

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – October 6, 2008

CABINET COMMUNICATIONS

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last June I made a Member's statement about Cabinet communication and consensus government. As indicated then, I believe in consensus government. I feel that it can and does work. However, for it to be effective takes cooperation from all Members: those in Cabinet and those on this side of the House. Unfortunately, open two-way communication and open dialogue does not always occur.

Toward the end of the May/June session I was optimistic that effective two-way communication between Cabinet and the rest of us was going to be a reality. Since then, there has been improved communication in some areas -- unfortunately, not in all areas.

Specifically, I'm talking about the recent actions undertaken by the Premier with respect to advancing the devolution and resource revenue sharing negotiations with the federal government. I'm not criticizing the proposal that the Premier has presented to the federal government. It may be a great deal. It may be the best deal that this territory can get. It may even be the right deal.

Mr. Speaker, my problem is that we, the 11 Regular Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly don't have or know any of the details of this

proposal. Resource revenue sharing and devolution are incredibly important to the future of the NWT. As elected officials, all 19 of us need to have input and provide some direction on where we, as a territory, go with respect to these issues. Unfortunately, we are once again being told by Cabinet what's being done. We are not included in the decision-making, and are not being permitted to work together in the best interest of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Today I would like to encourage the Premier and Cabinet to think about the commitment each of them made during the first TLC of this Assembly. Further, I would like to remind you that membership on the Executive Council is a privilege and a four-year term is not guaranteed. Working together is critical for the success of this Legislature and consensus government.

At the appropriate time I will be asking the Premier some questions on the status of the devolution and resource revenue sharing agreements between Cabinet and the federal government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.