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S. HODGSON
COMMISSIONER OF THE N.W.T.
YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

As a follow-up to the visit by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Parks before the Territorial Council last January 31, I felt that I should make you aware of my views on the subject of the establishment of Territorial Parks.

As Mr. Davidson explained to the Council during his testimony, a combination of national parks and Territorial parks would be fully complementary. Parks Canada's prime objective is to preserve representative natural areas to a high degree and to provide recreational activities within that context. Territorial Parks would have a prime objective, on the other hand, of providing intensive tourist and recreational opportunities in more readily accessible areas.

I believe that such a fully integrated parks system in the N.W.T. is essential, and that the objectives of both national parks and Territorial parks can be achieved.

At the present time, of course, the formal establishment of Territorial Parks is impeded by on-going native land claims negotiations, and it is my view that the alienation of land for such parks before these claims have been settled would be premature. As you are probably aware, even national park reserves that have been set aside, have been done so pending the outcome of native land claims.

In the interim, however, I feel that planning for a Territorial parks system should proceed. To this end, I repeat Mr. Davidson's offer of Parks Canada's assistance in establishing a planning system for Territorial parks, identifying specific areas, and setting priorities. Subsequent to this planning exercise, and the resolution of native land claims, the Department would then be

prepared to assist you in consultations with natives and other interested parties. If no conflicts in land use are apparent, a transfer of land to the Administration and control of the N.W.T. Government for Territorial park purposes could be arranged.

With regard to smaller areas, that could be developed as campgrounds or picnic areas, I have asked my Assistant Deputy Minister for Northern Affairs to meet with you soon to discuss practical mechanisms for the transfer of such lands to meet your immediate needs. These mechanisms, of course, would include a careful examination of land uses to ensure that no conflicts exist.

I also understand that Mr. Davidson is preparing follow-up correspondence to address specific questions that were raised during his testimony that he feels warrant further elaboration.

The Honourable Hugh Faulkner,
Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
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