

# Premier, cabinet face confidence vote

## 'You can sweep things under the carpet, but you can't take away the smell,' says MLA

by Herb Mathison  
Northern News Services

A movement is afoot tooust the premier and his cabinet.

On Wednesday, Hay River South MLA Jane Groenewegen announced in the legislative assembly she will table a motion to sack all seven cabinet members today.

If it passes, the change would be effective immediately, and just a day after Finance Minister Michael Miltenberger released his territorial budget.

Groenewegen said she is making the motion on behalf of regular members.

"The frustration has been growing with this particular cabinet and this premier over a long period of time," he said. "It's one thing after another."

She said communication

between cabinet and regular MLAs has not been there since the first days of the 16th legislative assembly in October 2007, starting with "inaccurate" answers to questions about Deh Cho Bridge cost projections, through to the government's lay-off notifications last year and the recent Discovery Air bailout and supplementary health benefits program announcement.

"I found out about the supplementary health benefits changes at a chamber of commerce meeting in Hay River when I was confronted by a senior, in front of the entire business community," she said.

"These guys in this cabinet are insensitive, bad communicators and they have their heads in the skies somewhere and they are not in touch with the people

of the North," she said.

Groenewegen said not all cabinet members will necessarily lose their positions.

"The ones who have been doing a good job will be back in cabinet and the ones who haven't ... will not be back," she said.

On Thursday, she gave a 20-minute speech to the motion, repeatedly stating she thought the premier was doing a poor job and stating he should have resigned.

"When it came to light before Christmas that the premier was having an affair with one of our clerks, he should have done the honourable thing then and resigned."

"You can sweep things under the carpet, but you can't take away the smell," she said.

On Wednesday, she would not comment on who was

being targeted in the motion.

The motion was seconded by Tu Nedhe MLA Tom Beaulieu.

The motion needs the support of at least ten MLAs to pass.

### Motion support

On Thursday, Great Slave MLA Glen Abernethy said he will support the motion.

There are 12 non-cabinet MLAs - including Speaker Paul Delorey, who only votes in motions in event of a tie - and at least one has already made it known publicly that he will not be supporting the motion.

Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins issued a press release immediately after the house convened Wednesday stating his opposition to the motion.

He said axing cabinet

comes at a bad time and he wanted MLAs to work together to "seek collaborative solutions" in the face of "unprecedented economic challenges."

He said the motion was too broad.

"It's hiding behind a blind sweep, instead of saying this particular person needs to go and why," he said.

Premier Floyd Roland said the motion is a personal attack.

"Their shadow cabinet must now be thinking they are ready to take over real roles."

"Is this action about the people of the Northwest Territories or about political motivation?" said Roland.

Groenewegen said claiming the motion was based on political motivation was completely uncalled for, seeing as MLAs were the ones who initially voted cabinet in.

"The people that we elected, branding us politically ambitious," she said. "That's a bit of a laugh."

Roland said he has heard concerns raised about communication between cabinet and regular members but said cabinet has to take care of day-to-day business.

"Not every letter can run through a committee or committee process to be reviewed," he said.

Roland said if the motion were to pass, the work the government has accomplished in Ottawa will be damaged.

The motion also raises concerns about the way consensus-style government is running.

"What does this mean for consensus government if these



Jane Groenewegen: will table motion to axe cabinet.



Floyd Roland: motion is politically motivated.

types of initiatives come up every session, where there has been the threat of somebody's head being put on the chopping block."

Groenewegen said if the motion passes, allowing Miltenberger's budget to stand would be up to whoever becomes finance minister.

"We will be in a budget session, regardless of who is sitting in the finance minister's chair," said Groenewegen.

If the motion passes, all 19 MLAs will vote to create a new cabinet from among them.

The Adam Dental Clinic would like to extend a huge

# Thank You

to ART YOUNG and HIS FELLOW HARLEY OWNERS GROUP (H.O.G.) for recovering our stolen bench almost a year after its disappearance. Without fuss or seeking recognition, you returned our bench to us by just putting it in its proper place. Coffee for you guys will be on us this summer!

The Adam Dental Clinic would also like to say 'Thank you' to the large number of Yellowknife citizens who protected our summer garden by chasing away vandals and stopping individuals from damaging the plants.



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