

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

**Third Session  
Oct 13 - Oct 29, 2004**

**OCT 25, 2004**

**Evaluation of Nursing Positions at Stanton Territorial Hospital**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of a group of persons who often do not get enough credit for doing the great job they do for us. That group are nurses and health care professionals, Mr. Speaker.

My wife is a nurse and I have had a firsthand glimpse into what it is that nurses do, and I must say I have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for the amount of work that nurses do for us. In March of 2000, the Union of Northern Workers filed a grievance on behalf of 42 nurses working at Stanton Territorial Hospital, alleging that the current job descriptions did not accurately reflect the duties the nurses were required to perform.

In 2002, the decision was made to undertake a review of all nursing and allied health profession jobs within the health and social services system to ensure the job descriptions and resulting evaluations correctly reflected the knowledge, skills, abilities and working conditions of each position.

Mr. Speaker, the re-evaluation has resulted in some very troubling changes in the way in which we are paying our nurses. I will state that I am fully supportive of the increases that have taken hold for some nurses in the specialty areas. However, the change has been causing difficulties for those who have not seen an increase, especially the nurses that have been there for 15 to 20 years working alongside their colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of a person who, after serving as an LPN for over 20 years, went back to school to become a registered nurse. Now that she's a registered nurse, there are LPNs at Stanton who are earning more than she is as a registered nurse. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is fundamentally wrong.

The Minister and his staff have told me on two separate occasions that this new practice of paying nurses happens in other jurisdictions. I have not seen any evidence or proof that this is the case. This is the only place in Canada where nurses are being subjected to wage segregation. In other jurisdictions, they pay all nurses the same. They can earn more through education and certification. This seems to be a more logical approach than the way we are doing things here at Stanton.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to say that nurses and other health care professionals all deserve to be treated equally. Nurses need our support in trying to correct what has happened at Stanton. It doesn't happen in Hay River. It doesn't happen in Inuvik and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't happen anywhere else in the country. Why would a government, in good conscious, set out to drive a wedge between our nursing staff at Stanton?

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time on today's order paper, I will have questions for the Minister. Thank you.