

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

## Fifth Session

February 7-22 & March 5-12, 2007

Third Sitting / Budget Session

FEB 12, 2007

### Extension of Highway No. 4 Into the Slave Geological Province

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to talk about a very important transportation issue. That issue, Mr. Speaker, is Highway No. 4, also known as the Ingraham Trail.

The Ingraham Trail is home to hundreds of year round residents. It is the access to the community of Detah, summer cottages, lakes, recreational areas, trails, campgrounds and parks. It is also the first 67 kilometres on which, each year, thousands of loads of fuel and other supplies travel to get to the mines located in the North Slave region.

As a government, we have spent approximately \$25 million in the past 10 years in upgrades and rehabilitation to Highway No. 4. It is proposed that upwards of \$21.5 million more will be spent in the next few years on improvements. We have also increased our operations and maintenance budget by \$852,000 to address safety issues on our highways.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that, prior to January, there were three serious accidents on the Ingraham Trail. Mr. Speaker, after the ice road opened, the amount of gravel put down was increased to the point where there was quite a noticeable difference between maintenance pre and post ice road season. As a government, I think we need to make sure that public safety is, and remains, a top priority on all of our highways all year long.

What I would like to see from this government is the pursuit, in partnership with aboriginal governments and industry, of the extension of Highway No. 4 north into the Slave Geological Province to open up access to our resources and eventually the Dogrib communities located to the west. This is the logical next step, seeing as we have almost 70 kilometres and millions of dollars invested in a road extending northeast from Yellowknife.

In his budget address the other day, the Finance Minister made mention of the fact that the federal government is responsible for new highway construction in our territory and that, since 1987, not a single kilometre of road construction has been completed in our territory. That is 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

We need roads. We need access to our communities and to our resources. We need to push for our transportation infrastructure. We need to get it on the agenda with the federal government. We cannot continue to flounder along as a territory with no lasting benefit from our resource riches. Roads should be a top priority in a lasting legacy as we develop these resources. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause