

Date: Feb. 11, 1991.  
Settlement: Lake Harbour



To: Joe Arlooktoo  
MLA, NWT

Dear Mr. Arlooktoo.

Teachers in the Northwest Territories have for many years been accommodated in Government Staff Housing while on duty in most, if not all, locations in the NWT. It has been considered an extremely heavy financial risk to become involved in a private accommodation investment. And teachers have not been able, for the most part, to become eligible for any housing assistance programs to facilitate the construction of a private home. Furthermore, to be realistic, there is no private real estate market in a vast majority of NWT settlements. And also, there must be a genuine recognition of the fact that the average tenure of teachers in the NWT, for whatever reasons, is only two to three years. It is not realistic that teachers should be expected to provide for their own housing, until the reasons for such a short average teaching duration are changed. Most teachers also are limited in their negotiating rights with their employer in that housing is not a negotiable item with the GNWT, and therefore, there is a built-in resentment concerning housing issues, such as poor maintenance, inequitable rent policies, the failure of the Buy-back plan to be a real incentive, having to share accommodations with a complete stranger, etc. Now, many teachers in the NWT are facing extremely high rent increases for their Staff Accommodation. In some cases, because of the elimination of the overaccommodation policy, teachers can expect a rent increase of between 28% and 69%. Surely, you can see that this highly inflationary increase in rent will be a source of extreme dissatisfaction for many teachers, and this will surely result in an even higher teacher turnover in many settlements, further destabilizing our educational program within the NWT.

The GNWT appears to want individuals to solve the housing crisis in the NWT by forcing them out of their present accommodations when no other units are available. The only possible people to gain in this situation will be the private speculators. And unless the salary scale changes drastically, or teachers get a huge increase in their private accommodation allowance, there will be few who can afford to live, or will choose to live, in the NWT, outside of a few major settlements.

As an educator in the NWT, I am aware of the difficulties that arise with the high turnover of teaching staffs in many communities. The students are the ones who suffer the most as there is little or no consistency left with the departure of teachers at the end of the school year. I feel that the recent decision by the Executive Council to eliminate the over accommodation

provisions in the Staff Accomodation Policy will have a major impact on the high teacher turnover in the spring of 1991.

As my representative in the Legislative Assembly, I am requesting your very strong and urgent support. The Deputy Minister of Personnel, Mr. Ken Loveley, and all other members of the Executive Council must be made aware that educators in the NWT will not remain quiet and accept this excessive rent increase. The Executive Council must review this policy and consider the major impact it could have on the children and the teachers of the Northwest Territories.

Thanking you in advance for your support, I remain yours truly,

*Shelley Forbes.*