

Beaufort-Delta leaders support housing strategy

by Ronna Bremer

Beaufort-Delta leaders have thrown their support behind the territorial government's housing strategy.

"We have to give credit to the government for doing

this... what amazes me is the employees are trying to hold the government hostage," said Roger Gruben, chairman of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

He complimented Person-

nel Minister Stephen Kakfwi and the rest of government for the housing strategy and said it was a timely thing to do, especially with the territorial government's financial situation.

"This is the second time I've complimented you today," quipped Gruben to Kakfwi during the first day of the Beaufort-Delta Leaders Conference Monday.

The past relationships between the two aboriginal leaders have often been stormy, particularly on discussions of community and regional governments.

But Gruben said this time the government made a decision and was sticking to it. He said the time had come for the government to make some changes to housing for its employees.

He called the deal that employees living in staff housing had been receiving for many years a "cushy deal."

But Gruben wasn't the only leader in the region who voiced his support for the housing strategy that will see employees living in government housing paying rents the same as in Yellowknife or the local market rate, whichever is lower.

Fort McPherson chief James Ross said many people in his region would be surprised if they knew what benefits civil servants get.

Ross said he didn't want to waste time at the meetings talking about people who are working and earning good salaries and benefits when he has about 200 adults in his community without jobs.

INUVIK DRUM, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1993

"I don't want to waste time talking about people who have good jobs ...let's move onto something more important," he suggested.

Gruben agreed with Ross and said the housing strategy will put government employees on par with the average person in the Territories.

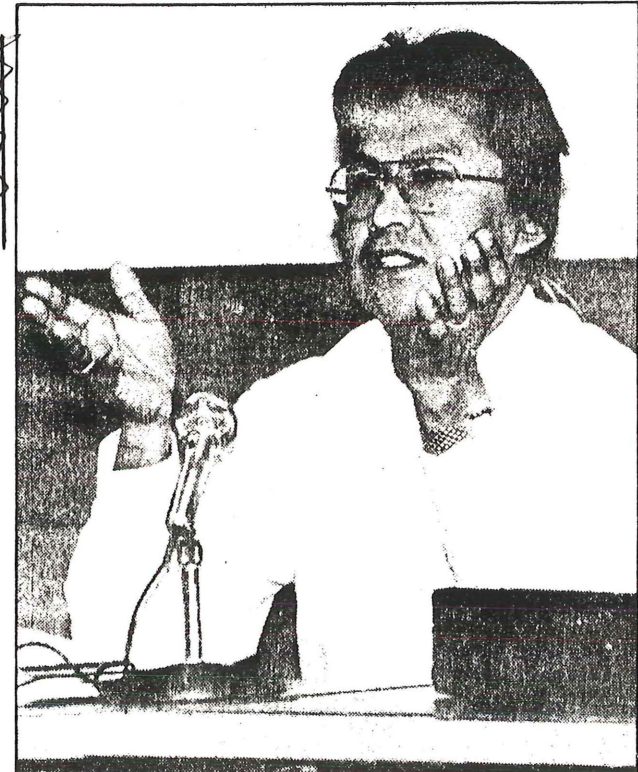
Kakfwi told those at Monday's meeting the government estimates about \$6 million will be saved through the housing strategy.

The first round of rent increases under the strategy

will come April 1, when rents will rise to market levels or by 25 per cent, whichever is less. On April 1, 1994, all remaining rents will rise to market levels.

Employees will also start paying their own utility bills. Those who pay more than 30 per cent of their gross income for shelter will be eligible for a hardship allowance.

Leaders at Monday's meeting passed a unanimous motion supporting the government's strategy.



Personnel Minister Stephen Kakfwi was in Inuvik to discuss a number of issues at the Beaufort-Delta Leaders Conference including the housing strategy. Regional leaders passed a motion supporting the strategy.



TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 42-12(3) TABLED ON FEB 18 1993

