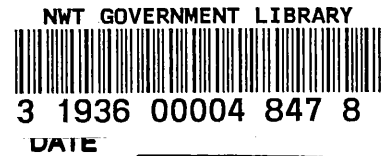


HONOURABLE NELLIE J. COURNOYEA  
MINISTER OF HEALTH



### ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS

MR. SPEAKER, AS MINISTER OF HEALTH, I WANT TO INFORM THE MEMBERS THAT AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE COLLABORATIVE WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE FEDERAL SCIENTISTS, AND COMMUNITY AUTHORITIES AND CITIZENS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN LEARNING OF POLLUTION LEVELS AND THE ACCOMPANYING RISK TO THE HEALTH OF POPULATIONS. THIS WORK IS CONTINUING NOT ONLY HERE, BUT ALSO IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD.

THE EARLY WORK BY CANADIAN SCIENTISTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND CITIZENS, PRESENTED LAST SPRING, LED OTHER CIRCUMPOLAR COUNTRIES TO BEGIN TO LOOK AT SIMILAR FINDINGS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR PEOPLES. THE GOVERNMENT LEADER HAS ALREADY REFERRED TO THE OSLO AND FINLAND CONFERENCES AND, IN ADDITION, INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITH SOVIET AND GREENLAND HEALTH OFFICIALS.

CLARIFICATION OF THE BROUGHTON ISLAND STUDIES AS PART OF A GENERAL POLLUTION PROBLEM FOR THE WHOLE OF THE ARCTIC (AND MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD) WAS PROVIDED TO THE BAFFIN AND KEEWATIN REGIONAL HEALTH BOARDS, AND TO THE BROUGHTON ISLAND PUBLIC IN THE SPRING OF 1989 BY THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, FEDERAL-TERRITORIAL POLICY AND TECHNICAL GROUPS HAVE HELD SEVERAL MEETINGS. THE TECHNICAL GROUP IS IN THE PROCESS OF OUTLINING EXTENSIVE RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROGRAMS WHICH WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY A VARIETY OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.

THE COUNTERPART TERRITORIAL TECHNICAL AND POLICY COMMITTEES, WITH REPRESENTATION FROM NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS AND FEDERAL SCIENTISTS, HAVE MOVED TO ENSURE RAPID ATTENTION TO TERRITORIAL CONCERNS AND DIRECTIVES. APPROVAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONTAMINANTS UNIT WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS BEEN GIVEN. AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST WILL BE RECRUITED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AT WHICH TIME THIS UNIT WILL COMMENCE OPERATION.

IT IS CLEAR ALREADY THAT THIS UNIT WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING ALL OF US TO UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES: ON MATTERS SUCH AS PCBS, WHERE MANY SCIENTISTS NOW SEEM TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE HEALTH RISK REMAINS LOW; ON THE DIOXINS AND FURANS THAT SEEM LIKELY TO BE PRODUCED BY ALBERTA PULP MILLS; ON TOXAPHENES, WHICH HAVE RECENTLY BEEN STUDIED IN THE DEH CHO AT THE REQUEST OF THE DENE NATION; AND ON MANY OTHER SUBSTANCES. UNDERSTANDING OF THESE MATTERS WILL BE IMPROVED BY THE WORK OF THE SCIENCE INSTITUTE AS IT PROVIDES AN ENHANCED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR BOTH THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS.

BECAUSE THE ANSWER TO POLLUTANTS OFTEN LIES IN STOPPING CONTAMINATION FROM SOURCES A LONG WAY OFF IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOOK THE INITIATIVE LAST MAY, AS PART OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY IN GENEVA, TO BRING THE PROBLEM TO THE ATTENTION OF DELEGATES FROM ALL THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED.

MEMBERS, MR. SPEAKER, WILL BE UPDATED AND CONSULTED REGULARLY  
AS THE NATION AND THE WORLD PAY INCREASING ATTENTION TO THIS  
GRAVE PROBLEM WHICH THREATENS OUR LIVES AND OUR WAYS OF LIFE.

THANK YOU.