

NWT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY NEWS RELEASES

1997

- 97-01 Feb 5 Sixth Nunavut Leaders Summit scheduled for Cambridge Bay.
- Feb 5 South Slave regional leaders to meet.
- Feb 10 Time for community leaders to work together.
- Feb 11 Flags at Assembly to fly at half mast.
- 97-02 Feb 13 Continue seniors fuel subsidy program, Committee says.
- 97-03 Feb 17 Voters should decide gender parity issue, Nunavut Caucus says.
- 97-04 Mar 3 Speaker accepts Literacy Council challenge.
- 97-05 Mar 5 Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission appointments.
- Mar 5 North Slave MLA urges community to come forward.
- 97-06 Mar 5 Long-time northerner recommended as first Information and Privacy Commissioner.
- 97-07 Mar 10 Social Programs Committee to launch consultations on proposed family law legislation.
- 97-08 Mar 17 Public vote on guaranteed representation.
- 97-09 Mar 21 Western coalition formed.
- 97-10 Mar 21 Legislative Working Group tackles affirmative action.
- 97-11 Mar 24 Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission begins work.
- 97-12
- 97-13 Apr 2 Ceremony honors makers of the Mace.
- 97-14 Apr 7 Hire northern students first, Seamus Henry says.
- 97-15 Apr 9 Boundaries Commission to hold first round of hearings in Keewatin.

97-16 Apr 11 Proclamation for public vote issued.

97-17 Apr 17 Western leaders coalition begins initial review of division plans.

97-18 Apr 25 YK South MLA questions parks job move.

97-19 Apr 25 Henry calls for orderly transfer of jobs to Nunavut.

97-20 May 7 Be aggressive in promoting Yellowknife, Henry says.

97-21 May 16 Affirmative action Working Group to make recommendations.

97-22 May 23 More than 12,000 eligible voters in Monday's public vote.

97-23 May 26 Nunavut voters have had their say in public vote.

97-24 May 27 Indemnities, allowances and expenses report tabled.

97-25 Jun 12 Official count shows little change in public vote results.

97-26 Jun 6 Groundwork laid for changes to affirmative action policy.

97-27 Jul 8 Healing lodge for NWT federal aboriginal inmates.

97-28 Jul 14 Henry calls for interim evaluation of BHP hiring.

97-29 Jul 18 Speaker receives Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission report.

97-30 Jul 21 Change your tune, Henry says.

97-31 Jul 28 YK South MLA welcomes comments of Interim Commissioner.

97-32 Jul 31 Don't lower student assistance rates, YK North MLA says.

97-33 Aug 27 YK North MLA concerned with delay in twin arenas.

97-34 Sep 2 Book of condolences at Legislative Assembly.

97-35 Sep 3 MLA's lobby for sorting and valuation facility.

97-36 Sep 3 Henry proposes fund to deal with pay equity dispute.

97-37 Sep 4 Shelve health board funding proposal, YK North MLA.

Sep 4 Picco reacts with surprise and disappointment over statement on Nunavut

health care transfer.

- 97-38 Sep 9 New Web Site promotes Legislative Assembly.
- 97-39 Sep 23 Henry calls for cohesive lobby on diamond facility.
- 97-40 Sep 25 Better co-ordination needed in diamond planning.
- 97-41 Sep 25 No change to health board funding is good news, says Inuvik MLA.
- Oct 1 Languages Commissioner of the NWT to host the 1998 National Conference of Canadian Ombudsman.
- 97-42 Oct 2 Inuvik MLA welcomes reduction in liquor store hours.
- 97-43 Oct 6 Legislative Assembly establishes National Unity Committee.
- Oct 8 Transition action plan alerts parties to need for urgent decisions.
- 97-44 Oct 8 Legislature recommends 17-member assembly for Nunavut.
- 97-45 Oct 14 Transition plan for new western territory released.
- 97-46 Oct 17 Fifth Sessions opens Tuesday.
- 97-47 Oct 24 MLAs to meet with Beaufort-Delta leaders.
- 97-48 Nov 18 Vigilance is needed now on the diamond front, Henry says.
- 97-49 Nov 20 Revisit the Public Service Act, Thebacha MLA says.
- 97-50 Nov 21 Government Operations Committee call for review of Public Service Act.
- 97-51 Dec 2 Assembly passes Unity Resolution.
- 97-52 Dec 3 First resident NWT Chief Electoral Officer appointed.
- 97-53 Dec 3 Public Works and Services commended for response.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sixth Nunavut Leaders Summit scheduled for Cambridge Bay

YELLOWKNIFE (February 5) - Nunavut leaders will gather in Cambridge Bay February 16 and 17 to continue planning for Division and the creation of Nunavut.

"We have less than 800 days before Division and the clock is ticking," said Natilikmiot MLA John Ningark, Co-Chair of the Nunavut Caucus. "We have a number of important issues that we have to make some key decisions on and this meeting will help us focus our efforts."

The meeting is an opportunity for leaders to discuss preparations for Nunavut and to determine the next steps to be taken. The Nunavut Legislature is expected to be a major topic item with discussions and decisions on a number of aspects such as the number of seats in the Assembly, dual-member constituencies and the selection of Premier. Other agenda items include labor and employment issues, including transfer of current government staff, and the design and financing of the new Nunavut Government.

The Hon. Ron Irwin, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Premier Don Morin, Nunatsiak MP Jack Anawak, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated President Jose Kusugak, John Amagoalik, Chief Commissioner of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, Nunavut MLAs and regional Inuit organizations have been invited to the Summit, hosted by Kitikmeot MLA Kelvin Ng.

Contact:

David Hamilton
Clerk
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2299
Fax: (403) 920-4735

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOUTH SLAVE REGIONAL LEADERS TO MEET

Yellowknife (February 5) - South Slave leaders will be looking for ways to work together to benefit the region when they gather in Fort Smith this weekend for the first South Slave Regional Leaders Meeting since the 1980s.

"We have to find ways to work together for the good of everyone in the region," said Thebacha MLA Michael Miltenberger, organizer of the meeting.

Conditions in the South Slave have changed dramatically since the demise of the South Slave Regional Council. Land claims are being resolved and there is an open and dynamic environment for resource development emerging. Division gives residents the opportunity for a major re-organization of the political and economic structure. A new constitution is being formed which will be the framework for the western Territory.

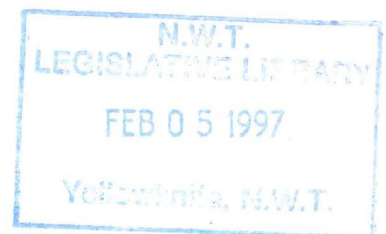
"The South Slave could, and should, be a major force in directing these changes," Mr. Miltenberger said. "While each community is unique, people in the South Slave share a common history. We have family, geographic and economic ties."

The 15 leaders attending the February 8 and 9 meeting include South Slave MLAs, Mayors, Metis Presidents and Dene Chiefs. They intend to focus on two key topics for discussion: developing ways to work together and common economic issues and strategies.

"Since the last formal gathering there has been a significant change in the political leadership of the South Slave," Mr. Miltenberger said. "It is time to come together to help each other build the communities of our region."

The meeting will be held in the Roaring Rapids Hall in Fort Smith. The public is welcome to listen to the discussions and to be part of the Community Feast and Celebration Saturday night.

Contact:
Michael Miltenberger
MLA, Thebacha
Phone: (403) 669-2270 OR Toll-Free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TIME FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS TO WORK TOGETHER

Yellowknife (February 10) - Now is the time for community leaders in Inuvik to rally together and find some alternate solution and funding to keep Delta House, the Territories' oldest alcohol and drug treatment center, open.

"The Minister of Health and Social Services has clearly stated he won't change his decision on cutting funding to Delta House but he has agreed to let staff use the equipment in the facility until June 30," Mr. Roland said. "This is a small window of opportunity, where with some creativity, we could perhaps keep the facility operating."

Mr. Roland has just returned from Inuvik where he hosted a public meeting February 7 with Kelvin Ng, Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Roland said he is committed to working with Delta House officials and other community leaders to find alternate funding within the territorial government's budget.

"We have to look at areas such as early intervention and other programs to see if we can qualify," Mr. Roland said. "It's in the hands of the community and its leaders."

He also noted that Inuvik Mayor George Roach said Friday he would speak to the town council about giving Delta House's board four months rent-free in a bid to keep the facility open.

"These are the kind of initiatives that could help us to keep Delta House operating," Mr. Roland added.

About 50 citizens attended Friday's public meeting at the Aurora Campus in Inuvik. Mr. Roland said their disapproval with the decision to close Delta House was clearly evident.

Mr. Roland expects community leaders will meet soon to discuss where to go from here but he stressed time is of the essence. The territorial government's funding for Delta House runs out March 31.

Contact:

Floyd Roland
MLA, Inuvik
Phone: (403) 669-2265 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FLAGS AT ASSEMBLY TO FLY AT HALF MAST

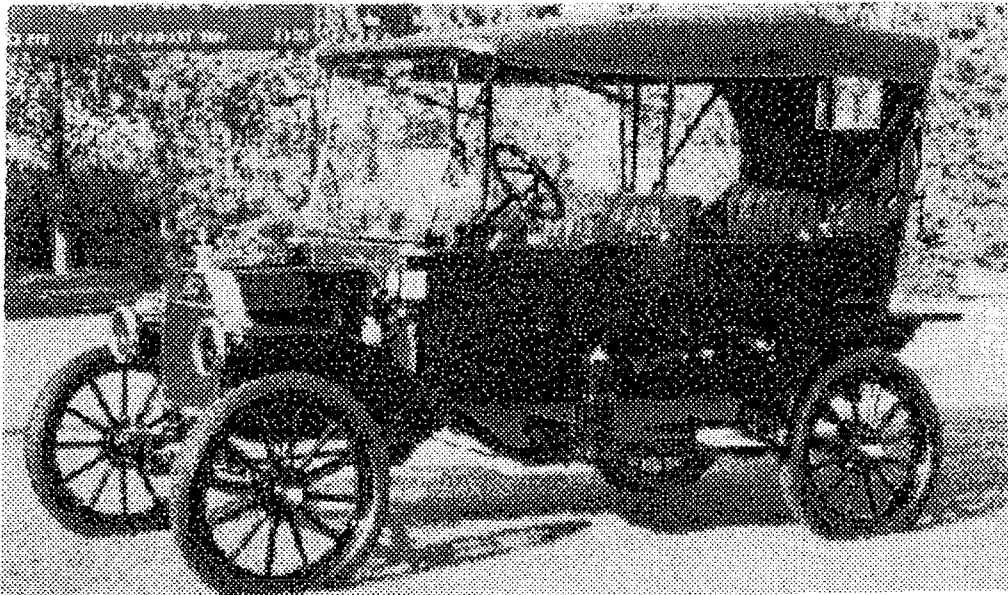
Yellowknife (February 11) - Flags will be flying at half mast at the Legislative Assembly today as a sign of support for our colleague Richard Bargery on the death of his long-time friend, his white Toyota.

"It's really a sad day around the building," said David Hamilton, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, when he learned of the demise of this relic. "The parking lot, or the 10-minute parking zone out front of the building which the Toyota was so fond of, won't be the same without that old white beater sitting there."

Mr. Hamilton said the flags will remain at half-mast today as Mr. Bargery mourns the loss of his car. The car, which was left in the Assembly's parking lot about two weeks ago, has been towed to a local repair shop but it will probably soon join other old heaps in car heaven.

Mr. Bargery declined to comment on his loss, choking back the tears as he struggled to tell Mr. Hamilton of his loss. It is reported that it would have cost \$600 to repair the car and Mr. Bargery decided it just wasn't worth it.

Mr. Bargery isn't sure what he will do now but speculation is that his generous boss just might be tempted to chip in for a new vehicle.



From one old relic to relic, welcome to the resting grounds!

97-02

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Continue Seniors Fuel Subsidy Program, Committee says

Yellowknife (February 13) - Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs say they want the Hon. Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to find the money in his budget to re-instate the Seniors Fuel Subsidy Program.

"Surely in a \$280 million budget the Minister can come up with \$250,000 to keep this program intact," said Michael Miltenberger, the Committee's Deputy Chairman. "The Minister's budget is coming up for discussion later this month and we want to see funding for this program included. We won't accept cutting the program."

Committee Members are frustrated that Mr. Dent appears to have disregarded their recommendation to continue the program. "The Committee has dealt with this issue since last fall and provided a number of options to the Minister, none of which have been acted on," said Committee Member Roy Erasmus, MLA for Yellowknife North.

"We have to recognize the contributions that our seniors have made to the North and this is one program that provides a benefit, albeit a small one, to thank them," Mr. Erasmus said.

On Wednesday the Legislative Assembly passed a motion, introduced by the Members of the Social Programs Committee, calling on the Government to continue the program. The motion suggested increasing the single income threshold to exceed the Statistics Canada poverty level for a single individual and indexing to Yellowknife's cost of living.

The Committee also brought forward a suggestion to Mr. Dent, supported by the N.W.T. Seniors' Society, that the Government look at charging seniors living in public housing a nominal rent of \$32 per month to help pay for the Fuel Subsidy Program.

Contact:

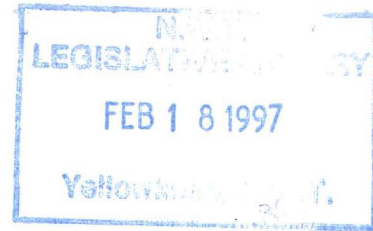
Tommy Enuaraq
Chairman, Standing Committee on Social Programs
MLA, Baffin Central
Phone: (403) 669-2281 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276



Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly / ᓄᓇᑦᓴᓴᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᐱᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ
 Nunavut Caucus / ᐱᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᓄᓇᑦᓴᓴᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᑲᐱᓴᓴᑦ

9703

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



VOTERS SHOULD DECIDE GENDER PARITY ISSUE, NUNAVUT CAUCUS SAYS

Cambridge Bay (February 17) - The people of Nunavut should decide by plebiscite whether or not the territory should have dual member constituencies based upon equal representation of men and women, say Members of the Nunavut Caucus.

"I, for one, do not believe that it is right to put me, as a woman, in a position where, for the rest of my political career, I will only be able to run against women because that is what gender parity means," the Hon. Manitoq Thompson, MLA for Aivilik, told the Nunavut Leaders Summit today. "Or on the other hand, for my sons to only run against men. For me, this is not equality."

Mrs. Thompson said, that regardless of her personal opinion, Nunavut MLAs believe such a fundamental change to the system of electing Members of the Legislative Assembly should be put to the people of Nunavut to decide.

Nunavut MLAs said they have heard a number of concerns from constituents who don't support gender parity or have questions about this issue. Amittuq MLA Mark Evaloarjuk said these concerns have to be addressed.

"We have to let the people of Nunavut tell us clearly what they want on the issue of gender parity," Mr. Evaloarjuk said. "We owe it to the people to ask them."

Nunavut MLAs said, as elected representatives, they have to be responsible and preserve the democratic process.

"What is important is that the principles of democracy and responsible governance demand all of us to empower the people of Nunavut so they can make this fundamental and critical decision about how we will be governed," Mrs. Thompson said.

Nunavut leaders at the Summit, Decisions '97, agreed that the Nunavut Legislative Assembly should have a minimum of 20 Members and a maximum of 22.

Contact:

Hon. Manitoq Thompson
 MLA, Aivilik
 Phone: (403) 669-2344
 Fax: (403) 873-0169

Ronna Bremer
 Public Relations Officer
 Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
 Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
 Fax: (403) 920-4735



97-04

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPEAKER ACCEPTS LITERACY COUNCIL CHALLENGE

Yellowknife (March 3) - The Hon. Sam Gargan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, has accepted a challenge from the President of the N.W.T. Literacy Council and has designated Wednesday, March 5, 1997 as Aboriginal Languages Day in the Assembly.

"Members will be asked to speak in their native language when they speak in the Legislative Assembly that day," said Mr. Gargan. "Languages are an important part of our culture and it is important that the people of the N.W.T. see their languages are alive and being used on a day-to-day basis."

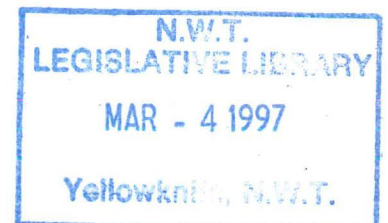
The Assembly will have interpreters from the Language Bureau on hand to simultaneously interpret the proceedings. The Assembly currently offers simultaneous translation in Inuktitut on a daily basis and rotates the provision of Dene and French language services on a weekly basis.

March is Aboriginal Languages Month and Literacy Council President Michael Kusugak issued the challenge to Mr. Gargan and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Gargan urges communities to participate in aboriginal languages month and promote the use of aboriginal languages.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735



97-05

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNAVUT ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Yellowknife (March 5) - Members of the Legislative Assembly have recommended that the Hon. Justice J.E. Richard be appointed chairperson of the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission.

The Legislative Assembly is also recommending that Mrs. Sandy Kusugak of Rankin Inlet and Mr. Titus Allooloo be appointed as members of the Commission.

The recommendations will be forwarded to the Hon. Helen Maksagak, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. The *Electoral Boundaries Commissions Act* requires that a Commission, consisting of a Chairperson and two members, be appointed.

Mr. Justice Richard, served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the 10th and 11th Assemblies, and is currently a Justice with the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories.

Mrs. Kusugak is a member of the Keewatin Divisional Board of Education and has been involved as a returning officer with numerous past elections. Mr. Allooloo was a Member of the Legislative Assembly, representing the Amittuq constituency, from 1987 to 1995.

The Commission will make recommendations on the boundaries, names and representation of new electoral districts for Nunavut to enable the election of the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly also provided additional guidelines to the Boundaries Commission that could require the report to contain options for both 10 and 11 dual member electoral districts and 20 to 22 single member electoral districts.

The Commission can hold public hearings and has to finalize its report no later than June 30, 1997. The Commission's report is to be provided to the Legislative Assembly and then forwarded to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0879

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NORTH SLAVE MLA URGES COMMUNITY TO COME FORWARD

Yellowknife (March 5) - North Slave MLA James Rabesca is urging people in Rae-Edzo to come forward with any information they may have on the disappearance more than six years ago of Charlene Catholique.

"In light of the RCMP's announcement last month that a man from Rae is suspected to have been involved in the disappearance of this young girl, it is imperative that people with information that could help come forward," Mr. Rabesca said.

The announcement by the RCMP has affected the entire community and many questions are being asked, both in Rae-Edzo and outside, he added. People are shocked that something such as this may have occurred in their community.

"If it is true we must make sure that the body of Charlene Catholique is found, returned to her family and buried in a Christian way so that her spirit may come to rest," Mr. Rabesca noted. "If it is not true then the RCMP must come up with an explanation and apologize to the community."

Mr. Rabesca extends sympathy from the entire community to the Catholique family and offers the community's support in finding the truth.

Contact:

James Rabesca
MLA, North Slave
Phone: (403) 669-2290
Fax: (403) 873-0276



97-06

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LONG-TIME NORTHERNER RECOMMENDED AS FIRST INFORMATION
AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER**

Yellowknife (March 5) - Members of the Legislative Assembly today recommended that Elaine Keenan Bengts, a long-time Northerner, be appointed as the North's first Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Ms. Keenan Bengts has operated her own law firm, Keenan Bengts Law Office, in Yellowknife for the past 10 years. Much of her work in recent years has been in the area of family law and she has traveled extensively in the Northwest Territories. She has also served as a Deputy Fair Practices Officer in the N.W.T., investigating complaints made under the *Fair Practices Act*.

As the first Information and Privacy Commissioner for the Northwest Territories, Ms. Keenan Bengts' responsibilities will include reviewing decisions of the Government on public access to their records and offering comment on the implications for privacy protection of proposed legislative schemes or government programs.

The *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, which came into effect January 1, 1997, requires the Commissioner to submit an annual report to the Legislative Assembly on the activities of her office.

Ms. Keenan Bengts' appointment will be in effect until March 31, 1999.

Contact:

David Hamilton
Clerk
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2299
Fax: (403) 920-4735

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0879

97-07

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SOCIAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE TO LAUNCH CONSULTATIONS ON
PROPOSED FAMILY LAW LEGISLATION**

Yellowknife (March 10) - Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs will begin public consultations on the proposed Family Law Bills next month.

"We want to hear from as many Northerners as possible on the changes being proposed," said Committee Chairman Tommy Enuaraq. "The changes contained in these Bills -- the *Family Law Act*, the *Children's Law Act*, the *Child and Family Services Act*, and the *Adoption Act* -- will have a major impact on Family Law and we need to know what Northerners think."

Mr. Enuaraq urges all Northerners to participate in the consultations and make their concerns and comments known. Family Law covers a wide variety of issues including child welfare, custody of and access to children, division of property, and adoption.

Limited funding prevents the Committee from visiting every community in the Northwest Territories but Mr. Enuaraq said residents outside the regional centers can still participate in the consultations.

"We urge those people living outside the regional centers to send us written or audio-taped comments or speak to their MLA and Committee Members," he said.

Copies and summaries of the Bills and other information are being sent to all communities in the N.W.T. prior to the start of the public consultations.

The consultation process will be launched in Yellowknife on Monday, April 7, 1997. Three Members of the Committee will be in Rankin Inlet April 8 to 11 and Iqaluit April 11 to 14. The other three Members will hold public hearings in Fort Simpson April 16 to 18 and Inuvik April 19 to 22. Hearings have also been scheduled for May and June in other regional centres.

The reform process for Family Law began about 10 years ago with the work of a Ministerial Working Group. The Bills were introduced in the Legislative Assembly last November and referred to the Social Programs Committee.

Contact:

Tommy Enuaraq
Chairman, Standing Committee on Social Programs
Phone: (403) 669-2281
Fax: (403) 873-0276

Michael Miltenberger
Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee on Social Programs
Phone: (403) 669-2270 or (403) 872-5511
Fax: (403) 873-0276

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0879



**NEWS RELEASE
NEWS RELEASE
NEWS RELEASE**

Chief Polling Officer

97-08

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC VOTE ON GUARANTEED REPRESENTATION

Yellowknife (March 17) - Residents in Nunavut will vote Monday, May 26 on whether or not the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly should have guaranteed representation for men and women.

The following question will appear on the ballot:

Should the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly have equal numbers of men and women MLAs, with one man and woman elected to represent each electoral district?

Nunavut Leaders agreed on the need for the Public Vote at the Cambridge Bay summit meeting last month. They felt that the residents of Nunavut must be given the opportunity to express their opinion on such a fundamental change to the way Members are elected to the Legislative Assembly.

Individuals 18 years and older, who have resided in Nunavut since May 26, 1996, will be eligible to vote. Voters list will be posted in communities in Nunavut no later than April 18, 1997. Eligible voters whose names do not appear on the list may apply to the returning officer by 3 p.m. Thursday, May 8, 1997 to have their names added.

A simple majority -- 50 per cent plus one -- of the votes cast will determine the outcome of the Public Vote.

The Chief Polling Officer, David Hamilton, hopes that despite the time of year the vote is being held in Nunavut that eligible voters will understand the urgency that has been placed on this vote by the parties to the Political Accord so that the people of Nunavut can express those views in this important matter.

Advance Polls will be held on Thursday, May 15, 1997. Proxy voting will be available to all eligible voters, application forms will be available from the returning officer in your community. Students, who are eligible to vote, and attending educational institutions outside their home communities can vote by proxy.

The Chief Polling Officer according to guidelines approved by the three parties, will be responsible for conducting the vote. The Federal Government will cover the costs of the public vote, estimated to be \$350,000.

Factual information, developed jointly by the Federal Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Nunavut Implementation Commission, concerning the subject of the Public Vote will be released in early April.

Contact:

David M. Hamilton
Chief Polling Officer
Phone: (403) 669-2299 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-09

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WESTERN COALITION FORMED

Yellowknife (March 21) - Business, aboriginal and political leaders have formed a Western Leaders Coalition to ensure the western Territory is ready for Division in 1999.

"Members of the coalition agree there is a need for some strong action by leaders in the western Territory," said Coalition Chairman Floyd Roland, MLA for Inuvik. "Right now the crucial issue we have to deal with is Federal financing agreements to be in effect after April 1, 1999."

Federal financing negotiations for both new territories will soon be underway between the Hon. John Todd, Territorial Finance Minister and his federal counterpart, the Hon. Paul Martin. The Interim Commissioner for Nunavut, a representative of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and a representative of the Western Coalition will also be represented in the negotiations scheduled to get underway in April.

Although federal financing is their main focus the Coalition is also reviewing a number of other issues. These include the division of GNWT assets and liabilities, the future of the NWT Power Corporation and the Workers' Compensation Board post-Division, and other issues that will impact on the new western Territory after Division.

The Coalition has representatives from the Western Caucus of the Legislative Assembly, the Aboriginal Summit, the NWT Chamber of Commerce, and the NWT Association of Municipalities. Besides Mr. Roland, Coalition Members include: Mr. Gary Bohnet and Mr. Fred Koe on behalf of the Aboriginal Summit, Mr. Don Yamkowy, President of the NWT Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Garth Malakoe, Chamber of Commerce Board Member, Mayor Dennis Bevington, representing the Western Caucus of the NWT Association of Municipalities, and Yellowknife South MLA Mr. Seamus Henry.

"This partnership between business, political and aboriginal leaders will ensure we have a co-ordinated approach towards Division in the western Territory," Mr. Yamkowy said.

The Coalition has hired Mr. Jean Guertin, a fiscal policy analyst and consultant to research the federal financing arrangements. Mr. Guertin is the former Director of Fiscal Policy, Department of Finance for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Contact:

Floyd Roland
Chairperson, Western Leaders Coalition
MLA, Inuvik
Phone: (403) 669-2265 or (403) 979-4693 (Inuvik)
Fax: (403) 873-0276

Don Yamkowy
President, NWT Chamber of Commerce
Phone: (403) 920-9505
Fax: (403) 873-6543

Doug Schauerte
Deputy Clerk
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2299 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-10

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGISLATIVE WORKING GROUP TACKLES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Yellowknife (March 21) - Members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations have set up a working group to deal with concerns about the lack of success with the GNWT's Affirmative Action policy.

"The current Affirmative Action policy and its predecessor, the Native Employment Policy, have been in place for 12 years and have only been successful in small pockets of the government", says Roy Erasmus, Chair of the Working Group. "There has to be a better way to get northerners into jobs within the government and to encourage more jobs in the private sector as well."

The Working Group is looking at how a representative workforce in the government can become a reality. The group will draw heavily on the 1995 consultation on the Affirmative Action Policy in its consideration of improvements.

"People expressed their concerns with the policy loud and clear. Now it's time to try to address those concerns," said Iqaluit MLA Ed Picco, a member of the working group.

Other members of the working group, besides Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Picco, are Michael Miltenberger, MLA Thebacha and Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry.

Acknowledging that major reform of the policy may not be appropriate with division less than two years away, members of the working group still think there are changes which can make an immediate and positive impact.

The working group represents a range of opinions about affirmative action, but the members all agree that the current policy isn't effective and there has to be a better way to get northerners working.

In addition to the Affirmative Action Policy, the working group is examining three other areas: a northern employment strategy, student employment and division.

In May, the working group will be presenting their recommendations to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. They expect their report will be discussed in the Assembly during the continuation of the 4th Session in late May 1997.

Contact:

J. Michael Miltenberger
MLA for Thebacha
Phone: (403) 872-5511
Fax: (403) 872-5642

Seamus Henry
MLA for Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287
Fax: (403) 873-0276
Facsimile: 1-800-661-0879



NUNAVUT ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

97-11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNAVUT ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION BEGINS WORK

Yellowknife (March 24) - Members of the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission will officially begin their work next month, including consulting with residents in Nunavut.

"We expect to visit all regions of Nunavut to hear comments and concerns in respect to electoral districts," said the Hon. Justice J.E. Richard, chairperson of the Commission.

The Commission, established by the Legislative Assembly in March, will make recommendations on the boundaries, names and representation of new electoral districts to be proposed for Nunavut. The Commission will also make recommendations with respect to options for both 10 or 11 dual member and 20 to 22 single member electoral districts.

Equal representation for men and women in the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly, the subject of the May 26, 1997 Public Vote, is not part of the Commission's mandate.

A public notice will be sent to all communities in Nunavut notifying Mayors, community councils and residents that the Commission's work has begun and how they can be contacted. The Commission will consider requests from communities to hold public hearings in their community. Requests may be made by calling the Commission's staff at 819-979-5479 or 1-888-655-1999 or faxed to 1-888-655-1333 (toll-free numbers will be in operation as of April 1, 1997). Requests can also be sent to Commission staff in Yellowknife at 1-800-661-0796 (phone) or 1-800-661-0872 (fax).

Written submissions can be sent to the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission, P.O. Box 2249, Iqaluit, NT X0A 0H0 or faxed to the Yellowknife or Iqaluit offices.

Contact:

Tommy Sammurtok
Commission Secretary
Phone: (819) 979-5479 or Toll-free 1-888-655-1999

Glen McLean
Assistant Commission Secretary
Phone: (403) 920-6140 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0796
Fax: Toll-free 1-800-661-0872

97-13

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CEREMONY HONORS MAKERS OF THE MACE

Yellowknife (April 2) - The Hon. Sam Gargan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and the Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Deputy Premier, will be in Cape Dorset April 12 to recognize the carvers who made the Mace of the Northwest Territories.

"The Mace represents the power and authority of the Legislative Assembly and without it no proceedings may take place in the Chamber," Mr. Gargan said. "We want to show our appreciation to the people of Cape Dorset for the part they played in the making of the Mace."

Four of the nine Inuit carvers -- Oshawetuk Ipeelie, Lukta Qiatsuk, Kovianaktuliak "B" Parr, and Ashevak Ezekiel -- who made the original Mace are still alive and will be at the ceremony. Family members will represent the five carvers who are deceased. The five are Peter Pitseolak (the head craftsman on the project), Nungoshuitok, Qavaroak Tunnillie, Moses Tauki, and Kovianatuliak "A" Ottokie.

A member of the family of Oolooreak Manning -- the Inuk woman who donated a old copper pot that finished the crown on the Mace -- will also be on hand.

The original Mace was presented to the Council of the Northwest Territories in 1956 by then-Governor General, the Right Hon. Vincent Massey. Made completely of materials from the Northwest Territories the carvers worked from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. to complete the Mace in just 21 days.

A replica Mace, made mostly of brass, replaced the original Mace in 1959 and is still in use in the Legislative Assembly today. The replica Mace will make the trip to Cape Dorset. The original, which is in storage at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, is too fragile to transport.

In addition to the Mace presentation, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories will also present a Bravery Award to Nathaniel Joanassie of Cap Dorset. Mr. Joanassie, 20, is receiving the award at the second level for rescuing Luccassie Qatsiya who fell into Cape Dorset Bay while ice-hopping.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HIRE NORTHERN STUDENTS FIRST, SEAMUS HENRY SAYS

Yellowknife (April 7) - Students will soon be returning to the Northwest Territories for the summer and Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry says that the Government should hire these students before hiring students from other jurisdictions.

"There are probably going to be fewer jobs this summer and the GNWT's first priority should be hiring Northern students," Mr. Henry said. "We have to take care of our own first and foremost."

Traditionally many students from southern Canada have moved to the Northwest Territories for the summer to work because they can often earn and save more money for the upcoming school year. But Mr. Henry said he wants to see the Premier and Cabinet Ministers instruct their staff to hire northern students. He also said Ministers should be vigilant about tracking the hiring done by their departments.

"Any department or departmental staff who hire non-Northern students should be held accountable," he added.

Mr. Henry also suggested if more Northern students are working in the summer and saving the money they earn, it could reduce the demand on the Student Financial Assistance program.

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276



NUNAVUT ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

97-15

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOUNDARIES COMMISSION TO HOLD FIRST ROUND OF HEARINGS IN KEEWATIN

Iqaluit (April 9) - Members of the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission will hold their first round of public hearings in the Keewatin beginning the week of April 21.

"Details of the exact dates and times for the hearings will be publicly advertised and will be provided directly to municipal councils," said the Hon. Justice J.E. Richard, chairperson of the Commission. "Based on the number of requests we received, we felt it was important that we travel to each region to hear concerns and comments on the electoral boundaries."

He and Commission Members, Mrs. Sandy Kusugak and Mr. Titus Allooloo, met with staff this week in Iqaluit to finalize details for the public hearings.

Following the hearings in the Keewatin, the Commission will travel to the Kitikmeot region the week of May 5, to South Baffin communities the week of May 12, and to the North Baffin (including Iqaluit) the week of May 26.

April 7 was the deadline to request the Commission to visit individual communities but written submissions are being accepted until Monday, May 5, 1997 by the Commission. These submissions can be sent to the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission, P.O. Box 2249, Iqaluit, NT X0A 0H0 or faxed to the Iqaluit (toll-free 1-888-655-1333) or Yellowknife (toll-free 1-800-661-0872) offices.

An information brochure, outlining the mandate and work of the Commission, will be circulated in communities prior to the Commission's visit.

Contact:

Tom Sammurtok
Commission Secretary
Phone: (819) 979-5479 or toll-free 1-888-655-1999
Fax: Toll-free 1-888-655-1333

Glen McLean
Assistant Commission Secretary
Phone: (403) 920-6140 or toll-free
1-800-661-0796
Fax: Toll-free 1-800-661-0872



Chief Polling Officer

PUBLIC VOTE ON GUARANTEED EQUAL REPRESENTATION

97-16

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROCLAMATION FOR PUBLIC VOTE ISSUED

Yellowknife (April 11) - The Proclamation to permit the May 26 Public Vote on the Guaranteed Equal Representation of men and women in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly was issued by the Chief Polling Officer today.

"A guide to the public vote which contains information explaining the concept of Guaranteed Representation and the voting procedures will be circulated in Nunavut beginning the week of April 21st," said Mr. David Hamilton, Chief Polling Officer.

A preliminary list of eligible voters has been prepared and will be posted in all municipal offices in Nunavut by Friday, April 18. Voters have until 3:00 p.m., Thursday, May 8, 1997 to contact the local returning officer to have their name added to the list.

The question that will appear on the ballot is:

Should the Nunavut Legislative Assembly have equal numbers of men and women MLAs, with one man and woman elected to represent each electoral district?

Canadian citizens 18 years and older who have lived in Nunavut since May 26, 1996 are eligible to vote.

Polls will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m local time on voting day in communities throughout Nunavut.

Contact:

David Hamilton
Chief Polling Officer
Phone: (403) 669-2299 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0879

97-17

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WESTERN LEADERS COALITION BEGINS INITIAL REVIEW OF DIVISION PLANS

Yellowknife (April 17) - Members of the Western Coalition met in Yellowknife earlier this week for briefings on the division plans of the Workers' Compensation Board and the NWT Power Corporation.

"This was an initial meeting with officials from these two agencies to hear how they are proposing to approach Division of the Northwest Territories and options for their future corporate structures," said Coalition Chairman Floyd Roland, MLA for Inuvik. "Our work is still in the early stages, we have a lot more ahead of us."

Coalition Members met with the Hon. Charles Dent, Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, and Pierre Alvarez, Chairman of the Board, on the Power Corporation's plans. They also met with Fred Koe, Chairman of the WCB, and the Board's President Gerry Meier for a similar briefing on the plans of the Workers' Compensation Board.

The Coalition -- which includes aboriginal, political and business leaders in the field -- was established in March to protect the interests of the western Territory in preparing for Division. A key part of the Coalition's role is to provide a western voice at the Formula Financing negotiations for the two new territories after Division.

The group's next meeting is scheduled for later this month in Yellowknife.

Contact:

Floyd Roland
Chairman, Western Leaders Coalition
MLA, Inuvik
Phone: (403) 669-2265
Fax: (403) 873-0276

Don Yamkowy
President, NWT Chamber of Commerce
Phone: (403) 920-9505
Fax: (403) 873-6543

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YK SOUTH MLA QUESTIONS PARKS JOBS MOVE

Yellowknife (April 25) - Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry wants an explanation from the Hon. Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, why she is moving Parks Canada jobs out of Yellowknife to Fort Smith.

"I understand that the jobs are staying in the North and will benefit Fort Smith which is good but it is at the expense of Yellowknife yet again," he said. "The city has already suffered enough job losses with decentralization and Division."

He said the city, which has already taken its share of cuts, will probably lose more jobs before Division in 1999. Mr. Henry worries about the impact on the community and its economy of what appears to be continual job losses. He wants a rationale for the move and questioned whether or not there was any significant cost savings to the move.

Mr. Henry also criticized Ms. Copps for making the announcement without consulting or informing representatives of the city. He said in the future federal departments should communicate with officials, such as MLAs, before making announcements in the media.

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HENRY CALLS FOR ORDERLY TRANSFER OF JOBS TO NUNAVUT

Yellowknife (April 25) - Seamus Henry says there should be an orderly transfer of government jobs from Yellowknife to Nunavut over the next 705 days leading up to Division.

"It is inevitable that the jobs are going to move with Division but the transfer has to be done in such a way as it causes the least disruption in service to the people in the N.W.T. and to the employees currently in those positions," the MLA for Yellowknife South said.

He said he wants to see "a plan" that clearly outlines what positions are being transferred and when. This plan would allow the City of Yellowknife and the whole western region to be better prepared for the transfer rather than moving all the jobs out of the city just prior to Division in 1999.

Mr. Henry also wants assurances from the Government that the current employees will be offered the opportunity to move with their jobs.

The first jobs to be transferred to Nunavut should be the ones that are currently vacant, he added. However, he wants to see the rationale for why the jobs need to be transferred and staffed in Nunavut when they aren't currently in the West.

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BE AGGRESSIVE IN PROMOTING YELLOWKNIFE, HENRY SAYS

Yellowknife (May 7) - It is time for the Yellowknife businesses, schools, and others to be aggressive in attracting fly-in miners to either relocate themselves and their families to the city or to use local services more.

"A group of representatives from the city -- apartment owners, realtors, school board officials, business leaders and city officials -- should be visiting mines such as BHP's diamond mine and encouraging fly-in miners to relocate here," he said. "We need to tell people why Yellowknife is such a good place to live and encourage them to make it their home too."

Mr. Henry said he thinks Yellowknifers could be a lot more aggressive in promoting the city and convincing these miners to move North. He said the economic spin-offs would be a boost to the local economy and would increase morale in the city.

He suggests that apartment owners should look at providing furnished apartments to miners when they are on their weeks off, school boards could convince miners with families that their children can get a quality education in the city, and others could speak of the benefits of living in Yellowknife.

The housing market in Yellowknife could also use the boost if the fly-in miners decided to relocate and purchased homes in the city.

"We have to make them feel welcome that's the first step," Mr. Henry said. "We have to stop standing still and get moving and capture these dollars, especially in this time of economic restraint."

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-21

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WORKING GROUP TO MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Yellowknife (May 16) - The Working Group on Affirmative Action is finalizing recommendations for improving affirmative action representation in the government.

After eleven years of affirmative action hiring, the GNWT workforce is still far from being representative of the N.W.T.'s population. This sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Government Operations has spent the past six weeks trying to find workable pre-Division options which can improve the GNWT's success with the policy.

The Working Group is looking at a range of issues including:

- changing the definition of long-term northerner from half-life to a specific number of years;
- setting attainable goals for affirmative action representation;
- increasing the accountability of Ministers and Deputy Ministers for affirmative action results and good human resource practices;
- creating an appeal process for people applying on management and excluded positions; and
- the perception of inflated education and work experience requirements for government jobs.

"Our recommendations are based on what people said during the 1995 review and on best practices from other jurisdictions," said Roy Erasmus, chairman of the Working Group. "Even with Division, we believe there is still much that can be done in the next two years."

"We need people to understand that the Affirmative Action Policy isn't just for aboriginal people; it also means supporting long-term northerners."

In 1995, the government undertook an extensive review of the Affirmative Action Policy, both within the government and with the public. Many people complained about the definition of the priorities, the attitude of management and politicians towards affirmative action, and the lack of support after hiring is done.

The Working Group expects to provide its report to the Standing Committee on Government Operations within the next few days. It is anticipated that the report will be discussed in the Legislative Assembly during the June session.

Other members of the Working Group are J. Michael Miltenberger, MLA for Thebacha, Ed Picco, MLA for Iqaluit, and Seamus Henry, MLA for Yellowknife South.

Contact:

Roy Erasmus
Chairman, Working Group on Affirmative Action
Phone: (403) 669-2296 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735



97-22

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MORE THAN 12,000 ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN MONDAY'S PUBLIC VOTE

Yellowknife (May 23) - More than 12,000 Nunavut residents are eligible to vote in Monday's Public Vote on Guaranteed Equal Representation of Men and Women in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly.

"Our list shows us that there are 12,065 eligible voters," said David Hamilton, the Chief Polling Officer. "But that number could change if eligible voters are sworn in at the polls on Monday."

Records show that 130 voters cast ballots in the last week's Advance Polls.

Unofficial results will be released by the Chief Polling Officer as they are received. Results will be broadcast live, in Inuktitut and English, on CBC Radio.

Results are available to all residents in Nunavut. No results can be released prior to the closure of all polls in the Nunavut Territory.

Polls will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (local time) in all communities in Nunavut.

The official count will take place in Iqaluit, at a date to be set later, once all ballots and other voting materials have been received.

Contact:

David Hamilton
Chief Polling Officer
Phone: (403) 669-2299 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0879

Nunavut Public Vote

	Yes	% Yes	No	% No	# Rejected
Nunavut-wide	1978	43	2662	57	28

	Yes	% Yes	No	% No	# Rejected	# Voted	# Voters	% Turnout
Arctic Bay and Nanisivik	64	48	70	52	0	134	444	30
Arviat	81	30	192	70	2	275	789	35
Baker Lake	94	45	113	55	0	207	741	28
Broughton Island	83	55	68	45	0	151	304	50
Cambridge Bay	105	55	87	45	0	192	652	29
Cape Dorset	90	53	80	47	1	171	579	30
Chesterfield Inlet	9	7	117	93	5	131	169	78
Clyde River	40	46	47	54	0	87	341	26
Coral Harbour	25	24	79	76	0	104	313	33
Gjoa Haven	90	63	53	37	0	143	396	36
Grise Fiord	17	38	28	62	1	46	82	56
Hall Beach	33	38	55	63	1	89	289	31
Igloolik	119	42	162	58	4	285	559	51
Iqrooq	387	54	328	46	0	715	1741	41
Kimmirut	49	40	72	60	1	122	227	54
Kugluktuk	68	51	66	49	1	135	635	21
Pangnirtung	122	42	169	58	6	297	610	49
Pelly Bay	32	40	48	60	0	80	225	36
Pond Inlet	68	33	141	67	1	210	530	40
Rankin Inlet	112	27	305	73	0	417	1065	39
Repulse Bay	16	10	143	90	2	161	276	58
Resolute	22	42	31	58	0	53	110	48
Sanikiluaq	55	38	91	62	0	146	330	44
Taloyoak	93	61	59	39	0	152	353	43
Whale Cove	24	46	28	54	1	53	133	40
Umingmaktok/Bathurst Inlet	32	84	6	16	1	39	50	78
Inmate Vote	48	67	24	33	1	73	142	51

	# Voted	# of Voters	% Turnout
Nunavut-wide	4668	12065	39

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS



97-23

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNAVUT VOTERS HAVE HAD THEIR SAY IN PUBLIC VOTE

Yellowknife (May 26) - The unofficial results of the Public Vote on Guaranteed Equal Representation are 57 per cent against and 43 per cent in support of the proposal.

A total of 2,662 out of 4,668 people who voted opposed the concept of electing one male and one female MLA for each of 10 or 11 constituencies in the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly. Voters in favor totalled 1,978.

Voter turnout was low in most communities in Nunavut. Overall 39 per cent, or 4,668 voters out of 12,085 eligible voters, cast their ballots in today's Public Vote. Chesterfield Inlet and Umingmaktok/Bathurst Inlet recorded the highest turnout with 78 per cent. (A breakdown of the results community by community is attached.)

"We were a little concerned about voter turnout in Igloolik with the blizzard blowing through the community," said David Hamilton, Chief Polling Officer. "However they had 51 per cent turnout, which was higher than many other communities."

The official count of the votes will be done in Iqaluit by Mr. Hamilton at a date to be set later. Those results will then be forwarded to the Federal and Territorial governments and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

"We were most impressed with the work and caliber of the returning officers in all communities," said Mr. Hamilton. "Nunavut residents should be proud."

Contact:

David Hamilton

Chief Polling Officer

Phone: (403) 669-2299 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784

Fax: (403) 920-4735

Ronna Bremer

Public Relations Officer

Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784

Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-24

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INDEMNITIES, ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES REPORT TABLED

Yellowknife (May 27) - John Ningark, Acting Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, tabled today the annual report of payments paid to MLAs for the 1996-97 fiscal year.

The report outlines the payments by way of indemnities, allowances and expenses made to each MLA for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997. The *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* requires that the report be tabled in the House.

MLAs receive an annual indemnity of \$36,748. For income tax purposes, the first \$1,000 of the annual indemnity paid to MLAs is tax free. The basic salary and all other indemnities were reduced by seven per cent in March 1996.

At that time Members eliminated their three per cent supplementary pension plan bringing their pension plan more into line with that of government employees. In May they also rolled back the 2.1 per cent automatic increase in their expenses and living allowances.

Members also receive constituency indemnities -- \$18,629 for ordinary MLAs and \$6,210 for the Speaker, the Premier, and Cabinet Ministers -- for work done in their constituencies.

Special annual indemnities are paid to MLAs with extra duties such as being Deputy Speaker, Chairperson of Committee of the Whole or a Standing Committee, and Chairperson of the Caucus. (See Schedule A for breakdown of payments.)

Indemnities, at a rate of \$207 per day, are paid to MLAs for Standing Committee work done outside of Session. The Chairman of the Standing Committee or Committee of the Whole receives an additional \$72 per day.

Living allowances are paid to MLAs to cover the cost of accommodation, meals, taxis, and incidentals while outside their home constituencies. These allowances are non-taxable and are not considered part of income.

Constituency expenses are funds reimbursed to Members or paid on their behalf for constituency expenses incurred. Original invoices must be supplied before reimbursements are made.

Contact: Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735



97-25

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICIAL COUNT SHOWS LITTLE CHANGE IN PUBLIC VOTE RESULTS

Iqaluit NT. (June 12, 1997) - Results from the May 26 Public Vote on Guaranteed Equal Representation remain unchanged with only minor revisions following the Official Count held in Iqaluit June 12th.

The official count confirmed that a majority of the Nunavut residents who voted in the Public Vote did not support the proposal to elect one male and one female MLA to the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly, said Chief Polling Officer David Hamilton.

A total of 4,668 ballots were cast on May 26, 1997 with 18 rejected and 4,650 accepted in the Official Addition. Official results showed that 2,666 people voted no (57%) to the proposal, 1,984 voted yes (43%). Voter turnout showed 39 percent, or 4,668, of the 12,044 eligible voters cast ballots.

The official count was done by Mr. Hamilton in Iqaluit in the presence of representatives from the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and the Nunavut Implementation Commission.

The results of the official count will now be forwarded to the Federal and Territorial governments, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated for their consideration.

Contact:

David Hamilton

Chief Polling Officer

Phone: (403) 669-2299 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784

Fax: (403) 920-4735



Chief Polling Officer

PUBLIC VOTE ON GUARANTEED EQUAL REPRESENTATION

Official Results

NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS: 12044 NUMBER OF VOTERS WHO VOTED: 4668

PERCENTAGE TURN OUT: 39%

<u>VOTING RESULTS</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF VOTE</u>
YES: 1984	43%
NO: 2666	57%

NUMBER OF REJECTED BALLOTS: 18


NUMBER OF BALLOTS ACCEPTED: 4650

NUMBER OF SPOILED BALLOTS: 3


NUMBER OF BALLOTS USED: 4671

NUMBER OF BALLOTS NOT USED: 10829

TOTAL NUMBER OF BALLOTS: 15500




Representative, Federal Government



Representative, Government of the Northwest Territories



Representative, Nunavut Inngavik Incorporated



Representative, Nunavut Implementation Commission

Dated at Iqaluit NT. this 12th day of June 1997.



Chief Polling Officer

91-27

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALING LODGE FOR NWT FEDERAL ABORIGINAL INMATES

Yellowknife (July 8) - Yellowknife North MLA Roy Erasmus says the NWT needs its own federal institution to house aboriginal inmates but he doesn't want just an ordinary penitentiary for the North.

"What I would like to see is a healing lodge similar to the one for aboriginal women in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan," he said. "And my discussions with federal officials indicate that they may be willing to provide one for us."

Mr. Erasmus said federal officials told delegates at the Aboriginal Justice Conference in Inuvik two weeks ago, that since the Maple Creek facility opened two year ago seventeen women have been released and only two have re-offended.

He thinks those numbers are a success and that the program should be tried elsewhere. He also attributed some of the success to the fact that the warden is an aboriginal woman and that 95 per cent of the staff are aboriginal.

"I would love to see a similar success story in the NWT," he said. "It would be better for the inmates and their families, plus it would create new jobs in the Northwest Territories."

Many inmates from the NWT in southern institutions complain of loneliness, racism, and physical, mental and sexual abuse. Mr. Erasmus said if the NWT had its own penitentiary it would be better for these individuals and could take some pressure off the overflowing institutions in the NWT.

NWT residents sentenced to more than two years in jail become federal responsibilities and are most often sent to southern facilities. Current figures show that more than 100 prisoners from the NWT are in southern facilities and another 22 are housed in Northern institutions.

Mr. Erasmus said federal corrections officials have been promoting traditional healing programs for aboriginal inmates in federal institutions for several years. He said it is time to move quickly and capitalize on that good will.

He also noted that delegates at the recent Aboriginal Justice Conference in Inuvik and the Treaty 8 Tribal Council's annual general meeting passed motions in support of a healing lodge for aboriginal inmates to be built in the western NWT.

Contact:

Roy Erasmus
MLA, Yellowknife North
Phone: (403) 669-2296 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-28

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HENRY CALLS FOR INTERIM EVALUATION OF BHP HIRING

Yellowknife (July 14) Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry wants the territorial government to initiate an interim review on hiring at the BHP Mine to determine if the company is living up to the quotas agreed to in the Socio-Economic Agreement.

"There appears to be some concern that BHP isn't living up to its end of the bargain," said Mr. Henry. "An interim evaluation could end all of the speculation."

He noted that BHP has demonstrated in the past that they have lived up to their Northern employment targets.

Mr. Henry wants the Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to initiate the review, and to do so quickly.

The Socio-Economic Agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and BHP requires that 33 per cent of the total employment, associated with the construction phase of the mine, be northern residents.

The Agreement also requires BHP to report annually on their Northern resident employment. However, Mr. Henry said, leaving the report until the end of the year means the speculation will continue to circulate.

"Leaving it until the end of the year only means prolonged rumors which will only harm the relationship between the Government, BHP, and Northern residents," Mr. Henry said. "It's time to set the record straight."

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-29

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SPEAKER RECEIVES NUNAVUT ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
COMMISSION REPORT**

Yellowknife (July 18) - The Hon. Sam Gargan has received the report of the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission.

The Commission's report provides three models for electoral districts for the first Legislative Assembly of Nunavut which includes 11 dual-member electoral districts, 20 single-member electoral districts, and 17 single-member electoral districts.

The Commission's report suggests possible constituency breakdowns for each of the three models, listing which communities should be linked together to form new constituencies. The report is based on information received during hearings held in various Nunavut communities and from written submissions received.

The report will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly once it reconvenes on October 1, 1997. Following consideration of the Commission's report by the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker will forward a copy and any recommendations of the Assembly to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The Commission was appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories on March 7, 1997, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Justice J.E. Richard chaired the three-member Commission.

Copies of the report are available through the Clerk's office in Yellowknife. The report is available in Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English, and French.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer, Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735



97-30

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHANGE YOUR TUNE, HENRY SAYS

Yellowknife (July 21) - Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry wants Nunavut leaders to change their tune when it comes to hiring current GNWT headquarters staff.

"These people have served us, and served us well, both East and West, over the last several years and all of sudden they aren't being told they aren't wanted," said Mr. Henry. "Instead of using their expertise and knowledge of the North to help get the new territory off to a good start, these people are hearing again and again that their services aren't wanted."

Mr. Henry has just compiled preliminary results of a survey he conducted with headquarters staff. He found that very few current employees say they would go to work for the new Nunavut Government because the leaders have basically told them they are not wanted.

Mr. Henry said he believes this position will end up costing both new governments, Nunavut and the western Territory's, money in payout packages for employees laid off in 1999. This is money that could be put to better uses in both regions, he adds.

He said that the Nunavut Government will have a difficult time attracting people from the south, with specialized skills, to relocate to the territory because of their approach with current GNWT headquarters staff.

He also questions what impact the position that Nunavut's leaders have taken is having on current staff.

"How motivated can you be when you know that at the end of the day you're just going to get dumped from your job anyway?" Henry asked.

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-31

YK SOUTH MLA WELCOMES COMMENTS OF INTERIM COMMISSIONER

Yellowknife (July 28) - Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry welcomes comments by Nunavut Interim Commissioner Jack Anawak that current GNWT headquarters staff are welcome in Nunavut.

"It is reassuring to hear these comments from Mr. Anawak since he is in charge of hiring the civil service for Nunavut," said Mr. Henry. "Our staff need to know that the work they are currently doing for all of the NWT is appreciated and valued."

He congratulated Mr. Anawak for his position and said it is reassuring to hear that the interim commissioner recognizes the value of territorial employees and what they can offer to the new Nunavut territory.

However, said Mr. Henry, while Mr. Anawak's positive comments should offer reassurances to territorial employees, the comments of Mr. Jose Kusugak, president of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, will probably have the opposite effect.

"Basically he told me to pay attention to issues in the west and not worry about Nunavut," Mr. Henry said. "But my concern was, and still is, that if headquarters staff won't go to Nunavut because they don't feel welcome and the GNWT ends up paying out huge amounts in severance packages it does affect both new territories."

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735

97-32

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DON'T LOWER STUDENT ASSISTANCE RATES, YK NORTH MLA SAYS

Yellowknife (July 31) - The rates for student financial assistance should be maintained at the current levels, says Yellowknife North MLA Roy Erasmus.

"The current assistance given to students is only a small portion of the actual cost of attending university or college," Mr. Erasmus says. "The tuition rate, book allowance, and travel seldom cover the actual amounts students have to spend."

He is concerned that the appointment of a task force by the Hon Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, means that the Government is looking to cut funding levels. The task force will be conducting public hearings on potential changes to student financial assistance.

Mr. Erasmus says many students do not have other sources of income, other than summer jobs, to help pay for a year of food and shelter. Older students with families who are trying to better their education are often hardest hit. Students who struggle to pay their way can find themselves with bad credit ratings when they can't pay all their bills.

He also warns against comparing the NWT student financial assistance program to other jurisdictions, noting that the opportunities for northern students to take courses close to home is limited.

"While the Aurora and Nunavut Arctic Colleges are filling roles, many students must still travel thousands of miles from home to study at university," he says. "Not only are their travel costs high but the cost of trying to stay in touch with family is high as well."

Members of the current Assembly have identified education as the answer to many of the North's social problems and unemployment rates, he notes.

"This is an investment in the North's future. If you think education is expensive, think of the cost of not supporting education," Mr. Erasmus adds.

Contact:

Roy Erasmus

MLA, Yellowknife North

Phone: (403) 669-2296 or Toll-free 1-800-661-0784

Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-33

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YK NORTH MLA CONCERNED WITH DELAY IN TWIN ARENAS

Yellowknife (August 27) - Yellowknife North MLA Roy Erasmus wants the City of Yellowknife and the Yellowknives Dene Band to sit down and see what alternatives can be found to ensure that plans for twin arenas for the city proceed as planned.

"If the Yellowknives and the City sit down together, I am sure they can find an acceptable solution," said Mr. Erasmus. "This could be the Twin Pines Hill or another alternate site, which might not be a bad idea since an increasing number of people oppose the proposed site."

The site chosen by the city for the new arenas is on land that has been claimed by the Yellowknives. Mr. Erasmus said the band isn't opposed to development in this location but wants reassurances of support from City Hall for alternate lands to be claimed.

Mr. Erasmus has already arranged meetings between the two parties and has offered to assist as requested to help the parties reach agreement.

The city needs the arenas to further enhance the recreational facilities of residents and meet the needs of all sporting groups.

"As a parent, I know firsthand that there isn't enough ice space in Yellowknife," Mr. Erasmus said. "With so many youth and adults involved in hockey, broomball, figure skating, and speedskating, there just aren't enough hours to provide good ice time. My constituents also say that youth need more to do and this arena will help meet that need."

The new arenas would also allow Yellowknife to host more tournaments, attracting more people, both tournament participants and spectators, to the city, providing an economic boost.

Contact: Roy Erasmus
MLA, Yellowknife North
Phone: (403) 669-2296 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276



97-34

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOOK OF CONDOLENCES AT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Yellowknife (September 2) - A book of condolences in honor of the late Princess Diana is available for signing at the Legislative Assembly.

The book will be available for Northerners wanting to send their condolences to the Royal Family. The book is in the Great Hall of the Assembly and will be available for signing until Monday, September 8, 1997, at which time it will be sent by the Commissioner to the Governor General for forwarding to the Royal Family in England.

Flags, including the Union Jack, in front of the Legislative Assembly have been at half mast since the day following the death of the Princess. The flags will be at half mast until sunset on Saturday, September 6, the day of the funeral.

Condolences can also be sent via the Internet at the following address:
www.royal.gov.uk.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or 1-800-661-0784



97-35

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MLAs LOBBY FOR SORTING AND VALUATION FACILITY**

Yellowknife (September 3) - Finance Minister John Todd and five MLAs will travel to Antwerp and London later this week to continue lobbying to have a diamond sorting and valuation facility located in the NWT.

"We've made no secret that we want this facility and the jobs that go with it here in the North," said Mr. Todd. "We want to be treated as any other diamond-mining country and have the facilities located here."

Mr. Todd will be accompanied on the trip by Yellowknife North MLA Roy Erasmus, Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry, Yellowknife Centre MLA Jake Ootes, the Hon. Charles Dent, MLA for Yellowknife Frame Lake, and Mackenzie-Delta MLA David Krutko, chairman of the Resource Management and Development Committee.

The group will meet with a number of officials from various diamond companies, such as Argyle Diamonds and IDC Holdings, in both Antwerp and London and tour sorting facilities.

Mr. Dent said the trip is an opportunity for MLAs to see how the valuation and sorting process works and see the operation firsthand.

"This will help us to better understand the process when we lobby the Federal Government on why this facility should be located in the Territories," said Mr. Dent. "We need to ensure some of the economic spin-offs stay in the NWT, not just in the mining jobs but also in the value-added jobs."

Mr. Todd estimates the trip will cost about \$35,000. His department is paying a portion of the costs and the rest will be paid by the Members attending.

"That's a small amount compared to the benefits if we are successful in getting the facility located here," he added.

Contact: April Taylor
Executive Assistant to the Hon. John Todd, Finance Minister
Phone: (403) 669-2377
Fax: (403) 873-0169





Northwest
Territories Legislative Assembly
Member for Yellowknife South

97-36

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HENRY PROPOSES FUND TO DEAL WITH PAY EQUITY DISPUTE

Yellowknife (September 3) - Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry is calling on the Territorial Government and Union of Northern Workers to establish a fund, with payments made to it over the next ten years, to deal with the issue of pay equity.

His suggestion comes just days after the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the right of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to force the government to negotiate a deal on fair pay for female employees.

Mr. Henry said the government can't afford to pay the millions of dollars that that has been suggested could be owing. By establishing a fund to deal with this issue and related matters both the government and union could ensure that all workers are treated equally and paid accordingly, he added.

"The people of the Northwest Territories have paid the price to get a balanced budget and I, for one, am not prepared to let them get stung again," he said. "Nobody is going to get rich on the settlement of this pay equity issue, however, people have to realize the impact and financial burden this could put on all territorial residents heading into one of the most crucial times ever in the NWT."

Mr. Henry also notes that it is estimated a large percentage of any payout would be paid to former GNWT employees now living in southern jurisdictions.

He said he isn't prepared to support any additional cuts to programs and services or more staff layoffs to fund any large settlements, noting most of the cuts would probably be at Yellowknife's expense.

Mr. Henry suggested the fund could be one that both the union and government could financially contribute to and jointly manage. Resources in the fund could be used to promote wage parity which initiated the original court action.

Contact: Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-37

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHELF HEALTH BOARD FUNDING PROPOSAL, YK NORTH MLA

Yellowknife (September 4) - Discussion on a proposed formula for funding health boards in the Northwest Territories should be shelved until after Division, says Yellowknife North MLA Roy Erasmus.

"The Health Boards have just had to deal with two years of cuts as part of the deficit reduction process. I think they need a couple of years without changes," said Mr. Erasmus. "This will give them a good idea of just how adequate their funding is and what type of formula would work best."

He acknowledged comments made by Premier Don Morin that the proposed formula funding allocations are only at the draft stage. However, he believes this is not the time to make major adjustments to funding.

Mr. Erasmus said if the Minister of Health and Social Services believes there is inadequate funding for health boards in Nunavut then the matter should be dealt with during negotiations, with the Federal Government, for base budgets for the two new territories.

Members of the Legislative Assembly are committed to ensuring the level of programs and services is maintained in both Nunavut and the western Territory, he said.

"Health services in the west are adequate but not extravagant so if we need more money for the eastern boards then address that concern," he said. "However, reallocating funds from western boards just means programs available to western residents will be reduced so we will be patching one problem but creating another."

Contact:

Roy Erasmus
MLA, Yellowknife North
Phone: (403) 669-2296 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

September 4, 1997

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

PICCO REACTS WITH SURPRISE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

IQALUIT- Iqaluit MLA Ed Picco has reacted with surprise and disappointment over recent statements made by THEBACHA MLA, Michael Miltenberger. Picco said, "the rhetoric being spewed by the MLA from THEBACHA indicating that a \$13 million dollar transfer for NUNAVUT Health Care is unacceptable..., even before other MLA's or the Assembly as a whole had a chance to even review or study the proposal is premature and reactionary."

Picco said, "Health care has been chronically underfunded in NUNAVUT where there is only one Hospital facility for the 26,000 residents spread out over the largest jurisdictional area in the country!". By referring to the amounts spent East and West is pure political fodder. **The monies transferred to and revenue raised by the NWT is for all NWT residents. Allocations are based on need and priority.** Those recommendations are then brought forward to the proper standing committee, cabinet and eventually the Assembly as a whole. "We were elected to serve our constituencies and the greater constituency of the territories as a whole. **It is not an East/West question but one of equity and compassion and it is still in the proposal stage.** Miltenberger's comments are irresponsible."

Michael's comments, "Are short sighted and demonstrates some of the East/West issues that we will begin to see more of as we get closer to April 1, 1999. That type of animosity and political rhetoric is not acceptable."

For more information please contact:

Edward Picco
(819) 979-3954, Fax 0507
email- <http://www.nunanet.com/~epicco>

97-38

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW WEB SITE PROMOTES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Yellowknife (September 9) - The Legislative Assembly has unveiled a new Web Site in an effort to help promote the Assembly more and provide information on the Elections NWT office.

"We felt it was important the Legislative Assembly take advantage of technology in getting our message out and helping people to better understand our systems in the North," said David Hamilton, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. "We will be working in the coming months to enhance the site, including the addition of a virtual tour of the building."

Members of the public will be able to discover more about the Legislative Assembly, the NWT's consensus system of government, the roles of key individuals in the Assembly, and the Standing Committee structure. The site will also be used to inform people of upcoming events including Committee Meetings and Session dates.

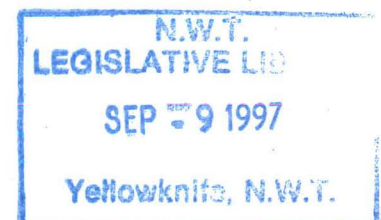
Elections NWT is also part of the Web Site and will be adding information to the site.

A virtual tour, highlighting the building, is expected to be added in the coming months, providing those individuals who can't visit Canada's newest Legislative Assembly, a glimpse into some of the highlights of the building.

Northerners can check out the new Web Site at the temporary address of www.gov.nt.ca/LEG.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735



97-39

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HENRY CALLS FOR COHESIVE LOBBY ON DIAMOND FACILITY

Yellowknife (September 22) - Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry is calling on Northern groups to work together to effectively lobby Ottawa and ensure that a diamond sorting and valuation facility is built in the NWT.

"The North is going to lose out on the opportunities associated with this project if the Federal Government doesn't pay more than lip service to us," Mr. Henry said. "They seem to have their heads in the sand."

"We have to have all Northern organizations, Chambers of Commerce, construction associations, aboriginal groups and Northerners working together on this one."

Mr. Henry said it is time for Northern groups to send a strong message to both the Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew, MP for the Western Arctic, and Nancy Karetak-Lindell, MP for Nunatsiq, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the Prime Minister that Northerners want, and demand, the diamond sorting and valuation facility be in the North.

"I am not sure that both MPs know the potential of this project and its importance to the future of Northerners and they have to help us ensure that the Federal Government understands how important this is," he said.

Mr. Henry said the Federal Government has to recognize that the evaluation of diamonds is different than any other product that is mined and change their regulations accordingly.

The Yellowknife South MLA has just returned from Antwerp and London where he saw firsthand and heard from experts in the field how the diamond sorting and valuation process works. He said the North needs the economic benefits and spin-offs that will come from this project.

"This industry should not be allowed by Northerners to be another Mackenzie Valley Pipeline," he added.



Contact:

Seamus Henry

MLA, Yellowknife South

Phone: (403) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784

Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-40

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BETTER CO-ORDINATION NEEDED IN DIAMOND PLANNING

Yellowknife (September 25) - Better co-ordination is needed to ensure that the benefits of diamond mining stay in the NWT and Canada, say two Western Arctic MLAs.

"From where I am sitting, I see the need for a comprehensive, "single desk", co-ordination and strategy in place to protect these resources for Canada and the NWT," said Hay River MLA Jane Groenewegen. "We have a very tangible opportunity that the Northwest Territories won't see again in our lifetime and we are going to lose out on if we don't get organized."

"This is a complex industry with discussions and negotiations taking place at the industry, political and bureaucratic levels on many fronts."

She has joined forces with her Yellowknife South colleague, Seamus Henry, to call on the federal and territorial governments to develop a clear plan that outlines who is in charge, what is happening, and how the interests of Canada and the NWT are being protected.

They want the Federal Government to acknowledge that diamond mining is a distinctive new industry in Canada and accordingly, the rules and regulations need to reflect that.

"It's more than just about ensuring the diamond sorting and valuation facility is built in the NWT," Mr. Henry said. "That facility is just the starting point. The jobs and economic spin-offs have to be kept in the NWT."

Mr. Henry does not feel that advisors in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fully understand or appreciate the economic potential for both Canada and the NWT associated with diamond mining. Their advice is nearsighted and inaccurate if they are advising their minister that diamond mining and royalties be treated as other commodities mined in Canada.



Mrs. Groenewegen said that the magnitude and degree of strategic co-ordination required on the "diamond front" is far more than can be fairly added to the workload of ministers and bureaucrats already coping with the day-to-day operations of the government. It is urgent that action be taken quickly before the first shipment of diamonds are out of the ground, the Northwest Territories and Canada.

A meeting should be convened immediately between elected northern leaders and the Hon. Jane Stewart, Minister of Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to pull this initiative together or the NWT and Canada will be the losers.

Contacts:

Jane Groenewegen
MLA, Hay River
Phone: (403) 669-2285 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (403) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-41

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NO CHANGE TO HEALTH BOARD FUNDING IS GOOD NEWS, SAYS
INUVIK MLA**

Yellowknife (September 25) - Inuvik residents can rest assured that their health services won't be affected by a proposal suggesting money be shifted from western health boards to those in the East, says Inuvik MLA Floyd Roland.

"There was a lot of concern in Inuvik that our health board might lose more than \$6 million," Mr. Roland said. "That would have had a devastating effect on the services the board provides."

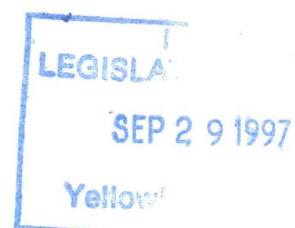
He said he welcomed comments from the Hon. Kelvin Ng, Minister of Health and Social Services, last week at a meeting of the NWT Health Care Association, in Rankin Inlet, that the formula for funding health boards would not change. A draft formula, driven mostly by needs and population and developed by Mr. Ng's department for review by the health boards, would have meant shifting money to health boards deemed to be underfunded.

However, Mr. Ng announced the government had allocated an additional \$4 million for re-investment, including \$2 million in supplemental funding for the Baffin, Keewatin and Dogrib boards, the three agencies identified as having the greatest shortfall.

Mr. Roland said he is glad to see that Mr. Ng recognized the hardships such a move would have had and found an alternative. He lobbied both Mr. Ng and the Hon. John Todd, Finance Minister, against making any change, pointing out the drastic impact such a move would have on his community.

Contact:

Floyd Roland
MLA, Inuvik
Phone: (403) 669-2265 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276



97-42

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INUVIK MLA WELCOMES REDUCTION IN LIQUOR STORE HOURS

Yellowknife (October 2) - Inuvik MLA Floyd Roland welcomes the news that the hours of operation for the Inuvik Liquor Store will be reduced to a maximum of 42 hours a week from the 54 hours originally negotiated.

"This isn't the best solution," said Mr. Roland. "However, it is better than what was planned and is a partial response to the concerns I raised on behalf of my constituents."

The Hon. John Todd, Minister of Finance, when questioned by Mr. Roland in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, announced his staff was working on reducing the maximum hours the liquor outlet can be open.

Mr. Roland said he confirmed today, that effective yesterday the Inuvik Liquor Store hours will be from: noon to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Wednesday, noon to 8:00 p.m. Thursday to Saturday.

He commended residents in his constituency for voicing their comments and concerns which factored in the Government's decision to reduce the liquor store's hours. Inuvik residents were outraged that the Government would increase the hours the liquor outlet was open and at the same time cut funding which forced the closure of Delta House, the community's alcohol treatment and rehabilitation center.

"If the government had done a better job of consulting people in Inuvik this whole issue could have been avoided," Mr. Roland said.

Contact:

Floyd Roland
MLA, Inuvik
Phone: (403) 669-2265 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0276

97-43

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ESTABLISHES NATIONAL UNITY COMMITTEE**

Yellowknife (October 6) - The Legislative Assembly announced today the establishment of a six-member Special Committee on National Unity to oversee consultations with Northerners on national unity particularly as it pertains to the NWT and Aboriginal issues.

“It is essential that we provide a mechanism, a partnership, to ensure that activities of the government and Legislative Assembly in relation to the public consultations and future national unity activities are co-ordinated and transparent,” Premier Don Morin said in the Legislature today. “Information and updates on activities need to be provided to Cabinet, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and NWT residents.”

Mr. Morin also announced that the Cabinet representatives on the Special Committee will include himself, the Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of National Constitutional Affairs, and the Hon. Jim Antoine, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Joining the three ministers on the Special Committee will be Natilikmiot MLA John Ningark, Hay River MLA Jane Groenewegen, and Yellowknife North MLA Roy Erasmus.

The themes which will serve as the basis for consultations in the NWT are:

- ensuring that principles and/or resolutions reflect the concerns of Canadians for their well being and the future of their children;
- securing a meaningful role for Aboriginal Leaders in the national unity process; and
- recognizing that Canada includes both territories and provinces and that the territories must be included in the national unity and reform of the federation processes.

A variety of means, including individual MLAs constituency meetings, will be used to communicate and receive feedback from Northerners this fall. Northerners can also call the Legislative Assembly’s toll-free phone and fax lines to leave or send messages. The phone line can be reached at 1-800-661-0784 and the fax is 1-800-661-0879. Comments can also be e-mailed to unity@assembly.gov.nt.ca or mailed to the Special Committee on National Unity, c/o Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9.

A special National Unity page has been established on the Legislative Assembly of the NWT’s Web Site where Northerners can get more information on the Calgary Declaration, the Special Committee, and leave their comments for the Committee. The address for the site is <http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>.



Comments should be submitted to the Special Committee by Friday, November 28, 1997.
Committee Members will report to the Legislature in early December.

Contact: Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735
E-Mail: ronnab@assembly.gov.nt.ca



Division Planning Committee

For Immediate Release

TRANSITION ACTION PLAN ALERTS PARTIES TO NEED FOR URGENT DECISIONS

Yellowknife (October 8) -- Describing it as "a functional, practical, but very basic plan to see us through this transition period," the Honourable John Todd, Chair of the Division Planning Committee released the GNWT's Transition Action Plan.

This document, "The Creation of Two New Territories: Transition Action Plan," was tabled today in the Legislative Assembly with the support of the Hon. Charles Dent, Minister Responsible for Western Transition Planning and the Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Minister Responsible for Nunavut Transition Planning.

"This draft plan will be many things to many people," said Mr. Todd. "For the Interim Commissioner and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated it is advice. For the GNWT departments it is a guide to action. For the western territory it is a basis for planning and response. For the federal government, it is a comprehensive costing and an assurance that the creation of two territories can happen in an orderly way as long as federal financial support is at reasonable levels."

The Transition Action Plan identifies a number of priority issues which must be urgently addressed, including:

- determining which functions should be established on a priority basis in Nunavut;
- establishing time frames for staffing of these positions;
- identifying and adopting alternate measures (ie. contracting services) to perform functions which cannot be staffed in Nunavut by April 1, 1999 but which are critical to the operation of government;
- determining and scheduling the staffing adjustments to the existing GNWT structure needed to reflect services only to the new western territory;
- establishing the nature of the western transitional (one-time) costs that will be incurred once western political and organizational reforms commence;
- identifying any positions that will be transferred from the existing headquarters to Nunavut that can be done prior to April 1, 1999--providing funding can be secured for relocation, severance and recruitment costs that may be connected to with these actions;
- developing a plan to put in place core computerized management information and processing systems which will be immediately required by the Nunavut Government on April 1, 1999; and,
- costing all transition activities identified in the plan.

The Transition Action Plan does not address the human resource training, infrastructure or legislative requirements associated with the creation of two new territories as these are dealt with in other planning forums. However, it does note that eventual transitional and incremental costs incurred in the west must be supported by federal funding in the same manner as Nunavut costs are being addressed in accordance with the Nunavut Political Accord.

The Transition Action Plan will be supplemented in the next 40 days with a plan that provides more detail on the transition costs for the new Western Territory. In addition, Mr. Dent will be tabling a report in the House next week which pays further attention to issues related to the transition to a new Western Territory.

The Transition Action plan acknowledges that the costs identified are preliminary estimates, based on current assumptions, which may change. However, the report clearly illustrates the nature and magnitude of the costs that will be incurred if the division process proceeds within the existing parameters.

Mr. Arlooktoo said he believes this is a realistic plan that outlines what needs to get done by April 1, 1999, in order to create two viable territories. "This draft report provides structure for an informed debate among all Northern parties and it is my hope that the issues raised in this report are dealt with responsibly so that implementation can proceed," he said.

The document states unequivocally that the plan will fail if adequate money is not made available to carry out the necessary transition activities. It also stresses that, given the limited time remaining before April 1, 1999, decisions are urgently needed -- both in the North and in Ottawa -- on many pressing issues.

Mr. Todd said that the GNWT cannot bring the creation of the two new territories about by itself. "The primary purpose of this plan is to provide a guide for action. We look forward to a positive response to this advice and a concerted effort by the parties to bring about timely implementation of two new territories."

Contact:

Ms. April Taylor
Executive Assistant to the Hon. John Todd
Phone (403) 669-2377 or toll free 1-800-661-0784
Fax (403) 873-0169

Questions and Answers

Creation of Two New Territories: Transition Action Plan

What is the purpose of the Transition Action Plan?

The Transition Action Plan sets out the steps in a practical, realistic way which can be taken during the transition period leading up to 1999 to begin to establish two new territories.

The plan will be many things to many people. For the Government of the Northwest Territories it will be a guide to action and will help ensure a smooth and orderly transition to two new territories. It also clearly identifies the actions that are needed to ensure this transition is done in an effective manner and prioritizes the order in which actions have to occur.

For the Office of the Interim Commissioner the plan offers advice on the creation of Nunavut and will help identify possible priorities for the Nunavut territory.

The plan will be used in the Western Territory as a basis for planning in the next 18 months, including identifying the adjustments needed to focus on providing service to only the western territory after April 1, 1999.

For the Federal Government, the Transition Action Plan is the first comprehensive costing and an assurance that the creation of the two territories will occur in an orderly manner provided federal financing support is available at realistic levels.

Who will be involved in implementing the plan?

The plan can only be implemented in a partnership approach.

Implementation will involve the Office of the Interim Commissioner for Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Western Coalition, the Federal Government along with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Decentralization is an issue that many communities in Nunavut have identified as being key but yet this action plan doesn't appear to address that issue, why not?

The Government recognizes that many communities in Nunavut have identified decentralization as a key issue. The Government fully supports decentralization as outlined in the Footprints 2 report. The Transition Action Plan identifies the financial resources required to meet the objectives of decentralization.

Questions and Answers

Creation of Two New Territories: Transition Action Plan

What doesn't the Transition Action Plan do?

The Transition Action Plan does not dictate a course of action. Instead it offers advice to the parties on a range of implementation options.

It doesn't address the human resource training, infrastructure or legislative requirements associated with the creation of the two new territories. These issues are dealt with in other planning forums. However, it does note that transitional and incremental costs incurred in the Western Territory must be given financial support in the same way as Nunavut costs are.

Has the Federal Government identified funding for the costs estimated in the plan?

There are a number of costs identified in the Transition Action Plan which have not been provided for in the federal funding that has been allocated to date. The Federal Government has, however, agreed to establish a process to assess the transitional costs identified in the Transition Action Plan.

What are the key issues in the Transition Action Plan for the Nunavut Territory?

This plan will provide advice to the Interim Commissioner regarding priorities for staffing as many jobs as possible in the Nunavut Territory prior to April 1, 1999. It will also help identify and put in place alternate measures (i.e. contracting services possibly from the Western Territory's Government) to provide the programs and services which can't be offered by the Nunavut Government, in the short term.

The plan also identifies the need to immediately put in place core management information and processing systems (i.e. payroll system) which will be needed by the Nunavut Government on April 1, 1999.

What are the key issues in the Transition Action Plan for the Western Territory?

This action plan will help Western leaders plan for the new territory including determining and making the necessary staff adjustments to provide programs and services to residents in the new Western Territory.

The Western Transition Minister and the Western Caucus will be releasing a document in the near future that more clearly outlines the priorities for the Western leaders and actions they will take to ensure that the transition to a new Western Territory is done in an orderly manner.

97-44

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LEGISLATURE RECOMMENDS 17-MEMBER ASSEMBLY FOR
NUNAVUT**

Yellowknife (October 8) - Members of the Legislative Assembly are recommending a 17 single-member Legislative Assembly for the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly, similar to Model C as suggested by the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission in their report.

However, Members did amend some of the constituencies proposed in the Commission's report. These changes include:

- moving the communities of Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktok from the proposed electoral district of Kugluktuk into the proposed electoral district of Cambridge Bay;
- changing the name of the proposed electoral district of Coral Harbour and Chesterfield Inlet to Nanulik;
- changing the name of the proposed electoral district of the High Arctic to Kutiktumiut; and
- placing the community of Whale Cove in the proposed electoral district of Arviat.

The report along with the recommendations of the Legislative Assembly will now be forwarded to the Hon. Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The Assembly passed a motion urging Ms. Stewart to forthwith comply with the *Electoral Boundaries Commissions Act* and by order-in-council, name and describe the electoral districts for the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly as amended and recommended by the Legislative Assembly.

Members also passed a motion expressing their appreciation to the Members of the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission, Chairman Justice J.E. Richard, Ms. Sandy Kusugak, and Mr. Titus Allooloo.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735
e-mail: ronnab@assembly.gov.nt.ca



97-45

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRANSITION PLAN FOR NEW WESTERN TERRITORY RELEASED

Yellowknife (October 14) - The Hon. Charles Dent, Minister for Western Transition Planning, along with Members of the Western Caucus today released an action plan to help guide the transition to a new western Territory.

"These interim measures will help ensure an orderly transfer to the new territory leading up to April 1, 1999 and beyond," said Mr. Dent. "People want to know that come April 1, schools in their communities will open as they did on March 31, that the same level of health programs will be maintained, and that plans are in order in the West."

The perception is that the new Western Territory is being left behind in the division process and it is important to show residents that Western leaders are taking action to ensure that programs and services in this region aren't adversely affected in the division of the NWT, Mr. Dent said.

This action plan outlines steps that need to be taken in the next 18 months to ensure that planning for the Western Territory is undertaken. It also clearly states that the Federal Government is obligated, under the Nunavut Political Accord, to pay transitional and incremental costs for division and that the territorial government can not afford to pay for the additional costs out of existing resources.

The plan also points out the benefits that the Western Territory can derive from an active offer to the Nunavut government for the provisions of those and services that will be not in place in Nunavut by April 1, 1999.

Michael Miltenberger, chairman of the Western Caucus of the Legislative Assembly, said the action plan is intended to support the work of other forums such as the Western Coalition or the Constitutional Working Group.



"This action plan is an important step towards securing the future of the Western Territory and is intended to complement the work of these other forums," he said.

Mr. Dent will be the lead Minister in implementing the action plan for the Western Territory. He will work closely with Members of the Western Caucus, the Hon. John Todd, Minister Responsible for Division, the Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Minister for Nunavut Transition Planning, and all parties to the process to ensure that the transition to the two new territories is done in an orderly manner.

Contact:

The Hon. Charles Dent
Minister for Western Transition Planning
Phone: (403) 669-2355 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-0169
E-Mail: charles_dent@learnnet.nt.ca

Michael Miltenberger
Chairman, Western Caucus
MLA, Thebacha
Phone: (403) 669-2270 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 873-2076
E-Mail: jmmiltenberger@auroranet.nt.ca

97-46

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIFTH SESSION OPENS TUESDAY

Yellowknife (October 17) - The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories will convene the Fifth Session of the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, October 21.

The Government will introduce several pieces of new legislation which will then be referred to a Standing Committee for review over the winter.

Members will also carry out the mid-term review of the Premier and Cabinet. The review will be held during Committee of the Whole beginning on Wednesday, October 22. At the conclusion of the review each Member having the opportunity to outline his/her vision of where the Assembly should be going in the final two years of its mandate. Suggestions could include refining principles for the creation of the two new territories and the common agenda.

The Fifth Session will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly building in Yellowknife. Wednesday and Thursday's sittings could be extended to conclude the review. The sitting is expected to continue until Friday, October 24.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer
Public Relations Officer
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Phone: (403) 669-2230 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (403) 920-4735
E-mail: ronnab@assembly.gov.nt.ca



97-47

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MLAs TO MEET WITH BEAUFORT-DELTA LEADERS

Yellowknife (October 24) - Several MLAs will travel to Inuvik this week to meet with leaders in the Beaufort-Delta on a number of issues, including plans for a new Western Territory, regional government in Inuvik, and planning for a new hospital, says Inuvik MLA Floyd Roland.

“This is a very important time not only for this region but for the entire western territory with a lot of important decisions needing to be made in the next 18 months,” Mr. Roland said. “I want Ministers and other MLAs to hear firsthand the concerns of people in the region and to give the leaders a chance to ask questions of the elected leaders.”

Mr. Roland will be joined by the Hon. Sam Gargan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Jim Antoine, Minister of Transportation and Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Kelvin Ng, Minister of Health and Social Services and Justice, the Hon. Charles Dent, Minister Responsible for Western Transition Planning, the Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and Thebacha MLA Michael Miltenberger, Chairman of the Western Caucus of the Legislative Assembly. Both Nunakput MLA Vince Steen and Mackenzie-Delta MLA David Krutko, the other two MLAs from the region, will attend the leaders meeting.

Mr. Roland said Members will meet with the Beaufort-Delta leaders at the regional leaders meeting scheduled for October 29 and 30 in Inuvik. Other items on the agenda include a report on self government, education, and community empowerment.

Members will also take part in a charity home game against the Inuvik Old-timers Hockey Association beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 28 in the new Midnight Sun Recreational Complex. MLAs have drafted some bantam hockey players from Inuvik to help fill out their roster for the game. All proceeds from the game will go to the Inuvik Minor Hockey Association.

Contact:

Floyd Roland
MLA, Inuvik
Phone: (867) 777-4693
Fax: (867) 777-4694

97-48

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIGILANCE IS NEEDED NOW ON DIAMOND FRONT, HENRY SAYS

Yellowknife (November 18) - Territorial officials must be vigilant in their efforts to maximize benefits from diamond mining for the NWT particularly detailed sorting and valuation for royalty purposes, says Yellowknife South MLA Seamus Henry.

“It has been over two weeks since territorial officials met with federal Finance Minister Paul Martin and nothing has happened,” said Mr. Henry. “We have to keep the heat on this one, otherwise the NWT and Canada stand to lose out on a chance of a lifetime.”

He wants both the Hon. John Todd, the NWT’s Finance Minister, and the Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, to be dogged in their pursuit of benefits for the NWT. Mr. Todd and Mr. Kakfwi met with Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin and Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister last month and Mr. Henry wants to know what went on and more importantly, why no action has been taken by federal officials.

“I hope Paul Martin knows how important this \$53 billion a year world industry is to Canada and the NWT,” Mr. Henry said. “In the next few years Canada’s North will be the producers of approximately 10 per cent of that market and what is Canada doing to protect our interests?”

Territorial and federal ministers discussed the possibility of establishing a diamond task force to protect Canada and the NWT’s interests. Mr. Henry wants to know where the task force is and when it will start work.

“The federal and territorial governments should appoint their members to the task force as the first step,” he said. “We have to stop talking and start moving before the first diamond shipment leaves the North.”

Contact:

Seamus Henry
MLA, Yellowknife South
Phone: (867) 669-2287 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (867) 873-0276

97-49

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Revisit *Public Service Act*, Thebacha MLA says

Yellowknife (November 20) - The *Public Service Act* should be revisited to review the section dealing with collective bargaining, says Thebacha MLA Michael Miltenberger.

"I am concerned that the 1995 amendments to the Act have had implications far beyond what was intended and are, in fact, getting in the way of good faith bargaining," Mr. Miltenberger said. "The recent dealings with the NWT Teachers Association and the resulting court case show that the amended Act has created difficulties in reaching a settlement with our bargaining partners."

Mr. Miltenberger has written to the Honourable John Todd, Minister of the Financial Management Board, asking that he consider a possible amendment to clarify the Government's intention to bargain in good faith with the employees bargaining agents.

He noted that the Union of Northern Workers, the other major union the Government has a contract with, expressed similar concerns in 1996 during their contract negotiations as those of the NWTTA.

"I believe that, as a government, we are committed to a fair and open collective bargaining process with both the Union of Northern Workers and the NWTTA," he said. "If the existing *Public Service Act* is getting in the way of that process we need to take another look and consider making changes."

The amendments to the *Public Service Act* were among the first pieces of legislation approved by Members of the 13th Legislative Assembly. Mr. Miltenberger said the changes were intended to support the collective bargaining process and to ensure that NWT residents could count on consistent delivery of programs and services.

Contact:

Michael Miltenberger
MLA, Thebacha
Phone: (867) 669-2270 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (867) 873-0276



97-50

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Government Operations Committee call for review of *Public Service Act*

Yellowknife (November 21) - Members of the Government Operations Committee have joined the call for a review of the *Public Service Act* to ensure that the Government is bargaining in good faith with both the NWT Teachers Association and Union of Northern Workers.

“The *Public Service Act* and subsequent amendments were needed two years ago considering our deficit situation, however, our financial position has changed since then and so should the Act,” said Committee Chairman Roy Erasmus. “It is now time to revisit the amendments that the Legislature passed to ensure we are bargaining in good faith.”

The Committee is asking the Honourable John Todd, Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, to review the Act and bring forward any amendments needed to ensure that the bargaining process between the government and the unions representing GNWT employees is fair.

Mr. Erasmus said the recent court case between the Government of the NWT and the NWTTA shows that some amendments are needed. He also said the changes are important to ensure that the government is working in co-operation with the NWTTA and UNW.

Two members of the Government Operations Committee -- Iqaluit MLA Ed Picco and, most recently, Thebacha MLA Michael Miltenberger -- have already publicly stated that they believe the Act should be reviewed.

Contact:

Roy Erasmus
Chairman, Standing Committee on Government Operations
MLA, Yellowknife North
Phone: (867) 669-2295 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (867) 873-0276 or toll-free 1-800-661-0879



97-51

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASSEMBLY PASSES UNITY RESOLUTION

Yellowknife (December 2) - Members of the Legislative Assembly today passed a resolution outlining the Northwest Territories position on National Unity and how the interests of Northerners can best be included.

"It was important that our resolution reflect the concerns of Northerners and, in particular, aboriginal peoples," said Premier Don Morin, chairman of the Special Committee on National Unity. "Other jurisdictions in Canada are looking to the Northwest Territories for leadership on aboriginal participation and how that can best be included in an agreement to foster National Unity."

In the resolution, Members agreed that governments have the responsibility to promote a strong and united Canada in all regions. The resolution promotes the involvement of the territorial government in any process directed at achieving unity, and outlines the GNWT's support of the negotiation and implementation of self-government for Aboriginal peoples in the NWT and elsewhere in Canada.

The resolution also points out that the Northwest Territories' desire to be a full partner within the federation on fair and equal terms.

The Northwest Territories, along with Newfoundland, are the first jurisdictions in Canada to discuss National Unity following consultations with the public. These consultations took many different formats including electronic mail, advertisements in newspapers, constituency meetings, meetings with aboriginal leaders, and hiring students to fill-in questionnaires.

Many of the comments received during the consultation process identified the need to include the Northwest Territories as more of an equal partner in the process to ensure that all Canadians are treated fairly and equally. A preliminary summary of the comments heard during the NWT consultation process is included in the Special Committee on National Unity's report which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly today.

Replies are still being received and the responses will be compiled in a report that will be tabled in the House in the New Year.

Copies of the report will now be sent to the Prime Minister, federal ministers, Provincial Premiers and the Yukon Government Leader and the leaders of the five national aboriginal organizations.

Copies of the report and draft resolution have been posted to the Legislative Assembly's Web Site. The address is www.assembly.gov.nt.ca.

Contact:

Ronna Bremer

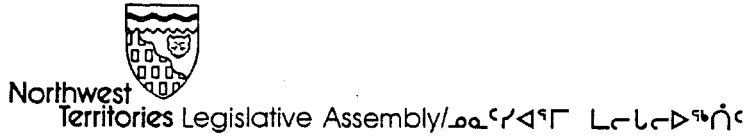
Public Relations Officer

Phone: (867) 669-2230 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784

Fax: (867) 920-4735 or toll-free 1-800-661-0879

E-mail: ronnab@assembly.gov.nt.ca

1997 12 02 4:05 p.m.



Motion

ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ

NWT NATIONAL UNITY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS all Canadians and their governments have a responsibility for preserving and promoting a strong and united Canada for the benefit of all Canadians in all regions from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic;

AND WHEREAS the peoples, lands and institutions of Canada's northern territories, including the future territory of Nunavut, comprise a dynamic and vital region of Canada;

AND WHEREAS efforts to promote and preserve national unity require the meaningful participation of all territorial governments in any processes directed at achieving unity;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly supports the negotiation and implementation of self-government for Aboriginal peoples in the territories and elsewhere in Canada, to secure their Aboriginal and treaty rights, and Aboriginal peoples' full participation within the Canadian federation;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories has a unique character and status within the federation and expects a fair and equal opportunity to achieve the status of a full partner within the federation on equitable terms as referred to in the Quebec Resolutions of 1864 and the London Resolutions of 1866.

NOW THEREFORE, I move seconded by the Honourable Member for Natilikmiot, that the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories supports all efforts to secure the commitment of the people of all provinces and territories to the unity of Canada in accordance with the principles set out below:

Date of Notice/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ
Date of Introduction/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ
Disposition/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ
Carried/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ

Moved by/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ
Seconded by/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ
Ruled out of Order/ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ ᐱᓴᐅᑦ

1. The Aboriginal peoples of Canada, being the first peoples to inhabit and govern this land, have the inherent right to self-government to safeguard and develop their lands and resources, languages, cultures and traditions and to ensure the integrity of their societies.
2. Canadians are committed to a united country to ensure a society in which all Canadians and their children have access to the benefit of Canada's prosperity, including quality health care, social services, education and employment opportunities.
3. The rights of Canadians are secured equally by the rule of law and should be implemented in a just, broad and liberal manner taking into account the spirit and intent of guarantees under the Constitution.
4. All provinces are equal under the Constitution, and together with the territories, have equality of opportunity to develop their unique characteristics in partnership, while respecting each other's jurisdiction.
5. In the Canadian federal system, where respect for diversity underlies unity, the unique character of Quebec society, including its French speaking majority, its culture, its institutions, and its tradition of civil law, is fundamental to the well-being of Canada. Similarly, the well-being of Quebec is ensured by the legislature and government of Quebec having the ability to protect and develop the unique character of Quebec society within a united Canada.
6. A strong national government for Canada, and the historic flexibility of Canadians and their governments, remain essential elements of our ability to modify, adapt and renew our institutions and arrangements for the benefit of all Canadians.
7. Each government and legislature has, in a manner appropriate to each, a responsibility to ensure that these principles and precepts remain enduring features of Canada.

Special Committee on National Unity

Results of NWT Consultations

Questions and Answers

Q. What was the level of response by NWT residents?

A. MLAs took on the primary responsibility for consultations. Various approaches were used including public meetings, distributing copies of the questionnaire in their constituency and informal discussions with constituents.

Aboriginal leaders were contacted by Committee members several times, they reviewed the draft resolution and provided comments.

To date the Special Committee has received 60 responses to the questionnaire on the Calgary framework, although, more continue to be received. Northerners have never been hesitant about saying no and had they not supported the Calgary framework, we would have heard. Instead we heard the opposite, NWT residents indicated qualified support for the Calgary framework

Q. What changes did Aboriginal leaders request to the draft resolution?

A. The NWT Aboriginal Summit requested changes to the draft resolution and these were supported by the Special Committee. No changes were requested by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

The NWT Aboriginal Summit did request to appear in front of the Legislative Assembly, which was not possible at this time. The Special Committee supports the full involvement of Aboriginal leaders in the national unity process and will look at future opportunities as the National Unity Initiative continues.

Q. What is the position of the NWT with respect to Quebec?

A. The Special Committee found that comments from NWT residents on the Calgary framework focused on issues other than Quebec, such as:

- expanding upon the references to the rights of Aboriginal peoples;
- recognizing the north as a unique region of Canada;
- ensuring the status of and future opportunities for territorial governments within the Canadian federation; and
- NWT residents support Quebec as part of Canada.

Special Committee on National Unity

Results of NWT Consultations

Q. Why was the NWT consultation period so short in comparison to most other jurisdictions?

A. Compared to other jurisdictions, the NWT has a small population and MLAs know many of their constituents by name which is an advantage that other jurisdictions do not have. By being one of the first jurisdictions to consider a resolution, the Special Committee felt this provided some advantages to the NWT, including:

- the resolution can influence consultations occurring in other jurisdictions, especially in relation to recognition of the north as a unique region of Canada and recognition of Aboriginal rights and interests; and

- the resolution will give our Government a mandate to prepare us for the next round of discussion among Premiers which may occur informally at next week's First Ministers Meeting and again in mid-January when Premiers review progress to date.

Q. What was the cost of the consultations?

A. There was no extra funding allocated to carry out the public consultations. No MLAs requested additional funding to carry out their consultations. Information kits were prepared for MLAs using existing staff and resources. The printing of the questionnaire for distribution by MLAs and advertising it in all northern newspapers on a one-time basis was covered with existing funds and amounted to about \$15,000.

Q. What are the next steps in the National Unity Process?

A. The first step is to share our resolution with other Premiers, the federal government, national Aboriginal leaders and NWT residents and Aboriginal leaders. First Ministers will meet December 11 and 12 to discuss Canada's social union, youth employment and health care. This will provide an opportunity for informal discussion of the NWT's resolution and it is expected that Premier Bouchard will attend this meeting.

First Ministers will meet again in mid-January for the Team Canada trade mission to Latin America, at which time we will review progress on our respective consultations and the NWT position can be advanced.

Meetings are also being set up with Ministers and National Aboriginal leaders for 1998 (social issues and Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples) which relate to their future involvement in the national unity process and a possible, future constitutional round.

The NWT Special Committee on National Unity will continue for the purpose of monitoring the national unity process, keeping the Legislative Assembly informed and making recommendations on NWT participation and objectives in the process.

97-52

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIRST RESIDENT NWT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER APPOINTED

Yellowknife (December 3) - The Legislative Assembly has recommended that Mr. David M. Hamilton be appointed as the first resident Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories.

As the first CEO for the NWT, Mr. Hamilton will be in charge of the 1999 elections in both the Nunavut and Western territories. The recommendation will now be forwarded to the Commissioner Helen Maksagak.

Mr. Hamilton, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, has extensive involvement and experience in conducting elections including municipal elections in various Northern communities. He has also been the Chief Plebiscite Officer for the NWT since 1981 and was responsible for the conduct of the 1982 Plebiscite on Division of the NWT and the 1992 Plebiscite on the Boundary to divide the NWT.

As well in his capacity as Clerk, Mr. Hamilton was delegated the majority of the responsibilities from the Chief Electoral Officer for Canada, for the conduct of the 1983, 1987, 1991, and 1995 general elections and for five by-elections.

The appointment of a resident Chief Electoral Officer was made possible with the November 10th signing of the Elections Agreement, which transferred the financing for both 1999 elections from the Federal Government to the GNWT.

As CEO, Mr. Hamilton has the responsibility to exercise general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of an election and enforce on the part of all election officers fairness, impartiality and compliance with the Act.

Mr. Hamilton is a long-term Northerner having lived in the Northwest Territories since 1970. Mr. Hamilton and his wife Kate have two daughters, Lisa and Judith.

Contact:

Brian Armstrong
Co-ordinator, Training and Information
Elections NWT
Phone: (867) 920-6929 or toll-free 1-800-661-0796
Fax: (867) 873-0366 or toll-free 1-800-661-0872
E-mail: brianar@inukshuk.gov.nt.ca



97-53

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES COMMENDED FOR RESPONSE

Yellowknife (December 3) - Hay River MLA Jane Groenewegen commends the Department of Public Works and Services for delaying plans to implement the Keewatin Marine Resupply initiative until after division.

“I am happy the department responded to the many concerns raised by residents in the Keewatin region and other areas of Nunavut,” Mrs. Groenewegen said. “Everyone supports the need for the most cost effective and efficient way of delivering fuel and bulk cargo for all Northerners, however, we have to ensure people are adequately consulted and that their concerns are addressed.”

She said she is confident once comprehensive planning and more extensive consultations with residents are completed that the best solution for delivery of both fuel and dry cargo for the region will be implemented.

The Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Minister of Public Works and Services, announced last week a delay in the timeline for implementing the strategy, which includes installing a pipeline to allow for direct delivery of fuel to communities in the Keewatin. Mr. Arlooktoo said the Government wants to reduce the cost of fuel delivery in the region and the proposed strategy could save the new Nunavut Government millions of dollars.

Contact:

Jane Groenewegen
MLA, Hay River
Phone: (867) 669-2285 or toll-free 1-800-661-0784
Fax: (867) 920-4735



