

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE -- October 23, 2008

NWT POWER CORPORATION

Thank you Mr. Speaker,

Last week in this House the Lead Minister for the Minister's Energy Coordinating Committee tabled the draft NWT Hydro Strategy and GNWT Energy Priorities Framework. Energy is an increasingly important issue for our constituents. How much do we have? How much does it cost? Can our environment cope with our demands? The GNWT also faces increased energy costs, along with higher costs for services we already provide and strategic initiatives we would like to pursue.

We are looking at expanding our existing hydro developments to offer electricity to industry. We are looking at alternative energy sources like biomass and wind. These are all worthwhile clean energy initiatives that can help address the energy needs of the NWT in the future. But they will not address the majority of our energy needs in the foreseeable future. Meeting these energy demands of our Territory will require huge investment. With our own borrowing limit set at \$500 million by the federal government, and limited capacity under this limit to borrow, how will we take the bold steps required to do progressive things on the energy front?

The energy potential of our Territory is huge. The Premier has made comments in this House about leaving no stone unturned to come up with solutions to our Energy problem. I believe that the Northwest Territories Power Corporation should play a role in this solution. The NWT Power Corp sometimes gets a bad rap, and rightfully so, for increasing our power rates when the costs to generate this fuel are going down, or when the power consumption of our residents goes down. I sometimes question

whether we need the Power Corporation at all. They are supposed to be the people's power supplier, yet there seems to be limited thought about the public as prices continue to climb and bonuses continue to be offered to senior staff. The business case that the Power Corporation is based on seems antiquated and in dire needs of a complete makeover or a complete elimination and substituted with something unique and current, built by Northerners for Northerners.

Also, the fee structure is based on southern models from decades ago. I hope the future role of the NWT Power Corporation will be based on a new approach to an old problem. I am encouraged to see talk of partnerships in the documents I mentioned earlier in my statement.

Partnerships can bring new ways of doing things, larger amounts of capital investment dollars, and expertise in their respective fields. The NWT is growing in stature, and thinking only within our own borders about solutions to bigger issues belongs in the past.

I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation at the appropriate time.

1. What role does the Minister see for the NTPC in the energy future of the Territory?
2. What kinds of partnerships are possible on energy projects?
3. What specific NWT energy projects can gain from partnerships with private industry?
4. Is the GNWT or NTPC actively seeking partnerships on any energy projects in the NWT?