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Public Information Campaign To Denormalize Alcohol Abuse

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to join my colleagues in speaking about alcohol and its impact on the lives of residents here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, we've had much discussion surrounding alcohol and other addictions, and the services we provide to residents. Mr. Speaker, we have to do more. The common denominator in family breakdown, family violence, violent crime and the segue into other addictions is alcohol.

As a society, we have normalized the consumption of alcoholic beverages to the point where much of our leisure type of activity involves alcohol to one degree or another. If we were concerned about portraying a positive message to the children and youth of the Northwest Territories, we must look at ways in which we can denormalize the consumption of alcohol.

The GNWT and the Department of Health has had a very successful campaign in the "Don't Be a Butthead" program. We have enacted tough laws dealing with the sale and distribution of cigarettes, and we need to examine how we are going to legislate alcohol. Mr. Speaker, the government is finally getting around to the introduction of the much anticipated new Liquor Act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. RAMSAY: One of the general themes stemming from the NWT Alcohol and Drug Program's discussion paper from last fall was that there needs to be more attention paid to health promotion and prevention programs. Investments need to be made and programs aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing the onset of addictions. These would be required in order to effectively combat alcohol and drug issues.

The more children in the NWT that we can get into sports and recreational type activities, the better the chance they will have to choose healthy living. We need to get more physical activity into our schools and into our communities. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the government for initiatives like the Get Active campaign which was kicked off today in the Great Hall.

We need a campaign to target alcohol consumption, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps "Don't Be a Boozehound" could be the name of this campaign. You could have a dishevelled looking dog with bloodshot eyes that has the shakes go around to all the schools in the Northwest Territories talking about the impact of alcohol abuse.

As a government, we have to do our best to effectively deliver the message on alcohol consumption. We've done it on smoking. Let's take alcohol head on and do something about it. Mahsi.

--- Applause