

**CLIENT SERVICE AND CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

Mr. Speaker, I continually hear departments in this government talking about providing quality customer service to clients of the G.N.W.T. This includes both internal and external clients. I believe that the vast majority of employees within the G.N.W.T. strive to deliver high quality and timely services to their respective clients. Unfortunately, sometimes this doesn't happen. Often, when an employee fails to provide high quality and timely service to a client, it has less to do with the employee's willingness or desire to help; rather, it is due to strict or rigid guidelines or operational procedures put in place by the bureaucracy and a fear of retribution if the employee were to take some additional steps outside the policy or procedure to assist their client.

Recently an example of this came to my attention. The specifics deal with the Department of Transportation, but it could easily relate to any department within the G.N.W.T.

A constituent of mine need to obtain picture ID for her grandson. She went to Motor Vehicles, it was minus 37 degree Celsius outside. She arrived ten minutes before the opening hour of 9 a.m. and found a lineup in place outside the door of people waiting to get in.

Now, although the office doesn't open until nine, it would have been reasonable to make an exception on that day when the temperatures were so extreme. I'm not suggesting that staff should have opened their desks and begun serving those clients until 9 a.m., but they could have let them into the lobby so they weren't outside freezing. When questioned by the constituent, they were informed the policy does not permit staff to open the office early. Where's the logic? In extreme weather situations, opening the door would have made good sense.

Once inside my constituent was asked to provide identification confirming her identity to prove who she was in order to support her grandson getting his picture ID. She produced her fancy new driver's license, which she had obtained from the Department of Transportation a few months prior – the one with a nice new hologram. She was informed that due to policy, they were not able to accept it as a valid piece of ID and that she would need to provide another form of ID and a copy of her power bill to prove that she was a resident of Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories – exactly the same items she had produced when she got her fancy new driver's license just a couple of months prior.

I'm sure the employee would have liked to accept the driver's license. The employee was probably as frustrated as the client. However, policy would not allow her to use her own judgment and accept the current driver's license. This is ridiculous.

As government we need policies and procedures to ensure that consistent delivery of services; however we need to remember the human element and

allow for flexibility. We need to empower employees to allow them some level of latitude so they can use common sense in providing services to clients. We need to be less bureaucratic and more human.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation questions concerning customer relations within DOT.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.