

Canadian Ministers meet on housing crisis

WHITEHORSE (CP) - Problems like homelessness and affordable housing cross provincial and territorial boundaries, so the ministers responsible will work together to solve them, they announced at a conference this week.

The ministers will meet roughly every six months, several ministers said last Wednesday. "We found that

although there was significant differences between different parts of Canada, there was also many issues of common concern," said Eric Fairclough, minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corp. Ministers from B.C., Alberta, Ontario, Newfoundland and P.E.I. attended the conference, although all 13 Canadian jurisdictions were represent-

ed. "In the Yukon, we do have some homelessness but it isn't as big as overcrowding," Fairclough said.

The ministers from B.C. and Alberta spoke about the homelessness problems they face. "The issue of hard-to-house and the issue of homelessness is one that really is a pain issue," said Alberta minister Walter Paszkowski. "It's one that every province

has some degree of." B.C.'s Jim Doyle said Canadians have a responsibility to remedy homelessness.

"Surely, we, as the number-one rated country by the United Nations, Canada shouldn't be looking at homeless people in any part of the country," he said. "There's a growing need for social housing in our country. There's homeless people

out there. We must take care of them."

The federal government was not represented at the meeting. Fairclough said the president of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC) was asked to come, but declined. "Frankly, I'm disappointed the federal government wasn't at the table," Paszkowski said. "I think there's a role for the federal

government to play and they should be present."

The ministers spoke specifically about First Nations housing, which is under federal jurisdiction. "We need additional resources, probably beyond what we can leverage at the provincial level, to address native housing issues," said Newfoundland minister Lloyd