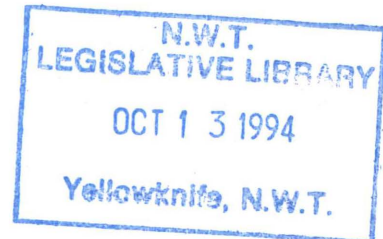




TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 29-12 (5) TABLED ON OCT 12 1994

Hon. Nellie Cournoyea,
Premier,
Government of the Northwest Territories,
Box 1320, Yellowknife, NWT,
X1A 2L9



June 7, 1993

Dear Ms. Cournoyea,

RE: Paid Propaganda - Above and Beyond, Spring, 1993

As you may know, the Spring, 1993 issue of Above and Beyond magazine, First Air's inflight magazine, contains a 16 page article, a copy of which is enclosed, including colour photographs, glorifying the great accomplishments of the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Communications, entitled "A Unique Approach to a Unique Challenge".

It is a wonderful article, portraying the department and your government in a very favourable light. Anyone connected with our government might say, on reading this article: "We couldn't buy advertising like that!"

The problem, and the reason I am writing to you, is that I understand that this article is in fact just that - paid, untendered contract advertising masquerading as editorial copy in a magazine which caters to an English-speaking elite - air travellers. I am told that the department paid some \$2000-\$2200 per page for this "article" - an untendered job worth some \$37,000. This is more than most Divisional Boards of Education spend on curriculum development in a year! Municipal and Community Affairs was featured in a similar "article" last year, and I am informed that another government department is being wooed to sponsor yet another advertising supplement for the summer edition now in production!

I am writing, therefore, to draw this matter to your attention and pose some questions about this which I believe are worth your immediate attention:

1. Are there not more effective ways of communicating the government's message to the public? Should the government not consider utilizing publications with a broader audience (including native language speakers) than an inflight magazine? Are there not more effective

uses of public money in difficult financial times?

2. Are there not policies in place which require tendering of such amounts when there are other northern publishers operating in a highly competitive marketplace - including one company operating in my constituency - who would certainly be interested in bidding for such work?

I am not begrudging Above and Beyond the advertising it successfully solicited, although I believe that most journalists would agree that when an article is purchased in this manner it should be properly described as an advertising supplement. However, I believe that others in the northern publishing field should have the same opportunity, in the public interest, to compete for such lucrative work.

I would be grateful for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Yours truly,

Dennis Patterson

c.c. Mr. Pierre Alvarez,
Deputy Minister, Executive Council