

CANADA 55+ GAMES - 2010

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As in previous years, a dedicated group of Northerners wants to participate on behalf of the NWT at the upcoming 2010 Canada 55-plus Games in Brockville, Ontario. Residents of the NWT have been participating, on behalf of the NWT since 1998. During that first year only one resident participated. The popularity of NWT participation has increased steadily since then and peaked at nearly 100 during the 2008 games in Dieppe, New Brunswick.

There are a number of advantages for Northern involvement in these games. Not the least of which is that there can be significant savings realized in health care costs over the long term by keeping seniors active and involved.

In previous years, the GNWT has provided some financial support to participants through the NWT Senior Society for planning and logistics. It is my understanding that these dollars were not used to cover accommodation or travel costs but were used to help coordinate travel, accommodations and participant registrations. These dollars were a huge asset to the participants and allowed for a seamless and coordinated participation by Team NWT.

Unfortunately, any future funding for this initiative has been cancelled. It seems unreasonable to me that the GNWT would cut these support dollars. The dollars help the participants coordinate their activity as a team, as Team NWT. The NWT participants of the Canada 55-plus Games are not asking for the GNWT to cover the costs of their airfare or accommodations. They are asking for some funding, dependant on the number of participants, to have assistance with the coordination of their

participation details such as arranging travel, registration, and providing uniforms. Mr. Speaker, this is a reasonable request.

Later this afternoon I will be asking the Minister responsible Seniors some questions and seeking her support of these athletes, the champions of the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.