



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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Speaker: The Hon. Red Pedersen, M.L.A.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1988

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Titus Allooloo, Mr. Angottitauruq, Mr. Arlooktoo, Hon. Michael Ballantyne, Mr. Butters, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Crow, Mr. Ernerk, Mr. Gargan, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Kilabuk, Mr. Lewis, Hon. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Nerysoo, Hon. Dennis Patterson, Mr. Pollard, Hon. Red Pedersen, Mr. Pudluk, Mr. Sibbeston, Mr. Zoe

SPEAKER (Hon. Red Pedersen): Father Duchaussois, would you kindly lead us in prayer?

ITEM 1: PRAYER

FATHER DUCHAUSSOIS: God, our Creator and Father, You entrust to us the care and development of Your world. Put into us Your spirit of love, honesty, respect so that together with You, and with one another, we will accomplish the work You give us to do, for the building of a just society and the betterment of our land. Amen.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to address the Legislative Assembly at this time?

ITEM 2: OPENING ADDRESS

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly: It is my pleasure to welcome you to this third session of the 11th Legislative Assembly.

Since I last addressed this Assembly in February there have been significant political developments affecting the Northwest Territories and its people. There has also been a slow recovery in the economy, sustained by government action. Political and economic development issues have held centre stage, receiving public attention and certainly being focal points for our government. They are basic elements for the "Directions for the 1990s" paper presented at the last session. Political and economic developments become important to people when they affect their daily lives or influence their future.

The same can be said for the social well-being of our residents, and I am taking this opportunity to assure the House that our government is applying its energy to strengthen the social fabric in the Northwest Territories. Our northern society is composed of different social groups with specific needs requiring specific approaches. It is not enough to talk about social development only in the abstract, because social development is people-oriented development.

We already have a sound base of social programs upon which to build. Over the coming months, our government, guided by the Minister of Social Services, intends to consider these programs and to find new ways to help people overcome the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, teen suicide and other difficulties affecting some NWT communities. The thrust of our approach will be to help people to help themselves. Communities will be supported in defining their own problems and implementing solutions. Individuals will be assisted in gaining self-reliance and given the opportunity to lead fully productive and healthy lives.

Economic initiatives and strategies and related improvements in education and training will play a major role in creating employment and preparing people to get and to hold jobs. Initiatives on the social front will be aimed at solving immediate problems, while not forgetting the long-range goal of a self-reliant, productive society.

Improved Benefits For Elderly

In the Northwest Territories our elders have always held a special place. They have much to tell us about what is good for the future, as well as how to learn from the past. Unfortunately, some live in difficult conditions.

At this session our government will be introducing new initiatives to the House which would improve health and social services benefits for senior citizens. The package of improved health care benefits would significantly expand the benefits presently available to persons 60 years of age and over in the areas of pharmacare, dental services, medical travel, hearing aids, eyeglasses and other aids to independent living. The Minister of Health will be describing the program in detail. As we would like to begin implementing the program this fiscal year, the money required will be sought through a supplementary appropriation.

Our government will also propose to the Legislative Assembly an increase of \$15 per month in the senior citizens supplementary benefit. If the increase is approved, seniors who are eligible for the supplementary benefit would receive \$100 per month. The Minister of Social Services will be providing further information on this proposed improvement.

Senior citizens personal care housing projects are under construction in Fort Simpson and planned for Inuvik, Baker Lake, Iqaluit and Eskimo Point.

Child Care And Women's Services

The Child Day Care Act and regulations which came into effect in July 1988, will be of considerable benefit to parents, especially mothers. The government has provided emergency funding for child day care centres and has developed guidelines for programming for special needs children in day care. Our government is developing a comprehensive day care policy, which will be linked to whatever federal legislation is eventually passed in this area.

Safe shelter programs for women were fully established in Hay River, Spence Bay, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. In Hay River, a second-stage house was opened, providing accommodation to victims of spousal assault when they leave crisis shelters and prepare to re-establish themselves.

Our Children And Our Youth

Proper attention is also being given to our children and youth. A public awareness campaign was undertaken to increase knowledge and understanding of child abuse and how it can be prevented. A protocol has been developed for investigation of child abuse complaints.

Our education programs are resulting in improved learning opportunities for our students. For instance, school attendance is going up. In the Kitikmeot Region average attendance reached over 82 per cent last year, compared to 68 per cent five years ago. Nine new school community counsellors started work this fall to promote the value of education and help sustain the upward trend in attendance. To give students a greater opportunity to continue their education, grades were extended in a number of communities this year. Grade 10 is now being offered in Baker Lake. At the initiative of the divisional boards, grade 10 is being offered at Sanikiluaq and grade 11 at Pond Inlet and Eskimo Point.

Despite financial constraints, the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to improve facilities for students. A concrete example of our government's commitment to higher education was the opening of the Iqaluit Campus of Arctic College last week. The adult education centre is now joined to the college, strengthening links between academic upgrading and college programs in the Eastern Arctic.

Enhancing Culture And Native Languages

The Government of the Northwest Territories worked closely with aboriginal communications groups and our sister Yukon Territory to obtain approval for the federal funding of Television Northern Canada. This new northern broadcasting service will provide cultural and educational programming in all native languages, as well as English, to the northern population. Our government sees this as an excellent opportunity to improve communications while enhancing our northern cultures.

This past summer an aboriginal languages legal interpreters course was held in Yellowknife, the first course of its kind in North America. A joint project of the Departments of Justice, and Culture and Communications, this course will be followed by additional upgrading opportunities. Improving the quality of court interpreting services will improve the ability of unilingual aboriginal people to understand and take part in the justice system.

Social Justice Initiatives

Citizens of the Northwest Territories also form a community at large, sharing common objectives for equality and social progress. For example, during this session the Minister of Justice will be tabling the report of the justices of the peace task force, which contains recommendations of concern to all NWT residents. This task force was appointed in 1987 to study the administration and design of the justice of the peace program. Their recommendations are directed at improving the training of JPs, emphasizing the independence of their decision-making authority.

In August, the Minister of Justice signed a new agreement with the federal government for funding of criminal injuries compensation. In addition to providing funds for individual compensation, under the agreement a new lump sum is earmarked for support of victims programs. This will enhance initiatives on behalf of victims included in the Victims of Crime Act which our government intends to reintroduce in the Assembly this session.

Last June, a UNESCO conference on circumpolar perspectives, the first of its type, was held in Yellowknife. It was felt that other circumpolar nations could learn from our experiences of integrating technology with the traditional way of life. Over 150 delegates attended this successful meeting, held under the auspices of the United Nations. Economic concerns accompanied discussion of social and cultural issues.

Developing Economic Strategy

According to our most recent statistics, the economy of the Northwest Territories is recovering and showing signs of growth. Monthly employment averaged 18,561 in 1987, exceeding 1986 and 1985 levels. Average weekly earnings increased by about five per cent over 1986. Retail sales rose to \$256 million in 1987, an increase of six million dollars over the previous year. There were 245 more companies registered in the NWT in the last quarter of 1987 than there were in 1986. The value of metallic mineral production rose to \$789 million from \$642 million in 1986. Mineral exploration almost doubled from \$35 million up to \$68 million. Construction activity was also up.

However, benefits are mainly accruing to larger communities. Major centres such as Yellowknife or Iqaluit have become more prosperous. Small communities, for the most part, still face high unemployment and low income levels. It could be said that the NWT contains two economies.

Our government is committed to the development of an economic strategy to deal with this and other pressing economic problems. In developing this strategy we will pay special attention to the advice and findings of the Assembly's special committee on the economy.

Land Claim And Energy Agreements

Meanwhile, two major recent developments provide a window to economic development for all northerners, native and non-native. The economic importance of the agreement in principle signed by the Dene/Metis and the Government of Canada is considerable. Compensation moneys will enable the Dene/Metis, through their own corporation, to become major economic actors in the Western Arctic.

While modest in the short term, resource royalties for the Dene/Metis will grow in the future. Security of land tenure to 70,000 square miles of land will underpin the traditional economy. Guaranteed participation by the Dene/Metis in the management of land, water and renewable resources will lead to more control over the environment and an economic base for aboriginal people.

The enabling agreement on energy, signed by the Prime Minister of Canada and our Government Leader five weeks ago, will bring major economic benefits. A stable and more predictable development framework, shaped by northerners, will result in increased employment opportunities and benefits. Royalties and taxes accruing to the NWT will guarantee a larger northern tax base diminishing our reliance on outside funding.

Implementing "Directions For The 1990s"

Our government has been acting to implement the economic priorities identified in the directions for the 1990s policy paper. For instance, increased focus on renewable resource development has led to funding of projects such as \$100,000 for a hog farm south of Hay River, over \$300,000 for marketing and stock assessments in the Baffin and \$150,000 in the Keewatin. An emphasis on development of tourism facilities has directed more funding in that area including improvement of hotel accommodation in Rankin Inlet, Rae-Edzo, Fort Simpson and Cambridge Bay and historical interpretive centres in Norman Wells and the Canol Trail. Assistance is also being provided to the arts and crafts industry with emphasis on improving the quality of production, assisting managers to acquire good quality materials and improving management and marketing skills.

Support for local contractors continued. For instance, in the 1988 construction season northern firms supplied construction materials for all of the Housing Corporation's major projects and by mid August over 80 per cent of the major labour contracts went to northern firms. During 1987-88, Public Works and Highways awarded 80 per cent of its 1300 construction, maintenance and service contracts to Northwest Territories contractors.

Our government is playing a key role in supporting the fur industry and countering the anti-fur campaigns of the animal rights activists. Trapping is a basic non-replaceable source of employment for many northerners. Our Department of Renewable Resources has been active in promoting conservation, wildlife management and trapper education, supporting local organizations involved in the fur trade and lobbying at international forums.

Taxation Options Considered

While economic prospects for the NWT look promising, it presently enjoys a very limited tax base. Revenue we raise ourselves only amounts to about 18 per cent of our government's expenditures. Furthermore, it costs three times more to provide comparable services in northern Canada than in the South. With birth rates in the Eastern Arctic three times higher than the national average, it will be increasingly difficult to improve services in the future. Needs are growing while resources are limited.

In August, 1988, the Minister of Finance released a consultation paper on tax options. It requested comments and recommendations from NWT residents on current taxes and options for change. This process will allow our government to consider all views and come to an informed

decision when reviewing revenue options. The quest for more fiscal autonomy is an essential component of furthering political development.

Devolution And Political Development

In recent months devolution initiatives, an increased profile in international relations, and success in protecting aboriginal rights are evidence of an evolving government coming to grips with important political issues. Transfers of health care programs and the Northern Canada Power Commission were achieved earlier this year. Our government has been emphasizing the development of public participation in the health care system since we assumed responsibility on April 1st. On August 25th the transfer of health services from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories was officially observed when our Minister of Health and the federal Minister of National Health and Welfare signed ceremonial documents in Yellowknife.

When the enabling agreement on energy was signed on September 6th, it signified a fundamental step toward provincial status. Onshore and shared offshore powers should accrue to the Legislative Assembly over the medium term. Provinces such as Alberta and Saskatchewan were denied such powers between 1905 and 1930. Devolution of powers in the energy field should logically lead to a transfer of mineral and land and water management.

Our government will, in the near future, reach a framework agreement on comprehensive devolution guidelines with the federal government. It will work closely with the aboriginal people during the negotiation process.

Much work remains to be done over the next two years related to the agreement in principle with the Dene/Metis on land claims. Because a final agreement will enhance the opportunities for aboriginal self-determination, the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to work toward a successful outcome with the assistance of the Legislative Assembly.

There are definite connections between claims negotiations and the Constitutional Alliance process. In April of this year, MLAs and representatives of four aboriginal organizations reached agreement to work toward principles for constitutional development without prejudice to division. Members of the alliance are now working as one unit. Recent discussions indicate that an agreement on a claims boundary and the ensuing procedures could be obtained over the coming months. All northerners have a stake in the work of the Constitutional Alliance.

National And International Concerns

The major role of the Northwest Territories in Canada and abroad is being recognized. Since the last session, all First Ministers have met with our Government Leader to review common political and economic interests.

Because the legal route to amend the Meech Lake Accord has been temporarily blocked, extensive discussions were held with the Premier of Manitoba and the Premier of New Brunswick to ensure a northern voice would be heard at provincial hearings on the constitution. Members of the Legislative Assembly will make presentations at the public hearings being held in New Brunswick during the next few weeks and in Manitoba once the legislature has set dates for its hearings. This is part of a continuing effort by our government to bring to the attention of Canadians the strong opposition which northerners have to parts of the accord which have negative implications for the Northwest Territories.

As of today, Canada and the provinces have launched an ongoing constitutional process from which northerners are excluded. Therefore we welcome the undertaking made by the Prime Minister on September 6th to develop guidelines with the Territories for participation in First Ministers' Conferences and major federal/provincial meetings. Our government will take a leading role in this regard over the coming months.

Since April, our government has put into place a circumpolar relations program. The program has already led to discussions with Greenland, two scientific exchanges with the USSR, and the Soviet decision to permit Yuit to participate in the Inuit Circumpolar Conference assemblies.

Ministers and MLAs closely co-operated this spring to successfully induce the British Prime Minister to discard a plan to label imported furs as possibly being obtained with the use of leg-hold traps. We can justifiably take pride in this victory. However, the battle has not abated. The European Parliament is considering a motion similar to the British plan. Our government will apply every effort to educate European parliamentarians on this issue so critical to our northern economy.

Different elements of political development, from protecting aboriginal rights to devolution, are coming together to form a framework of opportunity. During this session, the government will table a discussion paper on constitutional and political development which will identify some of the questions northerners face in seizing that opportunity.

Appointments Acknowledged

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the appointment of two distinguished Canadians to senior positions in the NWT. Ted Richard, a Yellowknife lawyer and until recently a Member of this Legislative Assembly, was appointed by the federal Minister of Justice to serve as a judge in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories. This marks the first time a resident member of the Law Society of the Northwest Territories has been appointed to the Supreme Court, signifying the level of maturity which our local bar has reached.

Edward Russell Wilson was appointed chief superintendent of "G" Division for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That division covers all of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Wilson brings with him over 30 years experience with the RCMP. In his last posting in British Columbia he was known for his work with community groups involved with young people and the good relations he maintained with native leaders. I would like to express our appreciation for the excellent service provided by Chief Superintendent Robert Head from 1985 to 1988.

Commissioner's Awards

Through the medium of Commissioner's Awards, outstanding public service may be recognized. It is my pleasure to announce that two territorial residents will be presented with the Commissioner's Award at the highest level. Thomas Tapatai of Baker Lake, who is 90 years of age, has spent his lifetime in service to the people of the Keewatin. Mr. Tapatai worked closely with the first Anglican minister in Baker Lake, and continued his ministry by guiding and travelling with Canon James to camps and communities throughout the Keewatin. He was licensed to hold services and offered spiritual guidance and meaningful support to his people until he became too old to travel.

W.R. "Red" McBryan of Hay River has distinguished himself as a leading citizen of that community through his lengthy and dedicated service in the municipal, emergency measures and education fields. Red McBryan has spent his entire working life in the North, going first to Aklavik when he was 18 years old in 1937. He was Hay River's first mayor and served for 28 years on the municipal council. He chaired his community's separate school board and his work each year on flood control is a legend all of its own.

When the presentations are made, much more will be said about these outstanding individuals. My sincere congratulations are extended to each of them and to their families.

Distinguished Elders Recognized

Since the conclusion of the last session of this Legislature, a number of elders have died, and their passing is noted with deep regret. Their contributions to their communities through their wise counsel will be sorely missed.

Lazarus Sittichinli died May 18 in Aklavik at 97 years of age. He had served as a special RCMP constable, a lay reader in his church and was an active hunter and trapper throughout his life. He served as a guide in the search for the Mad Trapper of Rat River. The new Aklavik arena complex bears his name.

Arctic Red River lost two elders through the deaths of Edmund Amos Niditchie at 81 years, and Clara Norman at 96 years. Mrs. Norman celebrated 72 years of married life to her husband, William, and both elders were important leaders in the cultural life of their community.

Ada Nalitak, a respected elder of Coppermine, died in May at 91 years of age. In September she would have become a great-great-grandmother.

Fort Smith mourns the loss of John Miltenberger, who passed away in June at 74 years. He was a long-time respected teacher and principal at Fort Rae and Fort Smith, as well as a strong community supporter, town councillor and education society member.

Alizette and Germaine Tourangeau, married for 56 years, died within two weeks of each other last May. Both were past their mid-90s and lived in Fort Smith. Germaine guided the cutting of the 60th parallel line through Wood Buffalo National Park.

Three respected elders of Fort Rae died during the past few months. Harry Black lived to the grand age of 100 years and he leaves many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to carry on his name and traditions. Monique Mackenzie lived to the age of 94 and also leaves many descendants. Elise Murphy died in Fort Rae on October 4 at the age of 79. She was the youngest daughter of Monfwi, who was the chief spokesman of the Dogrib people at the signing of Treaty 11 and who signed the treaty on their behalf. She is survived by one sister, Marie. I know that Members of the Legislature join me in extending sympathy to family members.

Sessional Legislation

During this session, a legislative program including the following bills will be introduced for your consideration. Amendments to the following acts will be advanced: All-terrain Vehicles Act, Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, Condominium Act, Coroners Act, Education Act, Evidence Act, Judicature Act, Legal Services Act, Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, Residential Tenancies Act, Statute Revision Act, Statute Law (Public Officer) Amendment Act, Territorial Court Act, Tobacco Tax Act and the Vital Statistics Act.

New bills include: Disease Registries Act, Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Act, International Sale of Goods Act, Interpretation Act, Land Titles Act, Public Utilities Act, Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments (Canada-U.K.) Act, Victims of Crime Act, Write-off of Assets and Debts and Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1988-89, and the Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1988-89. The government considers these bills essential to the good conduct of government business. I recommend the passage of each of these acts.

I now commend to you for your earnest consideration and wise judgment the business of this House, as I declare open the third session of the 11th Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the day.

Item 3, Ministers' statements. Item 4, Members' statements. Mr. Lewis.

ITEM 4: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Appreciation Of Mr. Ted Richard

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my appreciation for the work of Ted Richard, the Member for Yellowknife South, who has shown this Assembly for the last four years that we really do need an opposition to what sometimes happens on the other side of the House. He showed us, in fact, that in a system that has no parties or one party, whichever way you want to look at consensus government, there is a need to have some kind of cautionary force on this side so that the excesses that sometimes come to the minds of Ministers not be too excessive and that the interests of all of our citizens will be well-protected.

In expressing my appreciation to Mr. Richard for those four years, I would also like to welcome Mr. Sibbeston to this side of the House. Mr. Sibbeston is also a lawyer and will, no doubt, also be expressing his opinions from time to time in a very positive fashion to make sure that we get the very best government possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

—Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Members' statements.

Item 5, oral questions.

Item 6, written questions.

Item 7, petitions.

Item 8, reports of standing and special committees.

Item 9, tabling of documents.

Item 10, notices of motion.

Item 11, notices of motion for first reading of bills.

Item 12, motions.

Item 13, first reading of bills.

Item 14, second reading of bills. Item 15, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 15: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Orders of the day for Thursday, October 13th.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Oral Questions
6. Written Questions

7. Returns to Written Questions
8. Replies to Opening Address
9. Petitions
10. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
11. Tabling of Documents
12. Notices of Motion
13. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
14. Motions
15. First Reading of Bills
16. Second Reading of Bills
17. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
18. Report of Committee of the Whole
19. Third Reading of Bills
20. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Before adjourning for the day I would like to invite all Members of the House to join the public for coffee in the lobby.

This House stands adjourned until Thursday, October 13th at 1:00 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT



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