories.

My first obligation to you is the traditional requirement that the Speaker ensures that the rights and privileges of all Members are upheld and to ensure you are each able to discharge your duties. The most important and fundamental right is freedom of speech in your debates and freedom from interference in carrying out your duties. I can assure you that I will do my best to ensure that these fundamental rights are upheld, as are all other rules and procedures that this House has adopted.

You are all aware that as Speaker this may be my last chance to make a speech -- some of you are probably grateful for that -- so I would be grateful if you would permit me a few brief remarks.

I would like to acknowledge at this time my predecessor, Mr. Richard Nerysoo, who has set a high standard for me to follow. I am sure each of you will join me in extending thanks to the Member for Mackenzie Delta for his dedicated service as Speaker.

---Applause

I will be calling on Mr. Nerysoo's experience and wisdom to assist me as I learn my new role.

I would like also to acknowledge the service of all Members to this House, but in particular to the Member for High Arctic, Mr. Ludy Pudluk. Mr. Pudluk is now the Dean of the Assembly and has served his constituents for 16 years in this chamber.

---Applause

I would also like to thank all Members of this House for their vote of trust and confidence. I say this because without the support of all honourable

Members, in good times and bad, the Speaker cannot adequately and properly serve the Members who elected him or her.

The history of the speakership goes back many centuries. Most of you are aware that in those distant days the Speaker was chosen by the House of Commons in London to take messages to the King. Sometimes the King did not like the messages the Speaker brought. Undoubtedly the expression, "Don't shoot the messenger" stems from those days. I might add that sometimes Speakers did not return and, in fact, at least nine Speakers are known to have died a violent death. I am sure that this will not happen if I take a message from this House to the Commissioner.

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Today I would suggest the great test is not when the Speaker goes to see the Commissioner but when the Speaker comes to see you in this House. It is for these reasons that the Speaker used to be dragged to the chair because he was never sure of the fate that awaited him. I can assure you though, that I did not have to be dragged to the chair of this House for fear of my life. But I do respect the responsibilities you have given me. I will be pleased to convey your decisions to whomever you so instruct me to do so.

In the 19th century an unofficial adjournment of the House was instituted called, "The Speaker's Chop", to enable the Speaker to have his dinner.

Nowadays a Speaker can be relieved by a deputy. According to legend, Sir Henry Lacy, a Member of the House of Commons in London, was so driven by hunger to madness, that he went to hide behind the Speaker's chair and "attempted to eat the Speaker's chop." I can assure you I do not want to see any Member of this House driven to such extremes by lack of food, so I will ensure adequate adjournments.

I know you would want me to also take a moment to express our appreciation to the Clerk, Clerk Assistant and clerk of committees and all the Clerk's staff who, under great pressure and time constraints, have ensured that this sitting and election process yesterday and today were conducted with sophistication and professionalism.

I am particularly proud of our Assembly and how it works. I am sure that all Members have noted that we are now interpreting in all but one of our nine official languages. We have added Chipewyan and Gwich'in. I would like to acknowledge the work of all the interpreters and translators and there is no one in Canada, probably in the world, who comes close to us when it comes to language.

---Applause

On a personal note I would like to say a few words of thanks to the many capable officials who, over the past four years, have helped me so much. My executive assistant, John Stephenson; Tanis Stirling and Sharon Morrow, who were my secretaries; Geoff Bickert, deputy minister of Justice, who has been a tremendous asset to this government; Eric Nielsen, deputy minister of Finance; Jim Nelson, comptroller general; Lew Voytilla, the secretary to the Financial Management Board; Kevin O'Keefe, with the legislative and house planning committee; and all the staff in Justice, Finance and the cabinet who worked for me and with me during my time in cabinet. I would also like to thank my former cabinet colleagues and the former Government Leader for the support and the friendship that they afforded me.

I would like, before closing, to mention the most important people to all of us. These are our wives, our husbands and our families, and personally my wife Penny, my daughters, Alexandra and Erin, and my son Nicholas.

Without them I could not have continued in my political career. To them, from the deepest part of my heart and my being, I say thank you very, very much. You have been wonderful and you continue to be wonderful for me.

As a Legislature we are facing many decisions in the days and years ahead. Like all decisions made in this House, getting to those decisions sometimes leads us into adversarial situations. However, this is the place for these great decisions, and it is the place where history is made every day.

In conclusion, my ability to preside over this House ultimately rests in your hands, and I will do my best, inspired by the trust and confidence that you have placed in me today. Thank you very much.

---Applause

Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if His Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to address the Legislature?

## ITEM 3: OPENING ADDRESS

**COMMISSIONER NORRIS:** Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to welcome you to the first session of the 12th Assembly. Because of the government body leaving and a new one arriving, my remarks today will be quite brief. First of all I want to congratulate Mr. Speaker Ballantyne and Government Leader-elect, Nellie Cournoyea, on being chosen by their colleagues to fill these two demanding and important positions. I know that the experience both of you have gained in this House, as MLAs and as cabinet Ministers, has provided you with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out your duties. Your demonstrated

competence, combined with the goodwill of the Members, will ensure a continuation of strength and leadership required to tackle the important issues facing the Northwest Territories. While you are likely to find many frustrations and demands during the next four years, you will gain considerable satisfaction as you will help to guide the North towards increasing levels of responsible government.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important to commend all candidates in the recent territorial election and personally congratulate those of you chosen by your constituencies to sit in this House. Each of you have shown or expressed a sincere interest in the conduct of public government in the Northwest Territories.

Our thoughts also should be directed to those Members of the 11th Assembly who were not successful in their bids for re-election. I am sure this Legislature will join me on behalf of residents of the Northwest Territories in recognizing their years of dedicated effort and service.

Finally, I would like to recognize long-serving Members Tom Butters of Inuvik, Red Pedersen of Kitikmeot West, and Nick Sibbeston of Nahendeh, who decided to retire at the close of the 11th Assembly. These three distinguished Members provided a combined total of 45 years of service to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, as the term of the 12th Assembly begins, it is appropriate to note the rapid nature with which changes and improvements to the shape and size of the Legislature have been achieved in the Northwest Territories.

In 1951 there were only three elected Members on the Northwest Territories Council. The numbers continued to increase over the years until 1975, when we elected our first fully-elected Legislative Assembly of 15 Members including a Speaker. Since then, of course, we have added an additional eight Members.

It was not until 1986, only five years ago, that the Government Leader assumed chairmanship of the cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is also appropriate to recognize the introduction of a public process for the selection of the Speaker, the Government Leader and Members of cabinet. The events of yesterday and this morning are historically important in the evolution of public government in the Northwest Territories.

In conclusion, I wish to offer you and this Legislature my full support as you continue the tradition of consensus and representative government towards social, economic and constitutional reforms. I also want to renew my pledge to do my best to be a worthy ambassador and to serve our Legislative Assembly and the people of the Northwest Territories

to the best of my abilities.

I now commend to you, for your consideration and wise judgment, the business of this House as I declare open the first session of the 12th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Thank you very much.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated. Orders of the day for Wednesday, November 13, 1991. Item 4, Ministers' statements. Item 5, Members' statements. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, petitions. Item 9, reports of standing and special committees. Item 10, tabling of documents. Item 11, notices of motions. Item 12, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 13, motions. Item 14, first reading of bills. Item 15, second reading of bills. Item 16, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

#### **ITEM 16: ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE** (Mr. Hamilton):  
Orders of the day for Thursday, November 14, 1991.  
Prayer  
Ministers' Statements  
Members' Statements  
Returns to Oral Questions  
Oral Questions  
Written Questions  
Returns to Written Questions  
Replies to Opening Address  
Petitions  
Reports of Standing and Special Committees  
Tabling of Documents  
Notices of Motions  
Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills  
Motions  
First Reading of Bills  
Second Reading of Bills  
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters  
Report of Committee of the Whole  
Third Reading of Bills  
Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Thursday, November 14, 1991.

---ADJOURNMENT