

HUB OPINION



HISTORICAL QUOTE

"A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

System not preventing more female MLAs

Northern News Services
The Legislative Assembly needs to work on its messaging to promote its goal of getting more women elected to that august body.

Based on a public meeting last week in Hay River, MLAs have no coherent or convincing suggestions of what they can do, or what they should do. Instead, the meeting was at times a rambling chat session.

Of course, no one should oppose more women in the Legislative Assembly. The number of female MLAs has been extremely low ever since the Legislative Assembly was created. Currently, there are just two female MLAs out of 19.

Hence, the MLAs have taken it upon themselves to try to do something about it.

The Special Committee on Increasing the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly has been holding public meetings, including the stop in Hay River on Jan. 9.

If the committee wanted to get people riled up about the injustice of it all, it apparently has failed quite miserably.

First of all, it managed to attract just 11 people to the meeting, including seven women. If such a gathering

is supposed to demonstrate public concern over unbalanced gender representation, a turnout of seven women is not exactly the Women's March on Washington.

The meeting also pointed out that the reasons there are not more women in the Legislative Assembly are societal, not any bias against women in the electoral process or by voters.

Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green, the chair of the committee, basically said so herself in what we found a remarkable statement.

Generally, nine or 10 women run in territorial elections compared to about 60 men, she noted. "So women tend not to run. When they do run, they win at about the same rate as men."

Well, that's interesting. It's not the system.

The public meeting was based on the premise there are "barriers" to women running for office that are not faced by men, such as some women being caregivers who don't want to be away from their families, women sometimes being less confident in their qualifications while men run even if they haven't finished high school, no daycare at the Legislative Assembly, etc. etc.



All that may be true, but the question is can the Legislative Assembly do anything about it, except for maybe a daycare.

A discussion idea of appointing women to bring the number of female MLAs up to an arbitrary goal should be dead in the water. We're surprised the committee would even mention it.

It's undemocratic, plain and simple. More than that, it's condescending to women.

Maybe worst of all, the politicians seem to have a self-important opinion of their jobs and think most

people would want to become one of them except for those oppressive barriers.

Many women – and many men – just do not want to run for office.

Most likely, increased representation by women will evolve naturally, or be jolted forward by female outrage with government. (See the recent elections in the United States.)

We seriously doubt that recommendations by this special committee of the Legislative Assembly will make the slightest difference.

EDITORIAL

You Said It!

What's your message to the employer?

Members of the Union of Northern Workers express concerns at a Jan. 11 practice picket at four-way stop



Dawna O'Brien:
"My message to the employer is to bargain in good faith."



Ian Thiesson:
"I would say that they should come back to the bargaining table. The union is willing to bargain. And to give us a fair deal."



Brad Budgell:
"The message is that the union workers want to see the employer give us a fair and equitable deal."



Eliza Dobbs:
"That we are a necessity for the community to run ... We do need these changes and we do need progress."

THE HUB

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