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Support for Seniors' Participation at Canada 55-Plus Games

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to speak today about the government's lack of support for the Government of the Northwest Territories seniors participating in the Canada Senior Games.

Since I became a Member in 2003, I have seen the participation of NWT seniors increase steadily. First with the Whitehorse games in 2004, the Portage La Prairie games in 2006, and most recently with over 100 participants in the Dieppe, New Brunswick, games.

The 2010 Senior Games are being held in Brockville, Ontario. Despite numerous requests to the various departments and the Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Lee, the government has decided that it will not contribute any funds for our seniors to participate in the 2010 Games. The main reason is that the government indicates that the federal funding program that was utilized previously has ended, and that is a shame.

I have had the opportunity in the past to supply participants with pins and flags before they were to leave for the games and they were very excited at the opportunity, not only to participate in their chosen activities but to be ambassadors for their community and for the Northwest Territories. I've also had the chance to speak to participants on their arrival back home, all of whom were very proud of their accomplishments and excited to keep active. They also spoke of attending future games.

I'm saddened that the government can't seem to find some source of resources to allow our seniors to continue to take part in the games. In addition to some financial support, our participating seniors require help in administration of their participation. As a government, we need to find a way to keep our seniors active and their participation in the Canada Senior Games is a great investment in supporting our seniors.

As the stated objective of this government is a healthy, active people, our seniors are not looking for the government to pay the full cost of their participation; they are busy raising money on their own. They are willing to support themselves, as well, Mr. Speaker, but they can't do it alone. They need some government help. Thank you.