

Minister Bob McLeod's Opening Remarks
NWT Day Reception, February 19, 2010

Ladies and gentleman, I'd like to echo Premier Roland's previous comments and take this time to thank you all for coming to our reception and for celebrating our day – NWT Day – with us here at Canada's Northern House.

I'm a lifelong resident of the Northwest Territories – a Métis, born and raised in the small community of Fort Providence. It's a place with a population of about 700 people. In fact, you could probably fit everyone from Fort Providence into the building we stand in today.

The NWT is like that – sparsely populated communities spread out over a huge land mass of roughly 1.2 million square kilometres.

But while our population of just over 43,000 people might be small, the dreams and aspirations of our territory are as large as the land we live in.

Those large aspirations are a key reason why, with the Olympic Games coming to Canada for the first time since 1988, the Government of the Northwest Territories decided it had to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase our territory as a great place to visit, live, invest in and work.

Canada's Northern House, which has welcomed over 70,000 visitors since it opened its doors and over 50,000 during the first week of the Games, is part of our efforts to showcase the NWT. But we also have visual and performing artists, youth ambassadors and Arctic sports athletes at the Games. They are all here to give you, and the world, a glimpse of what our territory has to offer.

And what our territory has to offer is endless experiences and opportunities: in mining, oil and gas, arts and fine crafts, tourism and much more. We're a dynamic territory with a past we're proud of and a future we're excited about.

Ladies and gentlemen, with our friendly people, our vibrant communities, our beautiful land and our economic potential, we think the Northwest Territories is Canada's best kept secret.

However, we don't want to be a secret any longer. We think the NWT is the place to be. We want the world to think that, too.

So my sincere wish is that on NWT Day, what you see and experience here will drive home to you what our 43,000 residents already know – the Northwest Territories is indeed the land of opportunity.

Thank you. Enjoy the rest of the reception and enjoy NWT Day.