

# Simpson seeking flight subsidy

*Transporting employees to Yukon an option*

by Derek Neary  
Northern News Services  
Lidlii Kue/Fort Simpson

Fort Simpson is leaning on the territorial government to help it benefit from the CanTung mine.

Tom Wilson and Pat Rowe pushed Resources and Economic Development Minister Jim Antoine for subsidies to fly mine employees from Fort Simpson to Whitehorse or Watson Lake, where they would be driven to the mine site. The appeal came during a mine tour for Deh Cho delegates organized by Antoine last Friday.

Wilson, mayor of Fort Simpson, and Rowe, representing the Fort Simpson Chamber of Commerce, argued that the GNWT could surely provide some funding, especially if the NWT's future CanTung mine workers were part of an apprenticeship program.

Rowe suggested that outside residents may even settle down in the Fort Simpson if they knew they had reliable transportation to the mine where most employees work for the straight weeks and then get three weeks off.

Antoine made no promises, but said the idea could be explored for an "interim period," only until the mine becomes profitable.

North American Tungsten president Udo von Doehren jumped at the

employees from the NWT. He said his junior mining company can't foot the bill on its own.

"It's outside our economic capacity. We cannot afford to do these things," von Doehren said.

"Logistics has been a killer. It costs a huge amount of money to move people around."

The mine is supplied by a road in the Yukon. It's the "economic lifeline ... and there's nothing we can do about that," said von Doehren.

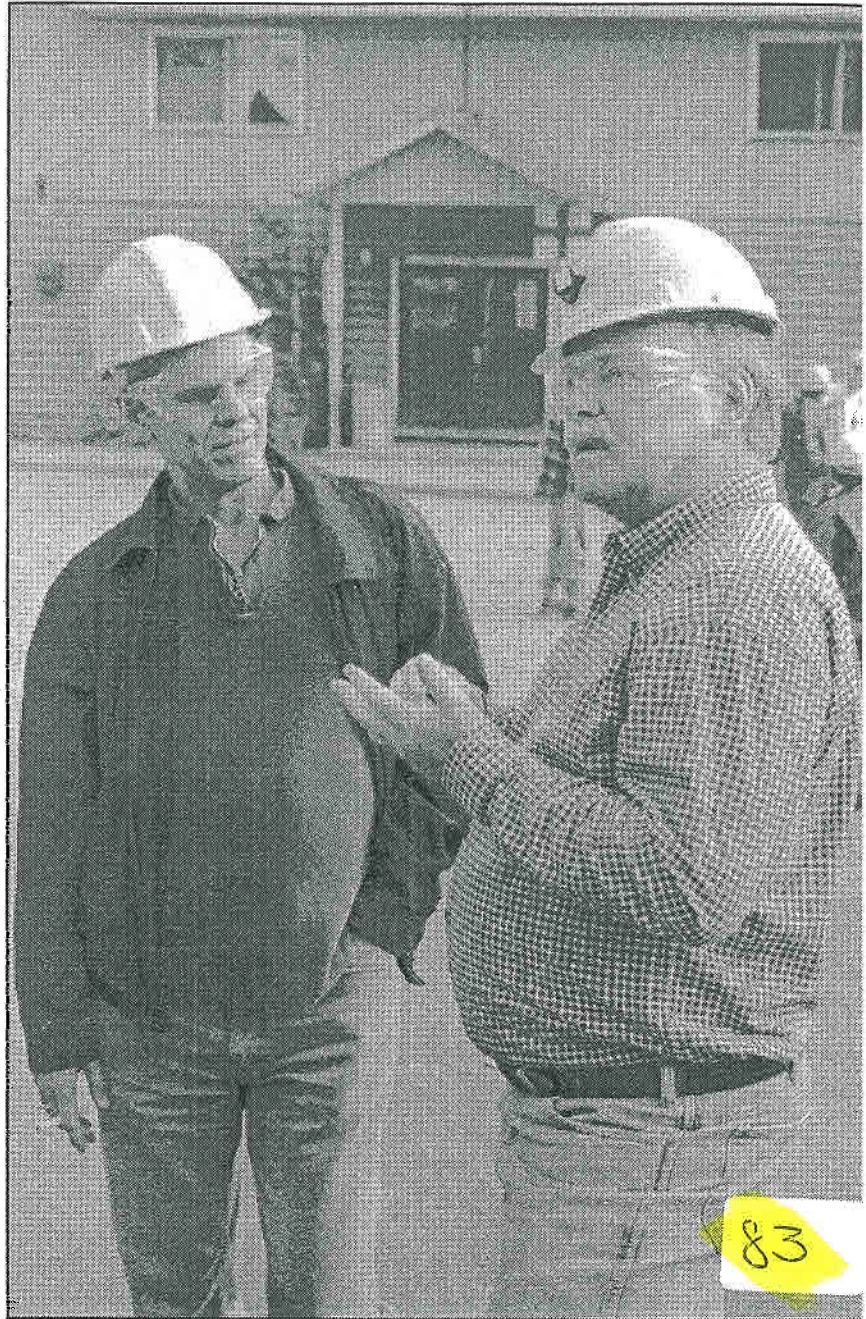
Other delegates, such as Julie Capot-Blanc, Bert Tsetso and Jonas Lafferty, were interested in mining occupations available for aboriginal people.

Michael Redfearn, mill superintendent, noted that a recruitment drive in Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte in November resulted in 11 hires. However, Dwayne Berreault, of Fort Liard, is the only Deh Cho resident still working at the CanTung.

"They weren't used to working indoors," Redfearn said of the employees who did not return.

"We are looking for people," he added.

"We have an excellent training program that we put everybody



North American Tungsten president Udo von Doehren, right, chats with Fort Simpson Mayor Tom Wilson.

## CanTung nuggets

- The mine is churning out 950 to 1,000 tons of ore per day; approximately 25 tons of tungsten concentrate daily. Tungsten is the world's hardest known metal and is used in light bulbs, drill bits, military weapons and various tools.
- Close to \$10 million in capital was spent to refurbish the mine. Expenditures since production resumed in January have amounted to nearly another \$22 million (36 per cent of that has been spent in the North, according to a North American Tungsten fact sheet). The mine's annual budget is \$30 million.

millions of dollars in loans from its two major clients, Sandvik and Osram Sylvania, which have guaranteed floor prices for their tungsten purchases. North American Tungsten now has until Jan. 15 to begin repayment on its loans.

• CanTung employs nearly 170 people (105-110 on site at any given time) and has contracted another 30 workers.

• The mine went back into production in January after being dormant for 1 years. It originally opened in 1962.

• CanTung has a three-year lifespan based on its current reserves, but a underground exploration program

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