

## 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly

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### **Need For A Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to discuss the issue of caribou management in the Northwest Territories and how our government seems to be avoiding some very important steps along the way.

In February of last year, the Bathurst caribou management plan was tabled in this House. It is very clear what caribou provide to us and their overall importance, as they have been ever since man first set foot here – to our culture, our way of life, our economy and our identity. My concern last year was the fact that we need a comprehensive, coordinated approach to caribou management.

The government seems intent, for whatever reason, to study and manage individual herds. In fact, it's going to continue to be a costly proposition to continue this shotgun approach to caribou management. In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, there are eight recognized herds sharing the same land area. What needs to happen is that all jurisdictions from east to west, Labrador to Alaska, have to come together to understand what is happening to the caribou in northern North America.

Caribou do not recognize borders; they migrate great distances, they intermingle, interbreed, and as such, need to be managed in an all-encompassing way. We should try to avoid any duplication in the management of the various herds. What I would like to know is why there has never been a meeting of all the stakeholders. I just don't see any coordination and, like I said last year in this House, when these herds move around as much as they do, it's imperative that we deal with the total number and act accordingly.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has an opportunity to bring all stakeholders together under one forum. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, they could call it the Caribou Summit. Invite all jurisdictions and stakeholders to attend to share their experiences, data and understanding with each other.

All governments involved should be ready to participate and jointly fund such an effort, and, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to do anything, I always say make sure that you do it right. I have to say, there isn't any evidence to date that suggests that the Government of the Northwest Territories is doing this in terms of caribou management. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

---Applause