



Government Leader

SEP 23 1992

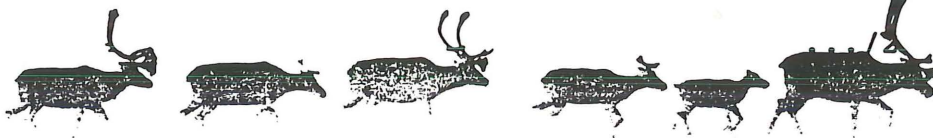
The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, P.C., M.P.
 Prime Minister of Canada
 Langevin Block
 Ottawa, Ontario
 K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister

As you may know, the Giant Mine Strike in Yellowknife is into its fifth month. Throughout this period there has been violence on the picket lines with consequent arrests and charges filed under the Criminal Code of Canada. During this time, there have been many instances of damage to mine property and, in particular, power transmission facilities that service the mine operation. Those responsible for many of these unlawful activities are not presently known to the authorities.

Canada appointed a mediator in early June. Shortly thereafter, the Honourable Dennis Patterson, then Minister of Justice, met with the Honourable Marcel Danis pursuant to briefing him on the gravity of the situation and to request him to consider compulsory arbitration or the establishment of an Industrial Inquiry Commission as ways of resolving this labour dispute. The Minister of Labour declined these requests on the grounds that it was better public policy to let the parties resolve their differences by way of the collective bargaining process.

The situation in Yellowknife has become even more complex and critical since the explosion that killed the nine miners. Investigations by RCMP as to the homicides and the Government of the Northwest Territories as to securing mine safety are well in hand and give comfort to the public that everything is being done in these areas. However, the strike itself continues. It is the considered opinion of this government and of many civic leaders that more can be done to assist the parties in resolving this labour dispute.



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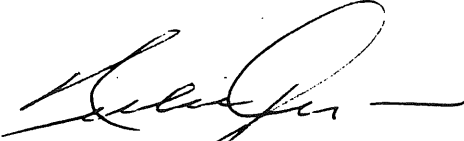
It is painfully obvious to the residents of Yellowknife that the collective bargaining process has failed. What is not obvious are the reasons for such failure. Has the mediator been sufficiently creative and professional? Is the leadership of management and union each discharging their mandates in a responsible manner? Are there special advantages given to one disputant over another because of the nature, location, or size of the operation? At what point should the collective bargaining process be abandoned when the social and economic fabric of a smaller community is significantly impacted?

Unless these questions, issues, and public concerns are addressed in a careful and meaningful manner, the residents of Yellowknife can only conclude that the current collective bargaining process will lead, not to a resolution of this labour dispute, but to continuing stalemate and further violence.

The appointment of an Industrial Inquiry Commission will not guarantee an end to this strike. But, it will enable the public, in Yellowknife and in Canada, to better understand why the collective bargaining process has failed in this instance. The Yellowknife public is being severely impacted by the strike - economically, socially, and emotionally. The Yellowknife public has a right to be a part of a search for the reasons why the collective bargaining process has not succeeded. The Yellowknife public has a right to be informed about the roles of both union and management so that their respective contributions to collective bargaining success or failure, past and future, can be effectively measured and judged in the public arena.

Because of the application of the Canada Labour Code, the Honourable Marcel Danis is the Minister of Labour for the Northwest Territories, and accordingly I have urged him to come to Yellowknife to meet with myself and other government and civic leaders so that he can assess firsthand how to better discharge his ministerial responsibilities for the people who must rely upon him, namely the residents of Yellowknife. I would urge you to support our request.

Sincerely



Nellie J. Cournoyea

