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Changes to Northern Wildlife Resulting From Climate Change

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about climate change and the impact it's having on our wildlife. Mr. Speaker, if you have lived in the North like I have for the past 25 years, you can't help but notice the changes in our climate. As a young boy in the early 1980s, I can remember when winter was a solid block of 10 to 12 weeks of minus 30 or colder. Sure, today as you look outside, we do get some cold weather, but it certainly isn't the same in duration as it has been in the past. Our winters, undeniably, are getting milder.

The increased evidence of evasive species into our territory is something that our government must pay close attention to: white-tailed deer, coyotes, cougars and, with these new species, there are also worries about new insects. Speaking from personal experience, just last summer out near Long Lake here in Yellowknife, I saw at least 20 to 30 frogs. I am not a biologist but having grown up here, it was something I had never seen before. These were not the small, typical brown frog that I had seen as a young boy, but rather they were green, aquatic looking frogs that were well over six inches in length and there were many of these frogs there.

The environment is changing. That is a given. What we have to do as a government is ensure that we have enough resources to study and track our wildlife and how it is being impacted by climate change. I listened closely to the Minister about the \$150 million that is earmarked for the International Polar Year. I would like to know when we can sign up to get some of this funding.

The Bathurst caribou management plan calls for an additional \$8 million necessary to carry out the work to manage, count and track our caribou. We've had many discussions in this House about caribou during the past year. I believe that climate change is having a direction impact on migration routes, calving grounds and on our ability as a government to get accurate data on their whereabouts.

Mr. Speaker, we need additional resources and the reality is we aren't doing enough to manage our wildlife through this era of climate change. Mr. Speaker, as the latest grappling over the caribou numbers has shown us, we need to do much, much more. Mahsi.

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