Nunatsiaq News

ᓄᓇᑦᓯᐊᖅ ᐊᕐᕌᒍᓐᓇᖅ

FEBRUARY
ᐃᕙᕐᕕᐊᓕ
16, 1990

ᐃᒪᓐᓂ
50¢
IN IQALUIT

BOX 8 • IQALUIT • NWT • XOA OHO ISSN 07027915 ᐊᖏᔪ YEAR 18 • ᓈᒻᒉ NUMBER 3

Second Class Mail # 6209 — Smiths Falls, Ontario Weekly Second Class Mail #3076 — Frobisher Bay, N.W.T.

Patterson denies GNWT support of Kiggavik

by Janet Smellie

YELLOWKNIFE—Government Leader Dennis Patterson has stated neither he nor his cabinet ministers have offered an official "go ahead" for the proposed Kiggavik Uranium Mine project, despite federal documents stating otherwise.

Patterson made the remarks after Aivilik MLA Peter Ernerk called immediate notice to a federal report written by the NWT Director General of Indian and Northern Affairs stating that the GNWT had offered its support for the project.

The covering letter, written by Northern Affairs Director General W. J. Stephen, claimed the enclosed report was the result of "candid conversations that I had with deputy ministers in the territorial government."

The report stated that "after very thorough environmental screening and extensive public hearings and political debate, the territorial government will approve the Kiggavik Uranium mine," adding, "construction will start about 1995."

Ernerk says he received a press release from Keewatin Inuit Association President Louis Pilakapsi, who demanded that Patterson explain "why

PATTERSON—2

PATTERSON, from page 1

the territorial government, in public, is sitting on the fence about Kiggavik, and why his deputy ministers tell the federal government, in private, that they believe the project will go ahead."

"People in the Keewatin are already angry that the GNWT has not begun to vigorously oppose the Kiggavik proposal. I want the GNWT to take a clear public position opposing the proposed mine," Pilakapsi stated.

"Our position, as has been announced, is that we are waiting for the (FEARO) hearings before we take a position," Patterson said. He added, "the contents of the letter certainly are not true, and I am sure the honourable member would not hold me responsible for statements made by a federal public servant."

Meanwhile, Ernerk, who told *Nunatsiaq News* that such controversy would be alleviated if the GNWT did in fact make its position known on the proposed mine once and for all, says he will call for a motion on the government's position in the next few weeks.

The motion, he says, will be along the lines of the one passed by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference last summer in Greenland. It stated that until all the research has been completed on the proposed mine, they will not support the project.

"I think the government has placed a lot of hardships on the people of Baker Lake and the people of the Northwest Territories by not telling the people of the Keewatin that we're at least going to say 'no' to uranium mining until we know all the facts," Ernerk says.

Another motion Ernerk is going to try to pass is that the eventual position the GNWT takes on the proposed mine will be one made by the consensus of the legislature, not by cabinet alone.