

Below is a report on the questions from youth to Minister Lathin and his answers at the Northern Youth Town Hall Meeting in Thompson. Websites and additional information to his answers has been provided in italics.

Minister Oscar Lathin
Northern Youth Town Hall Meeting in Thompson
February 8, 2003

Minister's Opening Remarks:

- Thanked the Department of Education and Youth for organizing the event.
- Regrets were given by Minister Ashton and Minister Lemieux who were unable to attend the event as they were out of town at other important events.
- Other MLA's were on route, but due to problems with the plane's heater; they unfortunately had to turn back to Winnipeg and were unable to attend the event.
- He explained and spoke in depth on the Northern Development Strategy. The main priorities of the strategy are Employment and Training, Transportation, Housing, Health and Economic Development. He provided a copy of the document to all youth attending.

What is the Northern Development Strategy?

The Northern Development Strategy (NDS) is a long term plan that identifies opportunities to develop the human and natural resources in the North - changes which will benefit the people of the region.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/nds.html>

Question and Answer Period

Question:

Issues like drugs, alcohol, and violence are major problems with youth in Northern Manitoba. What can the government do for us?

Answer:

Other departments like Family Services and Housing, Healthy Child Manitoba and Education and Youth are looking into those issues.

A variety of programs can be found under the Health and Lifestyle as well as Recreation and Culture links of the MB4Youth.ca web site. For those that do not have access to the Internet, they can call 204-945-3556 or 1-800-282-8069 ext. 3556.

The Northern Youth Councils Project in Northern Manitoba is found at the Ma Mow We Tak Friendship Centre. The council is designing culturally appropriate initiatives with northern aboriginal youth to assist in reducing adolescent pregnancies. To find out more, call Debbie Mercredi 204-677-0988 or email at youthcouncil@mamowwetak.mb.ca.

To learn more about Health and Wellness Programs, click on <http://www.gov.mb.ca/hcm/programs/had/programs.html#culture> or to find out about the Healthy Adolescent Development Strategy contact:

*Healthy Child Manitoba
219-114 Garry Street*

Winnipeg MB R3C 4V6
Phone: (204) 945-2266
Toll Free: 1-888-848-0140
Email: healthychild@gov.mb.ca

Question:

What is Manitoba doing about trees after logging is completed?

Answer:

Forestry is under the Department of Conservation and they're doing things, like surveys, clear cut licensing. Licensing has a lot of stipulations and we are monitoring people who are applying for them to ensure that proper reforestation takes place.

Question:

My question deals with Education on reserves and the qualification of teachers? We need teachers that can teach all subjects and are knowledgeable in them.

Answer:

Discussions are ongoing with Education Authorities. The decision on what teachers get hired is a local decision. The challenge of keeping teachers in Northern communities continues. The government is trying to find ways to encourage youth in the communities to pursue education and return to their community. There are some youth that chose to work as Educational Assistants. These young people often become interested in becoming a teacher from their work experience. The government wants to encourage these young people to continue their education and to return to their communities once they have finished their degree.

The Brandon University Northern Teacher Education community-based Program offers an opportunity for residents of Manitoba to enter an exciting career in teaching through a university that is an acknowledged leader in community-based teacher training.

This innovative program presents a real alternative to traditional campus-based teacher training. Many residents of Northern Manitoba are unable to attend a university campus, largely because of location, lack of financial resources and/or educational preparedness. BUNTEP eliminates much of the financial and social hardships brought about by long-term resettlement to a university campus. In addition, by offering the program in the students' community, BUNTEP contributes to both the educational and economic development of Northern and Rural Manitoba communities.

For more info, go to <http://www.brandonu.ca/Academic/Education/buntep/buntep-htm>.

Question:

What kind of supports are there for cultural activities for native youth? Granville Lake needs programs like more education, cultural, traditional programs. Other students voiced similar questions asking about money for cultural, educational and traditional programming for their communities? They wanted to start up a drop in centre, build a play ground as well as have a variety of cultural programs for the community.

Answer:

Many communities are in desperate need! I have met with the Granville and talked with local leaders to find out what the greatest needs are. I wanted to help youth to get involved. I will be having ongoing discussions with the community.

Opaskwayak Cree First Nation(OCN) learned that these issues weren't being addressed so they made changes. They introduced language and cultural programs to the school curriculum. These programs are being taught now. Ministers Lathlin and Minister Robinson are pushing for more aboriginal programs and more specifically, programs that look at treaties and inform the larger community about aboriginal history.

Below is additional information on culture and recreation programs.

1) The Sun Fund and the Sunshine fund are available to youth age 5 to 18 years of age. Camperships are purchased for youth who are economically disadvantaged to enable them to attend summer camps. For more info, contact:

*Ellen Kelley
Culture, Heritage and Tourism
6th Floor, 213 Notre Dame Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3B 1N3
Phone: (204) 945-4401
ekelley@gov.mb.ca*

2) Manitoba Community Services Council Inc. Grants provide support for Manitoba community services organizations through the allocation of funds or bingo dates or both. Those eligible include: non-profit volunteer organizations that provide various social and community services for the benefit of their communities as well as recreation, youth, and seniors' services, health-related services and other social services.

*Catherine Roberts, Executive Director
Manitoba Community Services Council Inc.
102 - 90 Garry Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4H1
Telephone: (204) 940-4450
Fax: (204) 453-2692*

<http://db.itt.gov.mb.ca/databases/brc/Otamiska.nsf/0/015538d39c6234ee8625672400718225?OpenDocument>

3) Aboriginal and Northern Affairs provides recreation funds to support 13 full time recreation directors who serve the following 18 communities: Ahgaming, seymourville, Bissett, Berens River, Crane River, Spence Lake, Camperville, Duck Bay, Barrows, National Mills, Red Deer Lake, Cormorant, Moose Lake, Brochet, South Indian Lake, Wabowden, Cross Lake and Norway House.

Stewart Sabiston 204-622-2148

Mike Thomas 204-677-6874

4) On February 28, 2003, the government announced...

[Recreation In The "Hub Of The North" Receives Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program Funding](#) THOMPSON, Manitoba – The Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program will provide \$2.5 million to support a new regional community centre that will

soon offer Thompson residents more sport and leisure opportunities, and enhance the city's efforts to attract major events.

Question:

Student from Tadoule stated it is very expensive to go to school. Better funding for post-secondary students is needed? What is the government doing?

Answer:

It wasn't that long ago, back in 1972, that there were few Indians that graduated from high school. There has been progress made in education. I look around at all of you and see that you are close to your graduation year. There is still a long way to go. Education authorities and aboriginal groups are also concerned with increasing the number of aboriginal youth that go to post-secondary and how they can be assisted. We are looking at improving access to student loans. We are continuing to look at how we can support aboriginal youth in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

Other government initiatives to support aboriginal education include:

1) *Access Programs*

The ACCESS programs are designed to assist priority group members to access post-secondary education. Priority groups would be those Manitobans who, due to geographic, financial, and academic barriers, would not be able to easily access post-secondary education. The programs are primarily, but not exclusively, meant for Aboriginal, northerners, women, immigrants and people from visible minority groups.

For more information, check out the links below:

<http://www.copse.mb.ca/en/institutions/access/index.htm>

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/unicoll/access.html>

2) *University College of the North*

On May 2, 2003, Advanced Education and Training Minister Diane McGifford announced that the province is moving ahead with plans to establish the University College of the North (UCN). For more info, check:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2003/05/2003-05-02-03.html>

3) *The Manitoba Student Aid Program*

This provides supplemental financial assistance for post-secondary educational purposes, to Manitobans with limited finances. For additional information on types of financial assistance available and how to apply, check:

<http://www.studentaid.gov.mb.ca/>

Question:

From Wabowden – Unemployment in her community has increased and the effect of the Tolko mill strike is having a big impact on the community. Can the government do something to stop the strike? What is happening?

Answer:

Minister Lathlin stated that he has met with her community and the union leaders and as of now, they are taking a step back. The issues there also effect The Pas. He stated the strike can not go on much longer. If it continues the damages it will create will be too far gone. The Premier is going up to see what he can do to help on the strike.

Minister Lathlin also stated that his government introduced legislation that requires the two sides of a union dispute to get together to talk within 60 days or mediation/arbitration will be enforced.

The province appointed a mediator for arbitration and the strike ended on March 2, 2003.

Question:

Further to the last question, the student felt that some people in the community did not understand that they were voting on whether to strike. They thought they were voting on a pre-strike. She asked if it mattered that people were misinformed? Could something be done?

Answer:

Minister Lathlin said to his understanding the vote was clearly on whether to strike or not. It is important to know what you are voting for. Unfortunately, nothing can be done now as the vote has taken place and the workers made their choice.

Question:

Garden Hill

Derrin Flett wants to know what is being done about the garbage problem in his community?

Answer:

When he was Minister of Conservation he was informed about this issue. Minister Lathlin stated some programs the government has like the Stewardship Program, Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention Program (WRAPP) address the environment and the community.

General information on the Manitoba Products Stewardship Program can be found at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2002/03/2002-03-07-01.html>

The Household Hazardous Waste program in the Pollutions Prevention Branch also offers a variety of information on resources available to the community. <http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/hhw/faq.html>

Additional information on the Waste Reduction in Manitoba and WRAPP (The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act) can be found at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/environ/pages/emd/pollprev/wrap/wraphome.html>

The minister also stated he met with Joe Guy Wood at Garden Hill and was willing to provide some money to help out from the Northern Forest Diversification Centre (NFDC). The Minister encouraged youth to get involved and stated that they could initiate a recycling program like other areas have. One example is the recycling program in Thompson. Other areas with environmental programs are Cross Lake and Norway House. The Pas and OCN have an interesting program that targets Colomb, Lynn Lake, Easterville and Grand Rapids.

In a press release dated March 13, 2003, Minister Oscar Lathlin announced \$350,000 additional provincial support for the Northern Forest Diversification Centre, a demonstration project located in The Pas. "The centre, through the use of local resources, is meeting the challenge of creating employment opportunities for residents in remote areas, which is a key priority of Manitoba's Northern Development Strategy," said Lathlin. "The centre has been acknowledged for its community economic development work by the Premier's Economic Advisory Council which includes more than 30 volunteers representing business, labour, the community and Aboriginal peoples."

Question:

Tadoule Lake

We have a police station that is not being used.

Answer:

Minister Lathlin was not aware that a police station was not being used and will enquire to the R.C.M.P as to why?

Question:

Lynn Lake

Highways in northern Manitoba are in terrible shape. What is your government doing about it? Why can't access roads be available to everyone?

Answer:

Before the NDP took power, only 5% of the \$110M budget was allocated for Northern Road Development. Now with the NDP, 22% of the current budget is allocated. Transportation will increase its budget by 25-30% this year.

In the past, access roads were built over frozen lakes because it was cheaper. Access roads are now being built over land rather than on frozen lakes it provides a base for all weather roads. Having a base helps when all weather roads are built for long term settlement as it helps to cut costs during the construction.

Question:

South Indian Lake

What percentage of funding goes to northern schools?

Answer:

First Nations Schools are funded by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and not the provincial government. For those schools funded by the provincial government, Education and Youth, schools are provided funding on a student per capita basis. The annual increase to the funding to schools is based on the annual increase in the Gross Domestic Product or GDP. On the campaign trail the premier promises to increase funding year by year, and since there has been an annual increase of GDP, school divisions have received an increase year to year.