



16th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Standing Committee on Government Operations

Report on the Review of the
Office of the Northwest Territories
Languages Commissioner
Annual Report 2009-2010

Chair: Mr. Kevin Menicoche

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May 12, 2011

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on GNWT Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner Annual Report 2009-2010, and commends it to the House.



Kevin Menicoche, MLA
Chairperson

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER
ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO) met on March 3, 2011 to review "The Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner Annual Report 2009-2010". The Committee would like to thank the Languages Commissioner, Ms. Sarah Jerome, for presenting her report.

COMMENTARY

The Office of the Languages Commissioner is accessible through its website, a toll-free phone line and an office in Inuvik. It is promoted through radio advertisements in all official languages and by Ms. Jerome, in her frequent attendance at public functions, and when she is interviewed by the media.

The Committee notes that promotion of languages is not in the Official Languages Commissioner's purview. However, it is Ms. Jerome's role to promote the office of the Languages Commissioner, the rights, status and privileges of official language speakers pursuant to the *Official Languages Act*, and her availability to answer questions or investigate complaints.

The Committee is also pleased with the approach taken by Ms. Jerome. As part of her regular practice, she attends summer assemblies and regional council meetings throughout the Northwest Territories. In 2009-2010, the Commissioner made more than a dozen presentations on official languages at these assemblies and other meetings and conferences. Ms. Jerome's presence and her sincere interest help to support community members involved in promotion, revitalization and enhancement of first languages.

When she is attending meetings, conferences and school functions Ms. Jerome responds to many inquiries. She also investigates complaints. The Committee respects and values Ms. Jerome's observations and good judgement. Ms. Jerome, subject to Article 20(2) of the *Official Languages Act*, may

investigate any matter, not just complaints, on her own initiative. If Ms. Jerome deems an issue worthy of study, Members will welcome reading her findings and recommendations in future annual reports.

CONCLUSION

The Standing Committee on Government Operations would like to thank Ms. Jerome for her activities promoting the role of the Languages Commissioner. Her many community visits to make presentations and to listen to peoples' concerns give her a valuable perspective on language issues.