



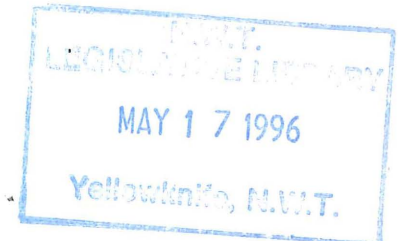
RESPONSE TO PETITION



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Petition tabled by Mr. Evaloarjuk on March 22, 1996

Response by the Honourable Jim Antoine
Minister of Transportation



EXTENSION OF THE POND INLET RUNWAY

On March 22, 1996 the Member for Amittuq tabled in the Legislative Assembly a petition of 328 signatures requesting that the Government of the Northwest Territories extend the runway at the Pond Inlet airport. The petition states that the Members of the Toonoonik Sagoon k Co-op Ltd passed a motion at its 1994 Annual General Meeting asking their Board of Directors to recommend a runway extension to the Territorial Government.

The Pond Inlet airport has a 4,000 x 100 foot runway. Three carriers make nine scheduled flights a week to the community using the Hawker Siddeley 748, DeHavilland Twin Otter and King Air 200 aircraft.

Traffic statistics at the Pond Inlet airport for 1994 report 5,503 passengers arriving and departing on 712 flights; producing a passenger/flight ratio of 8. Service to the community by larger aircraft, with much greater seating capacity, would undoubtedly result in fewer and less frequent scheduled flights.

The petition proposes an extension to the existing 4,000 foot runway. It does not refer to a particular runway length or to the type of aircraft that a longer runway should accommodate. In preparing its response, the Department of Transportation has considered runway extensions for two types of aircraft; the Boeing 737 and the Boeing 727. The Boeing 737 requires a 5,000 foot runway and the 727 a 6,000 foot runway.

Without the benefit of a site survey of the runway and the surrounding terrain, the Department estimates that a 1,000 foot extension for the 737 would cost \$1.2 million and a 2,000 foot extension for the 727 would cost \$2.4 million. Neither estimate includes the cost of expanding the apron area for the larger aircraft to park.

The Department of Transportation has no evidence to suggest that the existing runway at Pond Inlet is inadequate for the traffic it serves. Lengthening the runway would certainly allow larger aircraft to use the airport but at a great cost for a low volume of traffic. Especially in view of its reduced budget for capital infrastructure projects, the Department of Transportation cannot justify the expense of extending the Pond Inlet runway.