

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
8<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY, 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 8-66

TABLED ON Oct. 17, 1978

T.D. 8-66

17/10/78

USE OF BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

ON

TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT LETTERHEAD

Copies of Correspondence between Mr. Maxwell Yalden,  
Commissioner of Official Languages and Commissioner  
S.M. Hodgson with regard to the use of both English  
and French on Territorial Government Letterhead.

AUG - 2 1978

TO 001 071  
EC 78-13

Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
X1A 2L9  
AUG 3 - 1978

Mr. Maxwell Yalden,  
Commissioner of Official Languages,  
OTTAWA, Ontario.  
K1A 0T8

Dear Mr. Yalden:

Thank you for your letter of July 5, 1978, through which you express the opinion that under the Official Languages Act the Government of the Northwest Territories is obliged to give equal status to English and French on official letterhead.

As you are no doubt aware, a high priority of the Council of the Northwest Territories is the attainment of progress toward provincial status. Conversion to bilingual letterhead by the Government of the Northwest Territories may be viewed by the Council as a retrogressive step in its struggle for constitutional development. A move of this sort would serve to place further strain on the delicate state of Federal/Territorial relations. Within the Northwest Territories, the ideal of national unity can best be achieved by enabling the Northwest Territories fuller participation as an equal in Canadian Federation.

In view of the sensitivity of this issue, I will endeavour to place the matter before the Council of the Northwest Territories during its Autumn Session, and shall be pleased to advise you of the result of Council's deliberations.

2/8  
Mr. Beaman  
Please put before  
Council.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
S. M. HODGSON

S. M. Hodgson,  
Commissioner.

PARKINS/am

*AM*

AUG 25 1978



CANADA

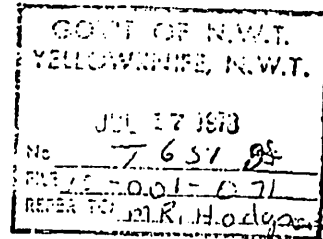
COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES

July 5, 1978

Our Ref.: 6816

Mr. S.M. Hodgson, O.C.  
Commissioner of the Northwest  
Territories  
Council of the Northwest  
Territories  
Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
X1A 2L9



Dear Mr. Hodgson:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 1, 1978, concerning the unilingual English letterhead of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

I understand the reasons advanced for your Government's reluctance to use a letterhead bearing both official languages. However, I am certain you will recognize that the Office of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is "an institution of the Parliament and Government of Canada" and hence subject to the provisions of Sections 2 and 25 of the Official Languages Act, which oblige such institutions to give equal status to English and French. Of course, if that were your Office's decision Inuktitut and Dene might also appear on the letterhead, but under the terms of the law there appears to be no choice but that the English and French versions should both be used.

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You may wish to give some further consideration to the matter in this light, and I shall look forward to receiving any additional comments you may wish to make. Meanwhile, I am sending copies of this correspondence to Mr. Arthur Kroeger, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, for his information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maxwell Yalden".

Maxwell Yalden

Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
X1A 2L9

JUN - 1 1978

Mr. Maxwell Yalden,  
Commissioner of Official Languages,  
Ottawa, Ontario.  
K1A 0T8

Dear Mr. Yalden:

Thank you for your letter of April 13, 1978, through which you drew my attention to a complaint you had received that the letterhead of the Government of the Northwest Territories was unilingual, and stated your intention to investigate this complaint.

The following table based on the most recent Census Canada data will give you an idea of the relative proportion of mother tongues in the N.W.T.

1976 Census  
Mother Tongues of the N.W.T.

<u>Mother Tongue</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Total</u>
English	23,085	54.18
French	1,095	2.57
Native Indian	4,140	9.72
Inuit	11,385	26.72
Other	1,470	3.45
Not Stated	1,435	3.36
Total	42,610	100

From this table, it can be seen that the Government of the N.W.T., should it consider the addition of other languages to its letterhead, would have to place a higher priority on the inclusion of Inuktitut and Dene dialects than on French. The matter is further complicated by the fact that there are four major Indian language groups used in the N.W.T. for which standard orthographies are only now being developed. In addition, the language of Inuktitut, of which several dialects are used in different regions of the N.W.T., uses either syllabics or roman orthography.

It may also be useful to point out that the Government of the N.W.T. is not unique in having a unilingual letterhead, and that it is my understanding that this is also the case in the Western Provinces and in the Yukon.

Sincerely yours,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
S. M. HODGSON

PARKINS/var

S. M. Hodgson,  
Commissioner.

AUG 28 1978  
AUG 28 1978  
CANADA

10-01-071  
GOVT OF N.W.T.  
YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.  
APR 20 1978  
No 7886  
FILE 10-01-071  
REFER TO Mr. Hodgson

COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES  
COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

OTTAWA, KIA 0T8

April 13, 1978

Our Ref.: 6816

Mr. S.M. Hodgson, O.C.  
Commissioner of the Northwest  
Territories  
Council of the Northwest  
Territories  
Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
X1A 2L9

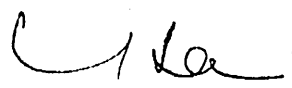
Dear Mr. Hodgson:

I wish to inform you of my attention to investigate a complaint which has been lodged against your Government.

A correspondent has sent me the enclosed photocopy of the Government's stationery and pointed out that the letterhead is in English only.

I should appreciate your comments on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

  
Maxwell Yalden

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 78 - 13PROPOSAL SUMMARY

1. SUBJECT: Commissioner of Official Languages - Complaint against the Government of the Northwest Territories
2. INITIATED BY: Executive Committee
3. REFERRED BY: Commissioner
4. ACTION REQUESTED: Commissioner Hodgson has referred to the Executive Committee for their information and comment a letter from Maxwell Yalden, Commissioner of Official Languages, informing this Government that he intends to investigate a complaint re the fact that our letterhead is unilingual.

*yes that's a fact. It and  
in Eskimo or Indian. Maybe  
should confid in you rather is  
B.C. all, but, man or Yukon.*

5. DOCUMENTS ATTACHED: Letter to the Commissioner from Maxwell Yalden dated 13 April 1978.

RECORD OF RECOMMENDATION