



MLAs Respond to Premier's Comments On Civil Suit

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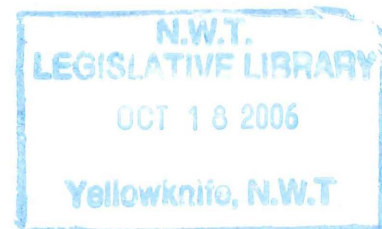
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MLA 'surprised' at territories' defence in Horne case

Last Updated: Wednesday, September 13, 2006 | 10:51 AM CT

CBC News

The governments of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories should be helping communities suffering from the legacy of convicted sex offender Edward Horne instead of denying responsibility, Hudson Bay MLA Peter Kattuk says.

On Monday, the governments filed their response to a lawsuit laid by a group of 72 men and one woman, who claim they were abused by the former teacher when he worked in the North during the 1970s and '80s.

Several years ago, the governments paid \$21.5 million to a group of 82 men and three estates to compensate for abuse by Horne.

In this case, the governments say they protected the children at school, but say they are not responsible for any alleged abuse that may have taken place at Horne's homes, which he rented from them.

Kattuk, who lives in Sanikiluaq where Horne taught for three years, says his impact continues to this day.

"Our community was destroyed by him," said Kattuk.

"When I heard that the government was defending itself, I was surprised. The government should be willing to help the community and the people that were abused by an employee of the government at that time. "

Government lawyers refuse to comment on the case while it is before the courts.



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22 » 2006

N.W.T. premier defends tough stand in teacher sex assault civil suit

Bob Weber
Canadian Press

Friday, September 22, 2006

(CP) - The Northwest Territories is right to argue the alleged sexual abuse victims of a former schoolteacher may have been considered adults in their Inuit community and old enough to consent to sex, says the territorial premier.

Joe Handley also stands by his government's contention in a statement of defence that the alleged victims might not have been harmed by any abuse. A few might even be making their stories up, he said.

In rare comments about a civil case before the courts, Handley backed his government's legal hard line against a lawsuit by 69 men who say they were abused by convicted pedophile Edward Horne.

"If some of this was consensual, if this was with adults, then it's a legitimate issue," he said Thursday.

"They are kind of hard-nosed, cold questions that lawyers have to ask as they dig into this."

Horne was employed by the N.W.T., from which Nunavut was later carved, between 1971 and 1985. He taught in communities including Sanikiluaq, Cape Dorset, Kimmirut and Iqaluit - all now part of Nunavut.

In 2000, Horne was sentenced to five years in jail after pleading guilty to 19 counts of indecent assault and one count of buggery. He faces further charges later this fall in Iqaluit.

In October 2002, the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut agreed to an out-of-court settlement and paid \$21.5 million between them to 85 of Horne's victims.

More men then came forward and lawyer Geoffrey Budden filed a second lawsuit on their behalf against both territories in 2004. None of the alleged assaults in the second lawsuit is the subject of criminal charges.

Handley, who was deputy minister of education at the time of Horne's arrest, argues that the government can't be held responsible for the activities of a teacher outside school hours or of people who weren't students.

"We don't know who goes to the teacher's house, if they're not school students, if they're adults, if they're people out of school," he said.

"It's hard to figure out how we should admit that, 'Yeah, we should have done something.' "

He also said that a young Inuk in the 1970s might have been considered fully adult and capable of making his own choices by the time he was 17.

"(A) 14-year-old, you're certainly dealing with someone who has not matured and may not understand what he's getting himself into. In the case of a 17-year-old, who's been operating as an adult - he's been hunting, he's been earning his own livelihood - (it) is a much different situation."

But Frank Tester, a University of British Columbia sociologist who has written extensively on Inuit life and history, said Handley misses the point.

"Just because they know how to load a komatik (sled) doesn't say anything about their understanding of somebody in a position of authority," he said.

"In the 1970s, Inuit feared white people with authority. Teachers, administrators were people you did not say 'no' to. If it gets to court, this will fall apart instantly."

Handley also suggested that some of the plaintiffs may have lied about the abuse they claimed.

"I wouldn't want to suggest that many of them are doing that, but there's a possibility that some are, and it's a reality that we have to deal with."

He added the same may have been true about some of the men who received compensation in 2002.

"From the little bit that I know of it, yes," he said. "It wasn't the majority by any stretch at all."

Budden points out that most of his clients have been interviewed by psychologists and 15 have gone through legal discoveries during which they testify under oath and are subject to cross-examination.

As well, all but a couple of his clients were clearly students at the time of the abuse, he said. Only a few, if any, were as old as 17.

Handley also said the alleged abuse wouldn't necessarily be the cause of any later problems.

"I'm sure there are specialists that can help determine . . . whether there is a causal relationship with the person's problems 20 or 30 years later, and what influence Horne may have had on them."

Handley isn't apologizing for his government's tough stand.

"We would like just as much as the individuals who are involved to have the Horne case behind us and resolved," he said. "But in order to do that we have to do it responsibly and there are the tough questions that the lawyers have to deal with."

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Premier Handley in Hot Water Over Comments re Ed Horne Lawsuit
CBC Northbeat, Tuesday, September 26, 2006, 6:00 p.m.

CAROL MORIN, CBC: NWT Premier Joe Handley is in hot water over comments he made to the media last week. In an article published by Canadian Press, Handley backed his government's hard line position against a lawsuit by men in Nunavut who say they were abused by convicted pedophile Edward Horne. He suggested that some alleged victims might be making up their story. Jennifer Hunt has more.

HUNT: Ed Horne is infamous in the North. For 14 years he worked for the NWT government as a school teacher and a principal in Nunavut communities where he molested many of his students. Because the crimes occurred when Nunavut was still part of the NWT, four years ago both government agreed to an out-of-court settlement and paid \$21.5 million to 85 of Horne's victims. Now 69 more men have come forward and filed a second lawsuit against the territory, but this time the NWT government is arguing that some of the alleged victims may have been old enough to consent to sex with the teacher, a position Premier Joe Handley appears to agree with. In an article published last week, Handley says, "in northern communities a 14 year old is considered a child," but he's quoted as saying, "in the case of a 17 year old who's been operating as an adult, he's been hunting, he's been earning his own livelihood, it's a much different situation." Handley also went on to suggest some of the plaintiffs may have lied about the abuse. "I wouldn't want to suggest that many of them are doing that, but there's a possibility that some are and it's a reality we have to deal with." Inuvik MLA Robert McLeod says he was upset that the Premier would comment on an issue before the court, and wants people to know that he doesn't speak for the NWT government.

MCLEOD: I was quite upset about the comment about they may have been lying, because it's a comment that really disturbed me, because there's a lot of people out there that went through stuff like this and to hear the Premier of the Northwest Territories to make a comment like that and me being a Member for one of the Beaufort-Delta communities, I really felt that I had to distance myself from these comments.

HUNT: And for Premier Handley, he's not willing to say anything further on the subject and says he was speaking in general terms when he made the comment, which he says were taken out of context. Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya says no matter how he meant them, the Premier's comments just confirm a victim's belief that if they come forward, no one will believe them.

YAKELEYA: It's sickening to the stomach and it was disappointing. I'm feeling frustrated that an article like this came out and had our Premier and had some things said in there that should have not been said.

HUNT: Jennifer Hunt, CBC News, Yellowknife.

MLAs Distance themselves from Premier's remarks

(Yellowknife, NT) September 26 – The undersigned Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories state their disappointment and shock with Premier Joe Handley's comments reported by The Canadian Press on Friday, September 22, 2006.

In response to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) position taken in a civil case currently before the Courts, Premier Handley spoke publicly to the content of the GNWT's defense. In doing so, the Premier breached a well known convention of politicians not speaking to matters before the Courts.

The comments were particularly inappropriate in this instance given the very sensitive nature of the case being brought by the Plaintiffs. The civil case relates to alleged actions of convicted pedophile, Edward Horne, while in the employ of the GNWT.

The issue of sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to Aboriginal people is one that has had devastating ramifications in the North. As such, the Premier should not have made any statements that could be interpreted, to dismiss or discredit the claims of the alleged victims. Any judgment of facts or circumstances should left to the Courts.

For this reason, the undersigned MLA's categorically distance themselves from the remarks made by the Premier.

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THE PREMIER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

SEP 27 2006

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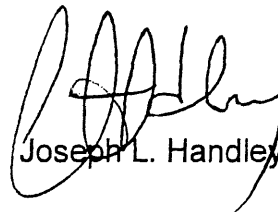
Dear Mr. Weber

I am writing to express my disappointment with the article entitled "N.W.T. Premier defends tough stand in teacher sex assault civil suit" that appeared in the National Post following my telephone interview with you on September 21st.

The comments I made, which were my own beliefs and did not represent any other Member of the Legislative Assembly, were conversational between us. As I explained to you at the time, I have not read the Statement of Defense and, as such, was not speaking with any degree of authority or knowledge of this specific case. Apart from the fact I believed this part of our conversation was not on the record, the comments I made were intended to be of a general nature and I feel were wrongly characterized in your article.

I appreciate we have enjoyed a long and respectful relationship and hope that this will continue but I would also appreciate you being a little more forthright with me in future as to the nature of the articles you intend to write.

Yours truly,



Joseph L. Handley

c. Members of the Legislative Assembly

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N.W.T. legislators denounce premier's comments on sex abuse case

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 Wed, 2006-09-27 19:20
[National News](#)

YELLOWKNIFE (CP) - Half the members of the Northwest Territories legislature issued a statement Wednesday distancing themselves from comments made by Premier Joe Handley about a controversial sexual assault case.

Handley caused a stir in the North last week after he told The Canadian Press that he backed his government's legal hard line against a lawsuit by 69 men who say they were abused by schoolteacher Edward Horne, a convicted pedophile.

The government's statement of defence argues that the alleged victims may have been considered adults in their Inuit community and old enough to consent to sex, or that they might not have been harmed by the activity.

Handley suggested that some might even be fabricating their accounts.

On Wednesday, a statement signed by 10 of the 19 members of the N.W.T. legislature expressed "shock and disappointment" with the premier's remarks.

The premier "breached a well known convention of politicians not speaking to matters before the courts," it said.

"The issue of sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to aboriginal people is one that has had devastating ramifications in the North," the statement said.

"As such, the premier should not have made any statements that could be interpreted to dismiss or discredit the claims of the alleged victims. Any judgment of facts or circumstances should be left to the courts."

Handley has not disputed the CP report, but does say that his comments represented his own personal opinions and that he believed he was speaking off the record at the time.

"I have not read the statement of defence and, as such, was not speaking with any degree of authority or knowledge of this specific case," Handley wrote in a letter to the agency Wednesday.

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N.W.T. legislators denounce premier's comments on sex abuse ca

Wednesday, September 27th, 2006

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Ed Horn Trial
CBC Radio, Wednesday, September 27, 2006, 6:30 a.m.

CBC: The Premier of the Northwest Territories says governments have the responsibility to ensure that public funds are protected and properly spent when dealing with legal cases. Joe Handley is commenting on the lawsuit filed by a second group of more than 70 people who say convicted sex offender Ed Horn abused them as children. Horn was a teacher and principal in several communities in the Eastern Arctic in the 1970s and '80s. He was fired a short time after Handley became deputy minister of Education in the NWT in September of 1985. Handley says he didn't know Horn because the teacher was working in the Eastern Arctic, but he says all claims must be verified.

HANDLEY: There's an obligation on our part to do the due diligence to make sure we are protecting the rights of people who have been wronged and at the same time make sure that we are protecting the rights of the public to make sure it's all done properly.

CBC: The lawyer representing the plaintiff says he agrees the two governments need to verify the claims, but Jeffrey Buddan(sic) says they need to acknowledge that the second group is entitled to the same compensation and treatment programs as the first.

CBC Radio, September 27, 7:30/8:30 a.m.

CBC: Money is at the root of the clash between a second group of alleged Ed Horn victims and the governments of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Seventy-two men and one woman are suing the two governments for failing to protect them as school children from the convicted sex offender in the 1970s and '80s. The governments say they want to make sure public funds are handled carefully and the plaintiffs want compensation they say fits the crime. Patricia Bell reports:

BELL: NWT Premier Joe Handley says he can't comment specifically on the second Ed Horn lawsuit while its before the courts. Still, Handley says if Horn wasn't working for the territory at the time or if there was sexual activity among consenting adults, then the government's aren't responsible. If Horn had kids visiting his home, then Handley says it would be difficult for governments to know what was going on behind closed doors. Those are the very arguments laid out in the statement of defense filed recently by Nunavut and the NWT, but Handley's main message is that public funds have to be protected.

HANDLEY: We have the responsibility to be fair to everybody. So whatever has to be done has to be done thoroughly in a way that due diligence ensures everybody's rights are protected.

BELL: The lawyer representing the plaintiff says he agrees with Handley that the two governments need to verify the claims, but Jeffrey Buddan says he's surprised that the former deputy minister of Education would bring up consent and home visitations.

BUDDAN: I don't think any person, including Premier Handley, really believes that very many of these men were involved in any kind of consensual sexual issue with Ed Horn. Does anybody really believe that very many, if any, of these men are making up their stories?

BELL: It appears the main stumbling block between the parties may be money. The first lawsuit resulted in a \$21.5 million settlement for 85 claimants. Buddan says once the second group's claims are verified, he will challenge the governments to provide the same kind of compensation and treatment programs. Patricia Bell, CBC News, Iqaluit.

CBC Radio, Wednesday, September 27, 2006, 4:30 p.m.

BRENT RAINEY, CBC: Money is at the root of the clash between a second group of alleged Ed Horn victims and the governments of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Seventy-two men and one woman are suing the two governments for failing to protect them from the convicted sex offender. He taught in communities such as Sanikiluaq, Iqaluit and Cape Dorset in the 1970s and '80s. Newfoundland lawyer Jeffrey Buddan is representing the plaintiffs. He also represented the group from the first Horn lawsuit that reached a more than \$20 million settlement with Nunavut and the NWT four years ago.

BUDDAN: I'm just challenging I guess the government to acknowledge that once the claims are verified these men are entitled to the same treatment programs, the same level of compensation as were the first Horn claimants, or they say that the first process is some sort of mistake, that that wasn't done properly because if so that's an incredible about-face over a period of four years.

CBC: Government lawyers have refused to comment on the case while it's before the courts, but the Premier of the Northwest Territories is saying the territorial governments have to protect public funds and make sure they're spent properly. He says they have a responsibility to verify claims and ensure everybody's rights are protected.

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**MLAs Speak Out Over Premier Handley's Comments Re Sexual Predator
CJCD Radio, Thursday, September 28, 2006, 7:00 a.m.**

CJCD: David Ramsay is speaking out over comments made by Premier Joe Handley regarding a sexual predator. Handley gave a national interview where he said it was possible some students had consensual relationships with former teacher Ed Horn who was convicted of sexually assaulting students and is facing further charges. Ramsay says the Premier's comments definitely do not reflect his own.

RAMSAY: From my perspective, his comments are certainly not reflective of my own and other Members of the Legislature.

CJCD: Sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to aboriginal people is one that has already had devastating ramifications in the north. Ramsay adds the situation is best left to the courts.

RAMSAY: To the lawyers and the Premier should not have talked about this publicly.

CJCD: At the time of the sexual assault incidents, the Premier was involved with the Department of Education.

CBC Special Report, September 28, 7:15 a.m.

CBC: The name Edward Horn is synonymous with sexual abuse in the North. Horn taught for 14 years in several Eastern Arctic communities. He's been accused of sexually assaulting some of the students. The governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut paid 85 of his victims millions of dollars in an out of court settlement four years ago. Now the governments face a second lawsuit from a second group of alleged victims. Premier Joe Handley has weighed in on the matter suggesting to the Canadian Press that some of these men may have made up their stories while others may have consented to sex with Horn. Regular MLAs say they are shocked and disappointed by Handley's remarks. Jane Groenewegen is the MLA for Hay River South and she joins me in the studio. Good morning.

GROENEWEGEN: Good morning, Randy.

CBC: What went through your mind when you read the Canadian Press article?

GROENEWEGEN: I was really surprised to see the comments. It's a long-standing tradition that politicians usually don't comment on litigation that's before the courts. Technically, it's only a real problem if you do it in the Legislature and this is a civil case, not a criminal case. I was just really surprised to see the comments. With the sensitive nature of the litigation and the way the article was presented, I thought there is going to be reverberations. This is in the national media and there are going to be repercussions from these comments.

CBC: So the Premier is an experienced politician. Why do you think he decided to make these remarks to a reporter?

GROENEWEGEN: I am sure he's the only one who can actually answer that. I do know Joe Handley well enough to know he does pride himself in being a very approachable Premier and approachable politician and quite freely speaks with media on government issues, on GNWT issues. The fact is this is one he should not have spoken about. He's the Premier. He speaks on behalf of the government and by extension, on behalf of MLAs. MLAs in our government want to distance themselves from these comments.

CBC: What do these remarks tell us about the Premier?

GROENEWEGEN: I think -- again he could probably better explain this -- his layperson's version of an explanation of the defense that is being put forward by the Government of Nunavut and the Government of the Northwest Territories. I think when lay people who are not lawyers get involved in trying to explain something that's legal and technical and particularly sensitive in this case, I think it's a recipe for misunderstanding and disaster really.

CBC: So what damage do you think his remarks have done to northerners, especially those who have been victims of sexual abuse?

GROENEWEGEN: From what I know from living in the North 32 years, it's taken many years for victims to actually come forward and have the courage to disclose some of the things that happened to them. I understand fully that the government also needs to perform due diligence on claims that are brought against the government and need to investigate things. But I think the way this article was presented, I think victims of abuse, reading this, could certainly find it offensive and feel that it's another case of being dismissed in some way.

CBC: So what action have you decided to take?

GROENEWEGEN: The action we've taken as Regular Members, and I don't purport to speak for everybody except all Regular Members did sign the press release, is we need to leave the responsibility on the Premier to deal with this. We have met with the Premier and I know he agrees with us that it's very unfortunate that things transpired. He has subsequently written a letter to the Canadian Press to the reporter who did the article.

Unfortunately, that letter is not public. Therefore, we felt it was necessary to express our opinion on the comments that were made.

CBC: Did he feel he was misquoted?

GROENEWEGEN: I think that the letter to Mr. Webber indicates that he felt he was in a conversation with him and the comments he was making were not on the record.

CBC: So what do you think the Premier should do now?

GROENEWEGEN: I am not really in a position to prescribe what he should do, except it is in the public now. I believe there has been a subsequent national article written in response to the letter he wrote to Bob Webber. So anything he could do publicly that could retract or neutralize these comments I think would probably be helpful.

CBC: Do you think this will be an issue in the upcoming session of the Legislature?

GROENEWEGEN: I think it all depends on how he deals with this.

CBC: Alright. Thanks for coming in.

GROENEWEGEN: Thank you.

CBC: Jane Groenewegen is MLA for Hay River South.

CBC Radio, September 28, 7:30/8:30 a.m.

CBC: Premier Joe Handley is in the eye of a media storm over some candid comments he made about new allegations of sexual abuse by Edward Horn. Handley spoke to the Canadian Press last week about the government's defense against a suit filed by a second group of alleged victims. The article says the Premier suggested some of them may be making their stories up. Regular MLAs are outraged and they are taking the unusual step of taking Handley to task. Julie Green reports:

GREEN: Edward Horn has already been convicted of sexually assaulting his students during the 14 years he taught in several Eastern Arctic communities. The governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut paid the 85 victims in the first lawsuit almost \$22 million in an out of court settlement. A second suit involves more than 70 alleged victims. Handley repeated some of the key points of the feds recently filed by the territorial government. He suggested some of the alleged victims may have lied while others may have consented to sex with Horn. Robert McLeod is MLA for Inuvik, a community that knows all too well the tragedy of residential school abuse.

MCLEOD: There is a lot of people out there who went through stuff like this. To hear the Premier of the Northwest Territories make comments like that, I really felt that I had to distance myself from his comments.

GREEN: Handley, who has years of experience with the media, has done some distancing of his own. While Handley says his opinions are his alone and the comments were made to the Canadian Press off the record, he also made similar comments in an interview with CBC. Great Slave MLA Bill Braden says the Premier has not done enough to clarify his position.

BRADEN: I would just like to see him take responsibility for having a discussion he should not have had.

GREEN: The Premier was travelling yesterday and unavailable for an interview. Julie Green, CBC News, Yellowknife.

CBC Radio, September 28, 7:30 a.m.

CBC: Meanwhile, Premier Joe Handley is taking some issue with the Canadian Press issue that was written. Jane Groenewegen is the MLA for Hay River South. She appeared on the Trail Breaker a few moments ago to speak about the Premier's comments. She says although she and other MLAs do not support the public comments, they support a letter Handley wrote to the Canadian Press.

GROENEWEGEN: I think that the letter to Mr. Webber indicates that he felt he was in a conversation with him and the comments he was making were not on the record.

CBC: Groenewegen says Handley is an open Premier who talks frequently with the media and the public, but she says many MLAs feel he should not have talked on the Edward Horn lawsuit topic.

CJCD September 28, 2006

MLAs distancing themselves from Premier's comments

Member of the Legislative Assembly Dave Ramsay is speaking out over comments made by Premier Joe Handley regarding a sexual predator. Handley gave a national interview in which he said it was possible some students had consensual relationships with former teacher Edward Horne who was convicted of sexually assaulting students and is facing further charges. Ramsay says the Premier's comments do not reflect his own views. "So, you know, from my perspective, you know, his comments are certainly not reflective of my own or other members of the Legislature." Sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to Aboriginal people is one that has already had devastating ramifications in the North and Ramsey adds the situation is best left to the courts. "To the lawyers and you know the Premier should not have, certainly should not have talked about this publicly." Handley questioned whether all the victims involved with the case were actually unwilling partners of the suspect. In the NWT between 1971 and 1985 Edward Horne sexually assaulted 19 individuals and pleaded guilty. Now Horne is facing more charges of sexual assault and the Premier says a lot of these new incidents involve claimants who may have been adults. Ramsey says the Premier should have thought about the ramifications before speaking out on the case. "I don't think it was proper that the Premier even comment on, you know, in that aspect I'm obviously...the Premier should have just stayed clear of that." Ramsey adds it's a possibility the Premier could be questioned over his comments in the next session of the Legislative Assembly. Handley was the Deputy Minister of Education when Horne was still a teacher.

N.W.T. premier taken to task for Horne case comments

Last Updated: Thursday, September 28, 2006 | 3:57 PM CT

CBC News

Northwest Territories Premier Joe Handley is in the eye of a media storm for comments he made regarding alleged sexual assault victims of former teacher Edward Horne.

Horne has been convicted of sexually assaulting some of his students during the 14 years he spent in the eastern Arctic working for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut governments.

In 2002, a group of 85 former students received a \$21.5-million out-of-court settlement from the two governments to compensate for the abuse. A second lawsuit filed by 72 men and one woman is before the courts.

In interviews with CBC and Canadian Press about the second lawsuit, Handley suggested some of the alleged victims may be lying, while others could have consented to having sex with Horne.

MLAs shocked by remarks

Ten N.W.T. MLAs have issued a statement saying Handley had breached the well-known convention that politicians not speak about matters before the courts.

"The comments were particularly inappropriate in this instance given the very sensitive nature of the case being brought by the plaintiffs," it said.

"The issue of sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to aboriginal people is one that has had devastating ramifications in the North."

Inuvik Twin Lakes MLA Robert McLeod told CBC on Wednesday that many people still suffer from childhood abuse.

"There's a lot of people out there who went through stuff like this, so to hear the premier of the Northwest Territories make a comment like that, I really felt I had to distance myself from these comments," McLeod said.

In a letter Tuesday to the Canadian Press, Handley said he thought the remarks he made were "conversational" and therefore "off the record."

He also said the comments were his own beliefs and did not represent any other N.W.T. MLA.

Corporate Communications and Protocol
Department of the Executive
Government of the NWT

CBC Special Report, Thursday, September 28, 2006, 5:15 p.m.

NORBERT POITRAS, CBC: Comments made by Premier Joe Handley surrounding more than 70 new assault claims against Ed Horn continue to haunt the Premier. Horn has already been convicted of sexually assaulting his students during the 14 years he taught in several Eastern Arctic communities. The governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut paid the 85 victims in the first lawsuit almost \$22 million in an out of court settlement. In an interview with the Canadian Press published last week, Handley was quoted as saying some of the new cases against Horn may have involved consensual relations between adults. The Premier also says it's possible some of the claimants against Ed Horn both past and present lied about their abuse and he questioned whether the alleged abuse would necessarily be a part of later problems. After that story came out on the wires, CBC Reporter Patricia Bell called Joe Handley, and here's part of her conversation with the Premier.

BELL: In this story that we had in the Canadian Press it quotes you as commenting directly on this lawsuit with Edward Horn. Did you comment directly on the lawsuit?

HANDLEY: Well I would say I didn't because I haven't even seen any detail on it. I've heard that there's seven individuals whose names are included in it, but I have no idea of the detail and I have no ideas exactly what our lawyers or the Nunavut government would have filed for, but I can't promise on the specific one. All I can say is that in any of these cases that we have to be careful to be fair to everybody.

BELL: Okay.

HANDLEY: I haven't seen the story, I've been travelling. So I don't know what he has said, but I don't know enough about this specific court case, nor would I comment on a specific court case that's going before the courts.

BELL: Okay, 'cause it says here clearly the Northwest Territories is right to argue the alleged sexual abuse victims of former school teacher may have been considered adults in their Inuit community and old enough to consent to sex says the territorial Premier, Joe Handley.

HANDLEY: Yeah, well, I'd say there may be some misunderstanding of Bob Weber, but basically what I'm saying is that if something happened to people by Ed Horn when he was in the communities, that he was there without any relationship to government then clearly we would have no responsibility that I would think, I'm not a lawyer, but the other would be if it was among adults, you know, in his home, but we have no easy way

of being able to monitor what people did in the communities whether they're our employees or not. So this is a complicated kind of thing, we have a lot of people involved, it was complicated in the first one, it will be complicated in the next case. So these kind of cases are not as straightforward as some people might wish.

BELL: Now was there any consultation with the legal departments before you made these comments?

HANDLEY: No, because I'm not talking about any specific case. I would say I have not seen any detail on this, all I'm saying is that in general we have this responsibility for those people who may be filing claims. We also have a responsibility as a government to make sure this is done right, whether it's this current case or it's a past case or whatever it may be there's an obligation to be fair, but on the specific case, no, I don't know enough about it to even comment.

BELL: Okay, well the comments, you might want to read the story 'cause it does have you commenting specifically on the story that's before the courts and in detail actually.

HANDLEY: Yeah, I'll take a look at the story and see how Bob has interpreted my comments, but...

BELL: Well it has you also talking about students going to a teacher's home, you know...

HANDLEY: Yeah about, for example, you know, if we had a teacher, in this case I'll use Horn as an example, if Horn has kids visiting of his home then it's very difficult to know what goes on after the doors close. We don't, as a practice, at least in the territorial government, tell teachers or any other employees who can visit their homes and who can't, that's something we have no control over. So those are the kind of complications in these issues that we have to be very thorough on.

BELL: Umm hmmm. Now a law professor that we spoke with in Ottawa said that she really doesn't think that you can distinguish between the home and the school, especially back 20 years ago or 30 years ago in Inuit communities, or even Dene communities I suppose, you know, because she says at that time people coming up from the South would have had quite a bit of authority, especially a teacher or a principal in that the only reason the kids are going to the homes is because they're teachers or principals.

HANDLEY: Sure and 30 years ago I'm sure it was quite different, a teacher was an authority figure, but again, I don't know the details of these individuals' cases, what happened. There was they said if we're talking about Horn there was a period of time where he was in the North, he did work for us and I don't know if some of these cases fall into that category too.

BELL: Okay.

HANDLEY: You know, and there's different opinions I'm sure by lawyers about a government's responsibility for its employees behaviour 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

BELL: So did you have any comments on the fact that someone might have consented to sexual activity?

HANDLEY: I don't know, but if, again, talking in general, because again, I don't know the specifics on the case, but if in general it is among consenting adults, then yeah, there's a question there, but we can't be responsible for consenting adults' behaviour, it's not, you know, unless it's happening on our time in our facilities or it's someone carrying out their mandate for us, but it's not something that the government that would be very easy for us to deal with.

CBC: NWT Premier Joe Handley speaking with CBC Reporter Patricia Bell. We've heard reaction from politicians alike all this week, but Harold Cook has lived through a case like Edward Horn's. He suffered sexual abuse at a residential school and he joins me on the phone from Fort Good Hope. Good afternoon, Harold.

COOK: Good afternoon.

CBC: Now you've been hearing about this story all week. When you first heard it what was your reaction?

COOK: I don't understand, like, before the settlement has happened how could anybody comment on that? It's just like a non-acceptance of responsibility in it seems that there is a denial mechanism at work here and all its doing is re-victimizing us.

CBC: So what have you been hearing from other people?

COOK: Disappointment. Like some of my friends that went through the Grolier Hall trials can't believe it. Why put us through this again and why, like, it's making some of us recall some of the events that happened with the Lareux (?) case and Como (?) case and those four pedophiles that were hired by the church and the government to look after us and they breached the trust in looking after us and it seems that it's okay for what Horn has done to those poor victims over there, and I can really sympathize with the Horn victims.

CBC: So as someone who has been abused, would it make a difference if you were an adult, a teenager or a toddler to have been abused?

COOK: No. I think that when Dr. Peter Collins (?) was the Crown's expert during the Grolier Hall trials had really laid it down. He talked about arousal and how the pedophile goes through the stages of initial contact, contact and so forth. I think that testimony by Dr. Peter Collins should be ready by our leaders.

CBC: So now it's very difficult for people to come forward with their stories of abuse, Harold. Do you think the Premier's comments about people possibly lying about abuse will have any impact on this?

COOK: Yes, the victim, like, when it came to myself when the investigation was starting I knew they were coming and I didn't provide all the details, I held back and this is going to have that same effect on some of the Horn victims and maybe other information that some of the residential school victims have that have not come forth. This really, really is hard on them.

CBC: So do you think the Premier should be speaking out about this case?

COOK: I don't think anybody should be speaking out on this case. I think if they're going to speak out they should express compassion and sympathy towards the victims. If there is people who are giving false statements those will be dealt with in due time, but it hurts, it really hurts.

CBC: So what would you like to see happen next?

COOK: I think maybe a retraction of what was stated, an apology to the victims. Back when we were going through the trials, after the trials we had made recommendation of a residential school aftermath advisor to the leadership within the government and some of the recommendations were not followed up. We had put together a healing team in the Grolier Hall trials. I think all sexual abuse victims should go through what we went through and that should have set the standard for the victims, but for the victims, I encourage you, get support and come forward, don't live with the abuse because statements like this sometimes revive the abuse that we went through and it re-victimizes us and maybe some of us have to go through therapy again because the healing from the sexual abuse takes a lifetime.

CBC: Harold, I appreciate your time this afternoon. Thank you for this.

COOK: Thank you.

CBC: Okay, bye bye. Harold Cook in Fort Good Hope, and if you'd like to comment on this story or any other that you hear on Trails End do call Talk Back at 873-4928 or 1-866-271-9957 toll free, or you can drop us an e-mail at trailsend@cbc.ca.

MLAs slam premier

Jason Unrau
Northern News Services

Yellowknife (Sep 29/06) - Comments Premier Joe Handley made last week about a sensational sex abuse case have raised the ire of his legislative colleagues and put the premier in a pickle.

Regular MLAs sought to 'distance' themselves from an article in which Handley suggested some of the alleged sexual encounters between former teacher and convicted pedophile Edward Horne and students may have been consensual.



When Premier Handley was asked if he made the controversial comments, he told Yellowknifer his words were "taken out of context." -

The NWT and Nunavut governments have been named in a civil suit filed by 72 men and one woman who claim Horne sexually abused them in Nunavut communities between 1971 and 1985.

"The issue of sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to aboriginal people is one that has had devastating ramifications in the North," reads a press release signed by 10 regular MLAs and released Wednesday. "As such, the premier should not have made any statements that could be interpreted, to dismiss or discredit the claims of alleged victims."

The only MLA not to sign was Range Lake's Sandy Lee. She is away from Yellowknife and unavailable for comment.

In a Sept. 21 Canadian Press story - which ran in several major Canadian newspapers - Handley said the decades-old alleged sexual abuse happened outside school and may not be the responsibility of the government.

"We don't know who goes to the teacher's house, if they're not school students, if they're adults, if they're people out of school... It's hard to figure out how we should admit that, 'Yeah, we should've done something,'" CP reporter Bob Weber quoted Handley as saying.

Handley also waded into the issue of adulthood with respect to the case.

"(A) 14-year-old, you're certainly dealing with someone who has not matured and may not understand what he's getting himself into. In the case of a 17-year-old, who's been operating as an adult - he's been hunting, he's been earning his own livelihood - (it) is a much different situation," Handley was quoted as saying.

When Handley was asked if he made the controversial comments, the premier told Yellowknifer his words were "taken out of context."

"I don't really want to say any more on that. I just didn't like the slant and the tone (of the story) so I'd prefer to leave it as it is. It is a matter before the courts," said the premier.

"My comments weren't about the specific case and were taken out of context."

Weber said he quoted the premier "carefully and accurately" and has spoken to Handley on the matter, but would not elaborate on their conversation.

"I won't tell you what was said but he has not asked for any kind of retraction, correction or clarification on the story," said Weber.

Kam Lake MLA Dave Ramsay spoke out against the premier's comments.

"There's some quotes in there, whether they were out of context or not, (that) were completely inappropriate and some very inflammatory," said Ramsay. "This is a very sensitive issue in the NWT and the premier shouldn't have been commenting on it at all. He's got a legal team inside the department of justice. They've got a number of lawyers, that's where the questions should've been directed."

In 2002, the NWT government and Nunavut agreed to an out-of-court \$21.5 million settlement filed by a group of 82 men who made the same claim Horne had sexually abused them.

MLAs slam premier over comments

Shocked, disappointed with Handley's remarks about sex abuse case

by Jason Unrau
Northern News Services

Comments Premier Joe Handley made last week about sensational sex abuse case have raised the ire of his legislative colleagues and put the premier in a pickle.

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Handley Not Ready to Apologize for Comments in Canadian Press



Corporate Communications and Protocol

Department of the Executive

Government of the NWT

If you require assistance, please contact Carmen_Moore@gov.nt.ca

Handley Not Ready to Apologize For Comments In Canadian Press CBC Radio, Friday, September 29, 2006, 6:30/7:30 a.m.

CBC: Premier Joe Handley admits it would have been easier not to have spoken to the Canadian Press about the second Ed Horn lawsuit last week. Horn, who taught in government schools in the Eastern Arctic, is a convicted pedophile. The government is facing a second civil suit from a group of more than 70 alleged victims. Handley's comments about their motives have set off a storm of controversy. Regular MLAs even took the unprecedented step of publicly distancing themselves, but as Julie Green reports, the Premier is not ready to apologize.

GREEN: Premier Joe Handley is quick to make himself available for interviews and yesterday was no exception, but once on the phone he had little to say about an interview that has now become infamous. Last week, Handley told the Canadian Press that a second group of Ed Horn's alleged victims may be making up stories of sexual assault. He suggested that the students may have consented to having sex with Horn. Asked to explain his comments, Handley said he wasn't talking about the Horn lawsuit in particular but about sexual predators in general.

HANDLEY: Everybody has a right to due diligence. You have to look at each case by itself in order to be sure that you are being fair.

GREEN: Handley has said he made the remarks off the record to the reporter Bob Webber. At the Canadian Press, Prairie bureau chief Heather Boyd says Handley hasn't asked for a retraction or a correction. Boyd says she's reviewed Webber's tape. She's satisfied that Handley knew he was speaking on the record, despite saying he didn't want to talk about the lawsuit.

BOYD: He perhaps thought at that point that everything he said after that would be background, but he was talking to a reporter. Politicians are pretty sophisticated people. Bob is a very good reporter and kept asking questions.

GREEN: The damage is done and Handley now has to deal with the fallout, especially with the regular MLAs. The question is whether they are willing to forgive and forget. Julie Green, CBC News, Yellowknife.

Monday, October 02, 2006 Logout

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Department of the Executive
Government of the NWT

If you require any assistance, please contact
Carmen_Moore@gov.nt.ca

Premier Offers Apology for Comments in Horn Case
CBC Radio, Friday, September 29, 2006, 5:30 p.m.

LORI SARCHADI, CBC: Premier Joe Handley has apologized to the Members of the Legislative Assembly for comments he made about the Edward Horn lawsuit. Last week, Handley told the Canadian Press that a second group of Horn's alleged victims may be making up stories of sexual assault. He suggested the students may have consented to having sex with Horn. In a news release today, Handley says he made a fundamental error of judgement in speaking about a lawsuit currently before the courts. He also says it was not his intention to dismiss the suffering of people who have been sexually assaulted by the former school teacher. Horn is the subject of a civil suit being brought against the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut by more than 70 alleged victims of sexual assault while he was a teacher in a number of Eastern Arctic communities. However, a Hay River MLA says Handley's apology may not be enough. Jane Groenewegen.

GROENEWEGEN: I know what the normal standard of response would be for something of this seriousness and it would certainly be for the person to resign. I don't think that Premier Handley chooses to do that. So we'll see what the public has to say.

CBC: It remains to be seen what the final outcome of the Premier's comments and apology will be. The Legislative Assembly next sits in mid-October.

PRESS RELEASE

The Premier of the Northwest Territories, Joseph Handley, has in recent days granted media interviews where he stated, among other things, that he believed that some of the Edward Horne victims whose civil claims are presently before the Court might have consented to sexual relations with Edward Horne; that some of them might be lying about having had sexual relations with Edward Horne; and that the governments were not responsible for sexual assaults which took place outside school buildings. He further stated that some of the claimants who had received settlements in the 2002 settlement may never have been abused. As present or former legal counsel to each group of Edward Horne victims, we feel that these comments require our public response.

Premier Handley's comments with respect to those men whose civil claims were resolved in 2002 is an unwarranted and unfounded personal attack on their integrity. It also casts aspersions on all of us who were involved in negotiating that settlement and on the administration of justice generally. He should either provide evidence to support his allegations, or unreservedly withdraw and apologize for them.

Premier Handley appears to be seriously misinformed as to the nature and effect of childhood sexual abuse and the circumstances of the present group of Edward Horne complainants. No person knowledgeable about the character of Edward Horne, about the characters of these complainants or about the communities in which they live could possibly believe that any of these plaintiffs (all of whom were under the age of 18 years at the time of the alleged assaults) consented in any meaningful sense to having sexual relations with Edward Horne.

As to Premier Handley's comments with respect to the governments not being liable for sexual assaults which occurred outside the physical confines of the school

buildings, we note that many of the Edward Horne victims whose claims were settled in 2002 were not abused on school property. The government, nevertheless, paid millions of dollars to settle the claims of such men. In any event, as Mr. Handley himself acknowledges, teachers in northern aboriginal communities in the 1970's and 1980's were authority figures whose control over pupils did not end at the school door.

We agree with Premier Handley that the governments must verify the claims, as was done with respect to the 2002 settlement. We have always cooperated fully with the government's reasonable efforts to satisfy these concerns.

Premier Handley's recent comments, coupled with the Statement of Defence filed in this matter, have created confusion over where the governments stand. We call on the Governments of Nunavut and of the Northwest Territories to resolve this confusion by committing to the immediate implementation of a treatment program, similar to that offered to the first group of Edward Horne victims, and to further commit to the ultimate resolution of verified claims within the general settlement framework established by the first group of Edward Horne cases.

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Premier should resign, says local MLA

BY SEAN PERCY
HUB EDITOR

The Premier of the Northwest Territories should step down because of his comments about a court case involving convicted pedophile Ed Horne, says a Hay River MLA.

Hay River South MLA Jane Groenewegen says Premier Joe Handley didn't live up to the standards of integrity she expects from a premier.

Handley has landed in hot water for comments he made in an interview with Canadian Press that were published Sept. 22 regarding a lawsuit filed against the government in the Horne case.

In the 1970s and 80s, Horne was a teacher in several communities in Nunavut, which was then part of the Northwest Territories. He was convicted of indecent assault and buggery in 2000, and he faces further criminal charges. In October 2002, the territorial governments paid \$21.5 million to 85 of Horne's victims in an out-of-court settlement. Newfoundland lawyer Geoffrey Budden has since filed a second lawsuit representing 69 more victims.

In the interview, the Premier defended the territory's statement of defence, suggesting that lawyers needed to look at whether the sex was consensual, whether the students may have been considered adults, whether the claims are true and, if they happened in Horne's home, why the government should be responsible.

The week after the story was published, 10 regular MLAs issued a press release stating their disappointment and shock with Handley's comments, and distancing themselves from the remarks.

They criticized the Premier for breaching the convention of politicians not speaking to matters before the courts.

"The comments were particularly inappropriate in this

instance given the very sensitive nature of the case being brought by the plaintiffs,” said the press release.

“The issue of sexual abuse in institutions and by persons who held positions of trust in relation to Aboriginal people is one that has had devastating ramifications in the North. As such, the Premier should not have made any statements that could be interpreted to dismiss or discredit the claims of the alleged victims,” the MLAs wrote.

On Friday, Handley met with MLAs and issued an apology.

“It is clear to me I made a fundamental error of judgment when I entered into a conversation with the reporter about this issue. I have no excuse. I am an experienced politician and I should have known better. During a long conversation with the reporter he asked me about this, among other issues, and I responded without fully considering the ramifications of my response, especially to the brave and courageous people who came forward with these type of issues,” said Handley.

“It was not my intention to denigrate or dismiss the suffering of those people who have been abused, sexually or otherwise, by Mr. Horne or by any other person. I deeply regret my remarks and the pain they have caused and I ask your forgiveness for my insensitivity and lack of judgment,” said Handley.

But Groenewegen says an apology won’t suffice.

“When I think of the reasons others stepped down from cabinet, Donny Morin, Henry Zoe, myself, it’s the first time it has been anything quite this serious,” said Groenewegen.

“There is a standard of integrity to uphold. When it’s not met, people resigned,” said Groenewegen.

She said she expects the issue will come up when the Legislative Assembly convenes October 17.

Editorial

Premier's defence

Northwest Territories Premier Joe Handley has every right to comment on a court case involving his government, despite "conventions" that conveniently gives politicians an easy ride.

As Premier, part of his job is to take on tough questions - and sometimes that means giving the public tough answers.

While you may not like what he has to say about the civil case regarding allegations of sexual abuse victims of a former school teacher, he has the right, indeed, obligation, to explain the tough stance his government's legal team has chosen to take.

Why apologize for doing your job and for backing the people who work for you?

Handley's comments were far from politically correct, especially given the sensitivity to the Horne case, and other sex abuse cases, in the North. But they pretty accurately reflect the stand the government's lawyers are taking in the lawsuit.

So perhaps Handley's critics should look at the government as a whole, and not Handley's comments as an individual. He told the truth, and if that brings about his political demise, it's a sad situation that will add to politicians' distrust of journalists, and, even worse, shift attention away from those who hold the true blame here – Ed Horne and his ilk.

Victims' lawyer offended by Handley

Jason Unrau
Northern News Services

Yellowknife (Oct 06/06) - The lawyer for victims of convicted pedophile Edward Horne has condemned Premier Joe Handley for questioning their sex abuse claims and the culpability of the territorial government.

"Premier Handley's comments with respect to those men whose civil claims were resolved in 2002 is an unwarranted and unfounded personal attack on their integrity," wrote attorney Geoffrey Budden in an Oct. 2 press release. "It also casts aspersions on all of us who were involved in negotiating that settlement and on the administration of justice, generally. He should provide evidence to support his allegations, or unreservedly withdraw and apologize for them."

Handley had already issued a public apology on Sept. 29 for remarks he made to Canadian Press reporter Bob Weber, whose story about the case ran in several major newspapers Sept. 21.

In the story, the premier is quoted as saying some of the sexual encounters between Horne and his victims may have been consensual.

Weber reported Handley questioned whether the government was responsible for abuse committed outside of school property.

When Weber was contacted, the reporter stood by his account, adding he quoted the premier, "Carefully and accurately."

Handley initially told Yellowknifer his comments were taken out of context, but later stated that he is at fault for what he said.

"It was not my intention to denigrate or dismiss the suffering of those people who have been abused. I deeply regret my remarks... and ask for forgiveness for my insensitivity," wrote Handley.

In 2002, the NWT and Nunavut agreed to an out-of-court \$21.5 million settlement filed by a group of 82 men who alleged Horne abused them between the years of 1971 and 1985, when he was a teacher in what is now Nunavut.

In 2000, Horne was sentenced to five years in prison after being convicted on 20 counts of sexual assault.



It's quite appropriate that Aklavik's old history museum was left standing after being abandoned. While the building is currently empty, it still reminds people of the past.

Views/North
with Lindsay Wood

Views/North Post 9/106

editorial

Handley's apology not enough

Settle lawsuit with victims of teacher Ed Horne

When Premier Joe Handley spoke to a Canadian Press reporter about the Ed Horne case, he was not being himself.

Ed Horne is the teacher first hired by the NWT government in 1971 to work in the Belcher Islands, then part of the NWT. Horne taught in Eastern Arctic schools until 1986, ending his career as a principal in Iqaluit.

Along the way, Horne sexually abused his students, using the schools and small, isolated Inuit communities as his hunting ground.

In 2000, Horne was sentenced to five years for sexually assaulting 20 of those students. He's presently facing another 15 charges.

In 2002, the governments of the NWT and Nunavut took full responsibility for hiring the sexual predator and over 82 students agreed to a settlement of \$21.5 million.

Now, 72 other men and one woman have come forward, taking

the governments to court on the same basis as the earlier lawsuit.

But this time, government lawyers have advised the politicians to put their consciences away and mount a legal battle against the victims of Ed Horne.

As there is no question Horne sexually abused an unknown and horrendous number of students, the only defence could be: The government was not responsible because it didn't happen on school premises and some students consented to the sexual abuse.

The first part of the defence ignores the fact Horne was flown into the communities by the government and lived in government subsidized housing. To suggest the government had no responsibility for him being there is silly.

The claim the students agreed to the sex ignores well established restrictions on the student/teacher relationship - They can't have sex

consensually because one is in a position of authority and other is not.

Premier Handley knows all this now, which is why he apologized. But he was obviously under the spell of his legal advisors when he spoke to the Canadian Press reporter.

NWT MLAs have come out against Handley's statement blaming the victims. Now they have to go one step further, as must Handley and his government.

First, direct the government lawyers to weed out any complainants who could not have been abused by Horne. We doubt there are any but it's possible.

Then, fire the lawyers and pay off the remaining claims.

It's a good thing to defend the public purse from abuse. It's a bad thing to hide behind lawyers who are being paid to pervert the truth.

We don't doubt the sincerity of Premier Handley's apology. He will need the support of other MLAs to back up his words with action equally sincere.

THE ISSUE:
Students victimized

WE SAY:
Abandon hurtful legal strategy

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**MORE COLUMNS, LETTERS
AND OPINIONS**
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Premier on the chopping block?

Jason Unrau
Northern News Services

Yellowknife (Oct 16/06) -The potential sacking of the premier and housing minister could take centre stage when the legislative assembly's members return to the house Tuesday.

Tu Nedhe MLA Bobby Villeneuve said he's heard from other MLAs that a motion is being bandied around to remove Premier Joe Handley over comments made about pedophile teacher Ed Horne, and remove Housing Minister David Krutko for general incompetence.



"I haven't firmly made a decision yet about what I'm going to do, but as far as the premier's position goes, I don't think it would be wise to change the leadership at this point in time," said Villeneuve.

He didn't say how he would vote on Krutko if his ministership came to a confidence vote.

After Handley was quoted in a Canadian Press story suggesting some of former teacher Ed Horne's alleged sex abuse victims may have lied and others could be deemed adults therefore nullifying the government's responsibility, the premier offered a public apology.

Premier Handley was quoted in a Canadian Press story suggesting some of former teacher Ed Horne's alleged sex abuse victims may have lied.

As for Krutko, he took a beating in the legislature during the last sitting over his refusal to do a cost comparison on his scheme to convert trailers - abandoned following the gas pipeline's construction - to low-cost housing.

Several regular MLAs were in contact with News/North on a possible non-confidence votes for Handley and Krutko. However, none were willing to go on the record stating this would indeed be the reality when MLAs return to the house Oct. 17.

One MLA, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said getting rid of the premier would depend on regular MLAs.

"The premier has apologized and some may feel that this is sufficient and it's time to get on with other matters," said the MLA. "Others may still have lingering questions that they want to have the premier clarify for them and the public."

On the issue of Krutko's fate, the MLA was not as diplomatic, but would not confirm if the minister was up on the chopping block.

"Krutko is a whole other matter and a long running story," said the MLA. "My sense is people are fed up with how the minister is handling the housing portfolio (but) it's not one member's call and any moves of that nature are on a consensus basis."

Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche said while there has been dissatisfaction among regular MLA ranks on the premier's Horne comments and slow movement on the housing front, he hasn't heard anything official.

"Housing is always a hot button issue in the communities and when there's no movement people want to shake the branches, so to speak," said Menicoche.

Julia Mott, coordinator of cabinet communications, dismissed the rumours.

"Cabinet is focused on the business of governing the territory," said Mott. "It's not appropriate to respond to anonymous comment."

A host of bills, including the Pharmacy Tourism, Engineering and Geoscience Acts are up for third reading during this session. - with files from Mike W. Bryant



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Premier Handley in Hot Water Over Comments
CBC Northbeat, Monday, October 16, 2006, 6:00 p.m.

CAROL MORIN, CBC: The Premier of the Northwest Territories might be facing some tough questions and even a non-confidence vote when the Legislative Assembly resumes sitting tomorrow. Joe Handley landed in hot water after it was reported that the Premier suggested some of Edward Horne's alleged victims could be lying, while others may have engaged in consensual sex with Horne. Horne was convicted of sexually assaulting some of his students during the 14 years he spent as a teacher in the Eastern Arctic. Handley has since apologized for his comments, but that may not be the end of it.

MENICOICHE: I went and I talked to constituents and they were saying that, look, it took him a while to finally to say look, I messed up, I apologize to victims and their families. And it took him a while to do it, but they were satisfied I believe to the extent they still have confidence in the Premier.

YAKELEYA: You know, we'll see how that plays out, but, you know, they were hurt by it. They were certainly devastated by his comments. It's not enough for, you know, my constituents to say remove the confidence of Mr. Handley from his post.

MCLEOD: There may be a non-confidence vote called and we'll have to deal with it when it comes up, but I have a lot of direction from the people I represent and I will be taking that direction into the House.



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**Legislature's Fifth Session Reconvenes Today
CBC Radio, Tuesday, October 17, 2006, 6:30 a.m.**

KIRSTEN MURPHY, CBC: Premier Joe Handley says he's expecting this session of the Legislature to be a busy one. The Legislative Assembly reconvenes this afternoon for its Fifth Session. Handley says he expects a lot of discussion around electoral boundaries. Earlier this year, the Electoral Boundaries Commission released a report that recommends creating two new ridings, a second one in the Tlicho region and an eighth one in Yellowknife. Revision to the Education Act, the Legal Services Act and the Income Tax Act will also be introduced in this session. Handley says he expects Members to have a lot of issues with everything from capital projects to social programs and housing.

HANDLEY: Because we are into our final year, people are beginning to get anxious that we show progress. I am sure they will be criticizing us, wanting us to move faster and so on on some of these files.

CBC: The Premier may be facing some other criticism from Regular Members as well. This is the first session since Handley made some controversial comments on the sexual assault case that involves the territorial government. Handley says he supports the right of MLAs to question Cabinet Members and he plans to stand by his record if the issue does come up.