



The Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 1

2nd Session

24th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, March 6, 1979

Speaker: The Honourable Donald Taylor

Whitehorse, Yukon

Tuesday, March 6, 1979

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF YUKON CONVENED IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS AT 3:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 1979.

The Members present were:

The Hon. Mr. D. Taylor, Speaker

The Hon. Mr. C. Pearson

The Hon. Mr. D. Lang

The Hon. Mr. D. Graham

The Hon. Mr. G. Njootli

The Hon. Mr. H. Tracey

Mr. G. Lattin

Dr. J. Hibberd

Mrs. M. McCall

Mr. A. Falle

Mr. P. Hanson

The Hon. I. MacKay

Mrs. A. McGuire

Mr. T. Penikett

Mr. R. Fleming

Mr. M. Byblow

Mr. Speaker: I have received communication from the Commissioner, in her role as Lieutenant-Governor, stating that she would open this Session at 3:00 p.m., today, Tuesday, the 6th day of March, 1979.

We are now prepared to receive the Speech from the Throne.

(The Commissioner enters the Chambers, announced by her Aide-de-Camp)

Madam Commissioner: You may be seated.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to assure you before I read my Throne Speech, that I shall not try to emulate my esteemed colleague in the Northwest Territories and go on for an hour and a half.

It is a privilege for me to welcome you to the opening of the First 1979 Session of the 24th elected Legislative Assembly of Yukon. As you know, I and my family before me have been witness to many changes in the Yukon society and government. I am all the more honoured, then, to play a role in the changes which are occurring now in this Assembly.

Since this Assembly last sat there have been a number of profound changes. For the first time, the elected members of Executive Committee represent a political party and are under the leadership of an elected political leader. This change enhances the stability of the Executive Committee process as well as furthering the responsibility of government members to this Assembly.

A fifth elected Member has been added to the Executive Committee and more portfolio responsibilities have been devolved to the elected Ministers with the result that virtually all program responsibilities of your government are now in the hands of members of this Assembly who are responsible, through you, to the electors of Yukon.

The role of the Commissioner has been formally defined in recognition of the political and constitutional advances of the past few years. The principal change in the role, as described in my letter of instruction from the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, sees the Commissioner bound by the advice of the Executive Committee in many of the areas of Yukon jurisdiction. It is my intention to table this letter in the Legislative Assembly.

Members of this Assembly have now had three months in which to begin the adjustment to party politics. A further step in this Session will be the introduction of new Standing Orders which will reflect this new alignment.

All the above changes have my strongest personal support and approval. The change to party politics was necessary to continue our evolution towards full responsible government. It is a big step and one which will take some time and a lot of constructive effort to function smoothly. I am committed to fostering increased political authority, responsibility and accountability in this government

and I invite all Members of this Assembly and the Yukon public to share this commitment.

At this point I wish to interject some personal concerns and outline my role as I see it played now and in the immediate future. Much has been made of the fact that I am a Yukoner but, this in itself is not a formula for solving all of our territorial and federal-related problems. I am not one of those who believes everything originating from Ottawa must be rejected. Whether we wish to admit it or not, our status as a territory has placed us in a favoured position nationally. We enjoy some of the lowest taxes and the greatest economic benefits of any jurisdiction in Canada. This is not to say that we must not work diligently on progressive constitutional reform, but the negative reaction by some to our present financial responsibilities as Yukoners and to the amenities that we receive bears little basis in fact.

My role as Commissioner must be to represent the views and the direction of the incumbent Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and to ensure that he is influenced by Yukoners' perceptions of how their Territory should develop. I am also dedicated to working closely in a supportive manner with the majority Yukon Government of the day, whatever their political leanings may be.

We have entered a new and exciting era in party politics. The road will not be smooth. There will be times when major problems arise. I intend to allow your elected Members to work out these problems with as little interference as possible. I fully realize and recognize my obligations and that the final responsibilities are mine, but at this point in our political evolution, I feel the leadership and the responsibilities for Yukon policies must come from your duly elected Government Members and that they must be fully accountable for their own policies and actions.

I invite all Yukoners to direct their political demands to those they have elected to office. The Office of the Commissioner should not be looked to by dissatisfied Yukoners to strongarm the desired results. Demand more of those you placed in office to represent you and in this way we will all be fostering the growth and maturity of the political responsibility and accountability so sincerely sought in Yukon.

I intend to continue to uphold the position of Commissioner with dignity, to fulfill all the duties with which the position is charged, and to give leadership as Chairman of the Executive Committee. The Government Leader and Members of Executive Committee, in turn, must give leadership and direction to the Yukon through this wholly elected Legislative Assembly.

The Opening Address presents another departure from past practice. I have asked Mr. Pearson, Government Leader, to present to this Assembly the 1979-80 Budget proposals of this Government. This he will do later in the week. I felt this change to be appropriate since it would recognize that the Government's Budget is the repository of all its political decisions, in other words, it is all in one basket, ladies and gentlemen.

Accordingly, this Opening Address will be confined to advising the Assembly of this Government's priorities and its plan of action for 1979.

The highest priority commitments of this Government are clear and unequivocal: we seek an early and just settlement of the Yukon Indian Land Claims; a full state of preparedness for the construction of the Alaska Highway Natural Gas Pipeline; and the development of a firm and aggressive economic development policy for Yukon.

Recognizing that your Government has legitimate responsibility for all Yukoners, we have sought and achieved a meaningful role in the Land Claims negotiations which have recently recommenced.

As a full and active participant on the Federal negotiating team, our goal is to achieve a settlement which will be just for our Indian citizens, which will recognize their special and valued role in our society and which will also be fair and acceptable to all Yukoners. Our goal is predicated on the belief that our society is flexible enough to accommodate differences without having to fracture itself into separate communities. We believe that we can enrich one another by sharing divergent cultural backgrounds rather than withdrawing into isolated enclaves. We believe in one society and one government, tolerant and responsive enough to embrace differences without suffocating them; in other words, integration and not assimilation.

We are, of course, mindful of the rights and interests of non-native Yukoners and of the need for a Land Claims settlement that will promote harmony and understanding rather than discord and bitterness. We shall be guided by this awareness and responsibility in the negotiations.

The proposed Alaska Highway Natural Gas Pipeline and the

possible Dempster Lateral have engaged the attention of your government and all Yukon residents for the past few years.

We have in the past few months received confirmation of scheduling delays as well as renewed assurances that the project will proceed, albeit later than originally planned. While the delay may occasion hardship for some, it does give our government and our society more time to plan and prepare. The delay, however, must not lull us into a false sense of lethargy. It is imperative that we proceed with legislation and program planning necessary to ensure that we benefit rather than suffer from pipeline impacts. In this regard we will be placing before you an important piece of pipeline related legislation.

The Northern Natural Gas Pipeline Agreement Ordinance gives effect in Yukon to the provisions of the Canada-United States Pipeline Agreement. This legislation will enable our government to proceed with pipeline taxation legislation and provide the legal basis for consultation with the Government of Canada on pipeline related matters.

This Bill will also allow for legislation enabling the recovery of costs incurred by the government directly related to the construction of the pipeline.

The importance of the pipeline to Yukon and the adverse effects of loss of mineral production in 1978 are clear testimony to the need for Yukon to develop a broader economic base. The citizens of Yukon must be given increased opportunities for economic growth while at the same time lessening our dependence on short-term projects or on a single industry. We believe the first step in this direction is to make clear to the private sector the position of this government. We are committed to growth and development. We are committed to seeing Yukoners benefit from an intelligent use of our resources. We are committed to making businesses which will provide long term jobs and economic activity feel welcome in Yukon.

In making these commitments we recognize the balance which must be achieved. Our wilderness, our wildlife, our scenic beauty are precious resources which contribute immensely to our tourism industry and to the unique lifestyles of many Yukoners. These resources will not be squandered or traded off indiscriminately for short-term benefits. But we believe this balance can be struck without extensive government intervention or stifling regulatory regimes.

In pursuit of this commitment, this government plans some immediate steps. We will be creating a Department of Economic Development and Tourism and putting at its disposal the resources to develop a long-term economic development strategy for Yukon. We will be increasing the resources devoted to the promotion and development of our tourism industry, an industry which has continued to grow in size and importance in our economy. Both these decisions will be reflected in the estimates to be presented to you later.

Further, we will actively pursue and promote the interest of stable private corporations in locating in the Yukon. An example of this is our forthcoming meeting with Kaiser Aluminum to explore the possibilities and ramifications of an aluminum reduction plant in the Whitehorse area.

Recognizing the importance to past, present and future economic development of a sound transportation system, we will take positive steps to encourage the survival and future expansion of our rail link to tidewater. In this regard your government has taken the initiative to convene a meeting next week of governments and principal private sector interests to discuss the current White Pass and Yukon Railway difficulties. Beyond this, we will continue to pursue with vigour all avenues that could preserve this integral part of Yukon's transportation system.

A singular imperative to future economic growth and to domestic price stability is assured access to and sound development of energy supply. Accordingly, we support and will encourage the current feasibility studies relating to large scale hydro-electric power. Yukon has been blessed with enormous potential for the utilization of this renewable resource and your government will ensure that its development is fully explored. Further, we intend to encourage a full exploration of coal and wood as energy sources for both power development and domestic use. Both are abundant in Yukon and have been under-utilized in the recent past. Thus, this Government recognizes the importance of energy to an economic development strategy and will move, in the coming year, to develop specific energy policies.

Related to these high priority areas are other important concerns of our government. It is the duty of government to ensure a high quality of education for all its citizens so they can actively participate in a meaningful development of society. The benefits of

a well informed and educated population and a well trained workforce dictate that we must achieve consensus on the means by which we make the education opportunities available to our citizens.

This government is concerned about preserving the right of individuals in local communities to play a part in determining the direction that our educational system will continue to function.

The recent introduction of an educational council, made up of the executive of Yukon school committees, and with two seats for members nominated from Yukon Indian organizations, is aimed at ensuring a direct contact between the grass roots of this Territory and the Department of Education.

This Government will continue to support the introduction of native language and cultural activities in Yukon schools and support their continued existence.

The teacher training program is being further amended for next fall to encourage more residents of our rural communities to take an active role in the education of Yukon students.

Efforts are being made within the Department of Education to expand grade levels in our rural communities so that students will be able to remain in their home community for a longer period of time.

All these developments are the result of demands from our citizens and serve to underline our determination to provide, through a single education system, for the diverse need of all Yukoners without deterioration of the quality of education.

Similarly, this Government believes that to ensure responsive delivery of health care to all Yukon communities we must push ahead with the transfer of health services and facilities from National Health and Welfare. It is our opinion that a smooth and effective transfer of health service responsibility will be of benefit to all citizens and will lead to an eventual improvement of the service.

It is important to understand clearly that our proposal in this regard contains guarantees of health care delivery to Yukon Indians which are superior to those they now possess. While the ultimate responsibility for native health care rights would still belong to the Government of Canada, Yukon would assume the task of delivering these services. Special entitlements are spelled out in the transfer proposal so that, unlike now, no rights could be arbitrarily removed.

With respect to property tax, this government has embarked on a comprehensive review of the legislation so as to avoid ad hoc and piecemeal changes to an Ordinance of such fundamental importance. Our intent is to provide for the orderly changes demanded by the citizens and to provide these changes in a manner that will not adversely affect other segments of the Territory.

To this end your government will introduce a policy paper on Real Property Taxation at the Spring Legislative Session so that all Members might participate in formulating of legislation to be introduced this fall.

In further response to the demands of Yukon citizens, the development of residential lots for all Yukon communities will continue to be a concern of this Government. Details of proposed residential land developments in the coming year will be outlined in the Budget. It remains a concern of this Government to ensure that Yukon residents are provided affordable land in order to obtain affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to proposals and money bills which will be announced later this week, and the concerns of this Government as outlined, this Legislature will also be asked to consider a bill dealing with the Fuel Oil Tax Ordinance.

I anticipate that the forthcoming session of this Legislative Assembly will be busy and productive for all of us as we all bend to the task of providing good government to the citizens of Yukon.

I wish you well in your deliberations. Mr. Speaker, as in the past, my officials and I stand ready to assist you in any way.

Mr. Speaker: At this time I will call the House to Order. We will proceed with prayers.

Prayers

Mr. Speaker: At this time, I would like to introduce to the House from the Jeckell Junior High School, the Pages, who will be assisting the House during this session. They are Susan Kehoe, Vince Deschamps, Carolyn Frankish, Steve Klassen, Cheryl Staley, Robert Kellington, Benita Roske, Chris Herbert, Leanne Wilson, and Michael Yamada. It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome, to the floor of the Legislative Assembly, our new Pages, and I would invite them to attend the House at this time.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Old Crow, that a Bill, entitled An Ordinance to Perpetuate a Certain Ancient Right, be now introduced and read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government Leader, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Human Resources, that An Ordinance to Perpetuate a Certain Ancient Right, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: I beg to inform the Assembly at this time that, in order to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the Speech from the Throne, which I will now lay upon the Table.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Klondike, that the Speech from the Throne be considered on a day following.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government Leader, seconded by the Honourable Member from Klondike, that the Speech from the Throne be considered on a day following.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: In this regard, and concurrent with Standing Order 31, the Chair will designate the next sitting day, being tomorrow, as the first day on which debate in reply will be entertained.

I wish at this time to inform the House that I have received communication from the Deputy Chairman, indicating his intention to resign this position. May I have your pleasure in regard to this vacancy.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Whitehorse North Centre, that Dr. Jack Hibberd, Member for the electoral district of Whitehorse South Centre, be appointed Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government Leader, seconded by the Honourable Member from Whitehorse North Centre, that Dr. Jack Hibberd, Member for the electoral district of Whitehorse South Centre be appointed Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: May I have your further pleasure.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour at the present time to present the first report on the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give Notice of the following motion: Moved by myself, seconded by the Honourable Member for Whitehorse North Centre, that the First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges be concurred in and that Appendix One of this Report be adopted, effective March 8, 1979, as the Standing Orders of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker: What is your further pleasure?

Hon. Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 35 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity.

In view of the contradiction between statements by the RCMP and the Government House Leader's statement yesterday, in which he said: "As a result of conversations with the RCMP, I am satisfied that Mr. Njootli has been cleared of all the allegations made against him". I move, seconded by the Member from Whitehorse West, that it is the opinion of this House that the Government Leader should now make a statement explaining the contradiction between his position and that of the RCMP in respect to the investigation concerning the Honourable Minister of Health and Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker: Under Standing Order 35, such a motion would require the unanimous consent of the House. Does the Honourable Member have the unanimous consent?

Some Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

May I have your further pleasure?

Mr. Lattin: I would like to give notice of the following motion: moved by myself and seconded by the Honourable Member from Porter Creek West, that the Standing Committee on Rules, Election and Privileges consider and make recommendations to the Yukon Legislative Assembly on: (1) the advisability of establishing a Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and (2) the Salaries, indemnities, and allowances of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, included those of the Speaker, and Deputy Speaker and Members of Executive Committee.

Mr. Speaker: May I have your further pleasure? The Honourable Government Leader.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice of motion, moved by myself and seconded by the Honourable Member from Mayo, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr. Speaker: May I have your further pleasure?

BILLS: INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce and give first reading at this time to a Bill entitled Northern Natural Gas Pipeline Agreement Ordinance. Attached to the Bill, Mr. Speaker is the Agreement.

Mr. Speaker: This is seconded by whom?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member from Mayo.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government Leader, seconded by the Honourable Member from Mayo, that a Bill entitled Northern Natural Gas Pipeline Agreement Ordinance, be now introduced and read for the first time.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: May I have your further pleasure?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Hootalinqua, that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, seconded by the Honourable Member from Hootalinqua, that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: Before leaving the chair, I would invite, and I am sure all Members would wish me to invite, the Gallery to a reception in the cafeteria following these proceedings.

Adjourned

