

**MOTION 1-18(3):
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT OF THE HONOURABLE LOUIS SEBERT TO THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE REMARKS

OCTOBER 18, 2017

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by acknowledging that this is a distressful conversation for the Minister, and it is for me, as well. I want to reiterate what some of my colleagues have said: it did not have to be this way. Had the Cabinet taken the direction of the non-confidence motion, as is normally the case in Westminster systems of governance, then the Minister would have resigned.

We have all made a commitment to do things differently in this Assembly -- that was the result of having 11 new Members -- with a special focus on accountability and transparency. Unfortunately, it has not amounted to much. Although there was support for the idea of doing a Mid-Term Review, there was a minority report on the process and Cabinet ultimately abstained from the vote, which brings us to where we are today.

I elected Mr. Sebert to his position with high hopes. I knew that he had a long history of public service and a law degree, and I thought he would make a terrific Justice Minister. I am very regretful today that I have to say that I was wrong about that. I have no desire to increase his humiliation by presenting a catalogue of complaints, but I am going to discuss the one that is really important to me, and that is the A New Day program.

As you know, as I never tire of talking about, and my colleagues as well, we have epidemic levels of family violence in the Northwest Territories, and they have been epidemic for years and years. We have been searching for ways to reduce that level, and that includes work by both the government and by the NGOs.

The Coalition Against Family Violence worked with the Department of Justice to establish the "A New Day" program as a pilot project, and, after a rocky start because of the lack of NGO capacity, the program arrived at the Tree of Peace, where it was taken up with great gusto by very dedicated staff who wanted to see what the women who advocated for this program wanted to see, which was healing for their intimate partners, which was a way to reduce family violence by having men admit that what they were doing was wrong and finding ways to break the cycle.

The program was evaluated, as you know, and the evaluation was positive. The program was being offered according to the curriculum that was set out, but the Minister decided that the program needed to be revamped, and he offered a new contract in the spring of this year. Unsurprisingly, because it was only a nine-month contract, there were no takers. Then, a short while later, we learned that the John Howard Society had signed not a nine-month contract, but a four-year contract to provide this revamped program, an organization that had been on the ropes just weeks before with the loss of their long-time executive director and some of their board members.

The John Howard Society is now offering this program, and the Minister has reported on

it. He has not reported in the kind of detail that we have asked for in the past, but he has said that it is all going smoothly, and at this point we have no contrary information. However, what the Minister did was to take a successful program and trash it. That is the reason I do not have confidence in him. That we are engaging in this exercise today is Cabinet's choice. Instead of taking direction from the Regular MLAs in the form of a vote of non-confidence, they have decided to flout it. What we have decided to do is that we need to act on principle that this vote of non-confidence was not just a piece of political drama. It means something. It means that we don't have confidence in the person doing this job and we need someone else to do it.

So here we are today, repeating the work of the Mid-Term Review that we conducted almost two weeks ago. That is because Cabinet has decided not to adhere to the spirit of the Mid-Term Review and instead to force us into the painful exercise.

Mr. Speaker, this Mid-Term Review has had both intended and unintended consequences. I had actually hoped that another Minister would lose his appointment, but that did not happen. The outcome of those who did and those who didn't lose their appointments says nothing good about consensus government. It says that consensus government works for those in power and not for Regular MLAs. There is a division between us. It says that consensus doesn't provide for accountability. Our special form of government is not so special. I will be voting in support of the motion.