



Newspapers

Features

[News Desk](#)
[News Briefs](#)
[News Summaries](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Sports](#)
[Editorial](#)
[Arctic arts](#)
[Readers comment](#)
[Find a job](#)
[Tenders](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[Subscriptions](#)
[Northern mining '07](#)
[Oil & Gas 2007](#)
[Construction \(PDF\)](#)
[Opportunities North '07](#)
[Best of Bush](#)
[Tourism guides](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Contacts](#)
[Archives](#)
[Today's weather](#)
[Leave a message](#)



Remember 2007
 Get entire year
 of a NNSL newspaper
 on compact disc
 for only \$50
 → [Order now](#)



Northern News Services **online**



Home
Page



Text
size



E-mail this
story



Order a
classified ad

Freedom of speech in question - Peterson

Yumimi Pang

Northern News Services
Published Monday, June 02, 2008

YELLOWKNIFE - The recent resignation of Qullit Status of Women Council president Donna Olsen-Hakongak became fodder for legislative debate recently.

Keith Peterson, MLA for Cambridge Bay, brought up the issue, stating that Olsen-Hakongak resigned after she received a warning from the Government of Nunavut, her employer, for having criticized the government.

He noted that the warning was issued to Olsen-Hakongak shortly after she spoke out about the election of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association president.

Peterson questioned the reasoning behind appointing a government employee into an advocacy position if her freedom of speech could not be guaranteed.

Levi Barnabas, minister of human resources, stated that he could not elaborate but if someone is appointed from the government then some issues must remain within the government. Barnabas added that the current situation has become a learning experience and that more caution should be used in making appointments to boards

Peterson also questioned Leona Aglukkaq, minister responsible for the Qullit Status of Women Council, whether the acting president, also an employee of the Government of Nunavut, may be prevented from speaking freely about women's issues in Nunavut because of government policies.

Aglukkaq said it is an issue that she must review as the responsible minister while underlining her support of women speaking up on equality issues.

Lack of Inuit representation questioned

Tagak Curley, MLA for Rankin Inlet North, has questioned the lack of Inuit representation on the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Two commissioners and a commission chair have been appointed, but none of the three members are Inuit.

Curley questioned Premier Paul Okalik during a legislative session on May 22, on whether Okalik had raised the issue directly with Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Chuck Strahl.

Okalik said that although the lack of Inuit representation is regrettable, the commission is not one of the territory's agencies. The

premier said he has not had a chance to communicate with the federal government.

Curley also asked Okalik to convey to Ottawa the importance of the commission travelling to the North, and the premier agreed to the request.

Okalik outlined the role of the territorial government in addressing the residential school legacy. Notably, Nancy Karetak-Lindell, Member of Parliament for Nunavut, has invited MLAs to attend hearings.

Okalik also committed to lobbying the federal government to provide a representative from former students and provide the airfare to attend the prime minister's scheduled apology to former students of residential schools at a session in the House of Commons on June 11.

GN calls for ban of hakaik

The Nunavut government will ask the federal government to ban the hakaik in seal hunting after a motion was unanimously passed in the legislative assembly on May 26.

The motion, brought to the house by Premier Paul Okalik, stated that less than 10 per cent of the 250,000 seals hunted were taken by hakaiks, and in Nunavut no seals are killed with the use of the hakaik.

According to Okalik, the use of the hakaik contributes to outdated and misleading information used by animal rights groups to lobby European legislators to consider banning the importation of Canadian seal products.

The motion was seconded by Iqaluit East MLA Ed Picco, who noted that while seal harvesting in the Maritimes and Newfoundland is a commercial venture, in Nunavut, seal hunts are of a subsistence nature, where all parts of the animal are used.

Picco said that while the hakaik has been shown to be humane, banning the hakaik would remove the ammunition that protesters have been using.

Lights out for Nunavut Energy Efficiency Act

The proposed Nunavut Energy Efficiency Act was withdrawn from the house after the standing committee recommended that the bill be axed.

Bill 13 was a part of Nunavut's plan to help reduce greenhouse gases by increasing energy efficiency and would have prohibited the sale of incandescent light bulbs in Nunavut. The act was to come into effect July 1, 2008.

The Nunavut Energy Efficiency Act, known as Bill 13, was read for the second time last June before being referred to the Standing Committee of Government Operations and Accountability.

Last November, the standing committee reported back to the house and identified several issues of concern and recommended that it be withdrawn.

Iqaluit Centre MLA Hunter Tootoo proposed the withdrawal motion and noted that with the withdrawal, the way is cleared for a new bill to be introduced.

Women and elections project

Elections training for women is now underway, according to Leona Aglukkaq, minister responsible for the status of women.

An elections toolkit to encourage women to run for elections to public office is in development, according to a statement released by Aglukkaq on May 28. The toolkits would provide information on the elections process, how to run a successful campaign, managing public life and roles and responsibilities.

Aglukkaq added that Rock the Vote newsletters are being developed and distributed to women's groups and organizations across Nunavut to encourage women to run in elections on several levels including territorial, federal, land claims organizations or municipalities.

Aglukkaq said political empowerment of women is necessary to ensure that the issues, challenges and needs of women are appropriately address.

The elections project is part of the new Women's Voices in Leadership program. In June, the Nunavut Women's Secretariat and the Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council will be co-hosting a women's elections forum and mock elections training workshops in Iqaluit.

