

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

**Fourth Session**

**First Sitting**

**October 15 – November 5, 2009**

**OCT 22, 2009**

**Transfer of Social Housing Administration to  
Education, Culture and Employment**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to discuss an issue that has been discussed numerous times on the floor of this House in numerous statements, oral questions, motions, and even a theme day.

It's been three years since the last government pulled off what was one of the worst decisions I have been witness to as a Member of this House. That was to take \$30 million in Social Housing Policy money from the Housing Corporation and give it to ECE to administer. The program was being delivered by LHOs, and by transferring the responsibility, ECE had to hire 14 additional staff to handle the program. These 14 additional staff and the \$1.5 million annual cost was an expense the government just did not have to incur. It absolutely continues to defy logic as to why this was done.

In 2006, Members passed a motion calling on the government to reconsider the transfer. The last government failed to listen to Members, which by extension means they did not listen to the people of our territory. There are currently three Cabinet Ministers -- Ms. Lee; and, I suppose somewhat ironically, Mr. Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment; and Mr. Robert C. McLeod, the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation -- that were here in 2006 when all three of them, as Regular Members, spoke in favour of Housing taking back the responsibility for social housing and assessments.

I'd like to even quote the new Housing Corporation Minister from Hansard, page 633 from November 1, 2006, "Mr. Speaker, this government has to be big and admit to themselves and everyone that this program is not working. They have to be big enough to admit they made a mistake and maybe it's time to go back to the way it was before, which was working for everyone."

I do hope the Minister still harbours these sentiments. Just this past March the Members passed a very similar motion to the one we passed in 2006 and just this past summer the Dene National Assembly passed a resolution calling on the Government of the Northwest Territories to transfer the program back to Housing from ECE. It's almost three years later and all the government is saying is they've hired four consultants to review it. How about listening to the Members? Our advice comes free.