

# 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly

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### Procurement of Government Office Space

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today about government procurement, and how it relates specifically to office space. With 4,400 employees, the GNWT is the largest customer for office space in the Territories.

First, Mr. Speaker, I would like to paint a picture. The total of all purchased goods and services by the Government of the Northwest Territories is in the neighbourhood of \$200 million per year. Of this, Mr. Speaker, 40 percent, or about \$75 million, is spent in what I would deem to be a non-competitive nature. How could this be allowed to happen, when the Government of the Northwest Territories says that it is an open, honest and accountable government?

Sole source contracts, negotiated contracts, and standing offer agreements continue to make up far too much of our spending as a government. When it comes to office space, the government's use of anti-competitive secret procurement practices discourages private investment in our communities, as well as reducing the confidence the business community has in open, transparent and honest government, at the regional and territorial levels, Mr. Speaker.

Secret procurement and deals done without a competitive process are usually the worst kind and often the most expensive, and, ultimately, lead to fewer funds being available for other needed services provided by government. The government has been vocal about rising energy costs and supporting the environment, but how are they putting this into action when it comes to procuring office space?

When an RFP is issued on an older, less energy-efficient building, as compared to a newer, energy-efficient building, it is like comparing apples to oranges. In looking at a recent RFP from Public Works and Services, the evaluation criteria consisted of cost, management, facility requirements and northern preference. There is no evaluation of how green or energy-efficient a building is.

In light of the current times, and increases to fuel and rising energy costs, it is time that the Government of the Northwest Territories starts to practice what it preaches in terms of evaluating office space with energy efficiency in mind, and to go to an open and competitive process whenever possible. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions regarding procurement practices for office space for the Minister of Public Works and Services, at the appropriate time. Thank you.

---Applause