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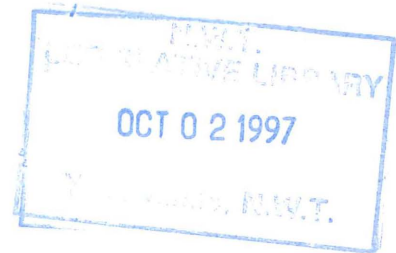
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Northwest  
Territories Commissioner

SEP 25 1997

Mr. Kevin O'Brien, MLA  
Kivallivik  
BOX 24  
ARVIAT NT X0C 0E0



Dear Mr. O'Brien:

**Call for Public Inquiry - Keewatin Regional Health Board**

I have reviewed your request to have a public inquiry into activities of the Keewatin Regional Health Board. The Premier has advised me that he and the Minister of Health and Social Services have reviewed the issues you raised and are prepared to pursue an appropriate course of action in each case. I am satisfied that a public inquiry is not warranted at this time.

The Minister has ordered a technical review of the preparations leading up to the decision not to renew the current contract for medical services with the J. A. Hildes Northern Medical Unit. The report will specifically address the adequacy of the transition plan for replacement of these services. The Minister is confident that the technical review will provide adequate information to assess the completeness and quality of the decision to shift services to a new provider, and that it will prepare him to direct an appropriate course of action.

The decision of the Keewatin Regional Health Board to replace dental therapists with a private dental contract is well within the authority of the Board, and must remain there. The Minister in turn has a responsibility to monitor the new arrangement to ensure that the dental needs of Keewatin residents have not been compromised by the change.

Allegations that members of the Keewatin Regional Health Board are in a conflict of interest over the assignment of contracts are a matter that is best handled in the courts, as outlined in the *Conflict of Interest Act* and Guidelines.

It is reasonable to expect that any Board carry out proper and effective consultations on major decisions that it makes. If you or your constituents believe that such consultations were not adequate, the Board and its administration must face the challenge to address this issue, but it is not a reason to call a public inquiry.

Yours truly,

Helen Maksagak  
Commissioner