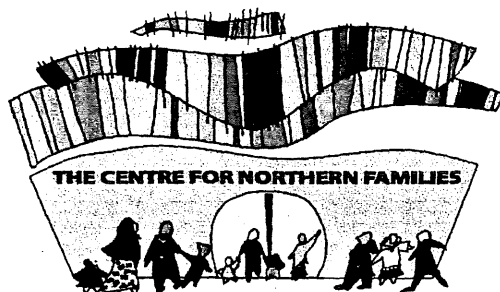


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OCT 27 2006  
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Letter to the Editor  
 News North

Bob Webber, Canadian Press

All MLAs

October 23, 2006

Cece Hodgson-McCauley reached the wrong conclusion in her column "Handley good for the NWT" October 23, 2006. The basis of her argument actually gives great weight to a call for the immediate "firing" of the Premier and supports the News North editorial suggesting MLAs force the government to end the court case it wages against residential school survivors sexually assaulted by Ed Horne.

Lawyers representing the governments of the GNWT and Nunavut have put forward a defense. In layman's terms they are arguing residential school survivors, wards of the state at the time, might have been abused, but if the sexual assaults took place in the teacher's home it isn't their fault. They also argue residential school survivors might have been abused, but once they reached the age of consent (14 years old), they consented to having sex with the teacher. SHAME!!! The Premier then took on the legal position of the government as his own "personal" opinion in a shabby effort to hide the fact he was commenting on a case before the courts.

As Hodgson-McCauley points out, statistics report over 90% of the population in the NWT has been abused. "We are all aware of it...., but there is a veil of secrecy, or an oath of silence in the system of governments. Why? To protect the damn abusers?" Through his actions and words Premier Joe Handley joined a multitude of others who know children are being sexually abused and who know youth are fed liquor and then are sexually assaulted, but do nothing. If you

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really want to change the fact that youth in northern communities are committing suicide, perpetrating crimes, sniffing glue and doing drugs, make this Premier accountable for his decision to perpetuate myths that discredit victims and feed the fire that keeps sexual abuse flourishing in the North.

Hodgson-McCauley says it is a mistake and everyone makes them. True, but there is no real evidence Mr. Handley is sorry or has changed his mind – certainly this government under his leadership has not dropped this grievous defense. This is the second time Mr. Handley misused his position to defend a perpetrator of violence. The first was as a bureaucrat when he issued a support letter on government letterhead defending a person who raped and physically assaulted his ex-partner.

I am glad my representatives and other MLAs were shocked and outraged by the statements of the Premier and the position of this government. Everyone should be – don't turn a blind eye to what community people can only "whisper" about because they constantly face the attitudes of people such as Joe Handley and Cece Hodgson-McCauley. Should we ignore it because the Premier is a nice guy and works hard. Some would say Mr. Miltenberger is a nice guy and works hard, but he had to be accountable for his actions.... as it should be.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arlene Hache', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Arlene Hache  
Executive Director