

Nunatsiaq News

ᑎᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓂᓄᓐ

MARCH
19
9, 1990

Δᓄᓐᓂᓐ
50¢
IN IQALUIT

BOX 8 • IQALUIT • NWT • XOA OHO

Second Class Mail # 6209 — Smiths Falls, Ontario

ISSN 07027915

Weekly

ᑎᓄᓐᓂᓐ ᓂᓄᓐ YEAR 18 • ᓄᓐᓂᓐ NUMBER 6

Second Class Mail #3076 — Frobisher Bay, N.W.T.

Motion opposing Kiggavik stalled by Legislative Assembly

by Janet Smellie

YELLOWKNIFE—A motion seeking unequivocal opposition by the Territories' Legislative Assembly to the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine near Baker Lake was left hanging last week when the issue was thrown to the Assembly's Committee of the Whole for discussion later.

Moved by Aivilik MLA Peter Ernerk and seconded by Tu Nedé MLA Don Morin, the motion was proposed on behalf of the thousands of Inuit who live in "day-to-day fear" of the proposed mine, Ernerk told *Nunatsiaq News*. "The government's tactics are clear. They (cabinet) don't see relieving the great anxiety of the people as a priority."

The motion details the historical opposition to uranium mining by previous Legislative Assemblies, and explains how, during the Legislative Assembly's session in 1981, a similar motion was proposed and was fully supported by current Government Leader Dennis Patterson.

Patterson had also expressed his support of a motion passed in May 1982, stating "We should have no excuses by the fall for not being fully prepared to take a position on this subject. The information is in.... We are now in a position to make an informed decision on this issue."

However, last week's motion

didn't even get past opening comments by Ernerk and Morin before Justice Minister Mike Ballantyne moved that the motion be referred to the Committee of the Whole. Ernerk says this reaffirms the present government's refusal to take a stand on the issue.

"It's very frightening that the government isn't letting the people of the Northwest Territories know where it stands. Referring the motion to the committee for debate means it could be delayed until next fall's session."

The Committee of the Whole is already backlogged with budget reviews and approvals of 19 GNWT departments and

boards (seven departments have been deferred after initial review). It will not have the chance to meet again until March 20, 1990, following a two-week break of the legislature. Before it can consider Ernerk's motion, four other matters are scheduled for study, including the report by the Standing Committee on Finance of the 1990/91 main estimates, and a long-awaited consideration of the issue of family violence.

"I feel a deep sense of responsibility to the people I represent. It's not the end of the world.... I'll keep at it until the government takes a stand," Ernerk says.

To date, opposition to the proposed mine has been clearly demonstrated by Keewatin residents by way of petitions

(1,700 signatures) from five communities. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference has also offered its full support of the Inuit. The proposed mine has been publicly opposed by the Keewatin Inuit Association, the Keewatin Regional Council, the Keewatin Wildlife Federation, the Beverly Kaminuriak Caribou Management Board, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, two concerned citizens' committees in Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet, the NWT Federation of Labour, Ecology North and Nuclear Free North.