

GREAT SLAVE MEMBER'S STATEMENT – October 19, 2009

HOMELESS DAY SHELTER

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to go on record and applaud BHP Billiton, the City of Yellowknife and the Department of Health and Social Services for their support of homeless people in Yellowknife.

I and many others have expressed concerns about some of the challenges facing the homeless in Yellowknife, especially with the onset of winter. Some of these challenges include the lack of public washroom facilities and the lack of warm, safe places for homeless people to utilize during daytime hours. Fortunately, BHP Billiton, the City of Yellowknife and the Department of Health and Social Services recognized the severity of these problems in downtown Yellowknife and have partnered together to make a difference.

Through this partnership the John Howard Society will be opening and operating a Day Shelter in Yellowknife starting this November. The John Howard Society, based in Yellowknife, is a volunteer organization that promotes just, effective and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime. Homelessness and desperation are a leading cause of crime. So, the John Howard' Society is a logical choice for the operation of this new day shelter.

Initially this initiative was just a pilot, scheduled to last three years. I believe the evidence will be there to suggest an ongoing need and I hope that the partners continue to work together with the John Howards society to make this a success.

Once again, in closing, I would like to applaud BHP Billiton, the City of Yellowknife, the Department of Health and Social Services and the John Howard Society for their vision and commitment to Yellowknife and the people of the Northwest Territories.