

H & K Communications

72 Elvaston Avenue
Nepean, Ontario
K2G 3X9

Phone: (613) 829-1800
Fax: (613) 829-2449
E-mail: hturkow@rogers.com

SOURCE: PCO

DATE: MARCH 11, 2013

REFERENCE/ RÉFÉRENCE: 1103doc1

LOCATION/LIEU: YELLOWKNIFE, NWT

TIME/ HEURE: 14:00

LENGTH/DURÉE: 7:43 MINUTES

PRIME MINISTER'S MEDIA AVAILABILITY IN YELLOWKNIFE

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-6181 E-mail hturkow@home.com

For Internal Information and Research Purposes only

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Good afternoon. This is a short visit, but a productive one, and I thought we'd give a chance to answer a couple of questions before I'm in the air again.

MODERATOR: We'll begin with Bob Webber from CP.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, in your mind, how fine an agreement is this? We've got public consultations coming up with citizens of the NWT and the aboriginal governments as well. How much room is there to move in this agreement?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, you know, obviously a lot of work has gone into this between ourselves, the territorial government, and those groups who have been participating. By constitutional law, of course, we're required to complete consultations, including with those who are not participants. So we can't, obviously cannot rule out changes, but obviously, as I've said this morning, the heavy lifting has been done, and I would think that what we witnessed this morning will certainly get us a long way to what we eventually approve, and hopefully are able to implement by April of 2014. That remains our deadline to get all of this squared away.

MODERATOR: Ok, next question, Chris Windeyer, Up Here business magazine.

REPORTER: Hello. I'm wondering if you can explain why the federal government's one third interest in the Norman Wells oil field was not included in this agreement, and is that, I guess, a subject for negotiation at a later date?

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-2449 E-mail hturkow@rogers.com

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: The reason it's not part of it is the federal government's one third interest is not a royalty. This is in a way very similar to the Hibernia situation. In the case of Norman Wells, as in the case of Hibernia, the federal government is actually a partner in the development, and actually a co-owner of the operation there. So it is not a royalty in the governmental sense. It's actually our share as a co-owner of the facility. So it's a commercial interest.

REPORTER: So just to reiterate, is that up for negotiation later at some point? Like, would the federal government consider divesting it, or...

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: We would only... we only divest commercial assets based on market arrangements and commercial value.

MODERATOR: Next question, Layla Beaudoin from CBC North.

REPORTER: Hello. I'm wondering – oh, sorry – if you can give us an update on the Tuk-Inuvik highway, the developments, where we are right now.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Sure. Yeah, I just had lunch with Premier McLeod, and I indicated to the Premier in lunch that the federal government will be increasing its contribution to that particular project. The Premier assured me that based on that contribution, that that should allow the project to go ahead. I know he'll be having some discussions with other members of the legislature on that, but I'll leave further announcements on that to him, but look, I'm optimistic that with this additional contribution, that we'll see that project get underway.

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-2449 E-mail hturkow@rogers.com

MODERATOR: Next question, John McFadden, CJCD.

REPORTER: Hi...

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: I said to the Premier, I can't promise every time I come up here that we'll have announcements this big. (LAUGHTER)

REPORTER: Prime Minister, I ask this question with respect to the Premier.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Oh, there's the Premier. Sorry! I didn't know you...

REPORTER: Prime Minister, the protesters out front say you're not really turning the resources of the Northwest Territories over to the NWT, you're turning them over to the Premier and his cabinet, and they're not happy about that. I just wonder what your response would be to those folks, those 20, 30, 50 people that were out front today.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, obviously our... when we negotiate devolution with the territory, that negotiation is with the territorial government, as in the case of Yukon and here, so it is an agreement with the territory. At the same time, obviously part of that negotiation, and particularly spearheaded by the territory, has been the negotiation with aboriginal governments as well. Five major aboriginal governments are participants. And look, I will leave debates about... beyond that about politics and resource sharing and projects and what are priorities and not priorities to the territorial legislature. They will ultimately be the ones making those detailed decisions, but that's who, when we talk about devolution to a province-like entity, we're talking about the territorial government.

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-2449 E-mail hturkow@rogers.com

MODÉRATRICE : Et la dernière question va à Noémie Bérubé de La Quillon.

JOURNALISTE : Bonsoir, Monsieur Premier ministre. Nous avons eu des informations par rapport aux retombées économiques des Territoires du Nord-ouest, mais pouvez-vous nous dire s'il vous plaît quel sera l'impact de la dévolution sur le budget fédéral?

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER : C'est difficile de dire, mais je peux dire que plus de 60 millions \$ seront transférés à la territoire pour... au territoire pour l'administration des terres et des ressources, qui est, en effet, le cœur de cette entente. En même temps, le territoire a la capacité de gagner 50 pour cent des revenus des ressources additionnels au transfert pour le financement territorial. C'est difficile de dire quel sera exactement ce montant. Ça dépend évidemment de l'activité dans le secteur minier et secteur des ressources en général, mais évidemment nous avons considéré ces choses en développant notre budget fédéral. C'est, franchement, en comparaison à nos transferts, c'est une petite partie, parce que pour exemple, le transfert, les transferts pour le financement territorial est plus d'un milliard de dollars par année, 30 pour cent plus grand que quand nous étions arrivés en fonction, et c'est additionnel aux transferts aux provinces pour la santé et l'éducation, des choses comme ça. Mais évidemment ça va aider la situation territoriale, mais le Premier ministre ici, il a déjà un surplus. Je dis c'est différent que notre situation.

I'll just answer that in English. Look, it's difficult to say the precise value of the transfer because it depends particularly on resources in the mining sector, and the formula in the agreement allows for the province to keep 50 percent of those additional resource revenues, up to five percent of its

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-2449 E-mail hturkow@rogers.com

gross revenue base. But one must remember, that is a relatively small amount in comparison to the territorial financing formula. Through the territorial financing formula, which is a billion dollars a year, it's increased 30 percent, over 30 percent under our government. That amount is additional to provincial transfers for health and education. So it's in addition to already significant transfers, but as I just mentioned, the Premier here is already running a surplus, and I'm not running a surplus yet, so maybe at some point he'll transfer money to me. (LAUGHTER)

MODERATOR: Ok, that concludes the media availability. Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Thanks, everybody.
Great.

(1162 words)

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-2449 E-mail hturkow@rogers.com