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Member's Statement On Waiving Of The Business Incentive Policy

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to utilize my Member's statement today so that I can again bring up a topic that has been heavily discussed in this House over the last week. The topic is the tender for 22 mobile homes, which are to be sent to various communities throughout the Territories. The tender was issued by the Housing Corporation and closes this Friday, April 2.

Mr. Speaker, I have some very serious concerns with the evolution of this tender, the decision making process on how and why the business incentive policy was waived on this has not, to date, been fully explained to this House. This causes me and some of my colleagues a great deal of consternation.

Waiving the BIP on this tender is one issue, Mr. Speaker. The other issue is the fact that this government has given direction to the Housing Corporation which effectively pulls the rug out from any made-in-the-North solution to community housing needs in the NWT. I have not been given a clear answer yet on when the decision was made to not consult with northern manufacturers. At the very least, Mr. Speaker, the government should table a chronology of events on how, what and when things transpired to arrive at the decisions that they've made.

As I understand it, the Housing Corporation has been in contact and consulting with southern manufacturers for the past six months. Mr. Speaker, this would lead me to believe that the direction to exclude the northern manufacturers was predetermined. Waiving the BIP is further proof that the government really has no intention of supporting the northern manufacturing sector.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is the perfect example of a government that, like the last government, talks out of both sides of its mouth. They talk about how important it is to diversify our economy, create jobs in the communities, train young people and grow community capacity, but when given a fine opportunity to work with northern manufacturing firms to find a solution that fits our territory, the issue of tender... That, in my mind, flies directly in the face of what we as a government are trying to accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of consideration on the part of this government in this whole thing is shameful. Does this government support northern manufacturing or not? Judging by their actions to date, I would suggest they don't. Like my colleague, Ms. Lee, from Range Lake, I know we have the capacity here in the Northwest Territories to accomplish this tender. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause