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Importance of Reviewing Territorial Boards and Agencies

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, as well, recognize International Women's Day before I start. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today about the priorities of Members and how they don't always seem to fit into the priority list of Cabinet. Case in point is the review of the boards and agencies.

Mr. Speaker, one of the top priorities of Members coming into the 15th Legislative Assembly was to do a comprehensive review of boards and agencies. Shortly after the election as a group, we supported the establishment of a Joint Special Committee on Boards and Agencies. On May 26th, 2004, the Premier announced in this House that the committee would be overseen by the former Minister of Health and Social Services and he also committed at this time to involve Regular Members in the process as part of an overall commitment to bring Regular Members into the decision-making process.

The committee was established in order to review the mandate, organization and governance arrangements of existing GNWT boards and agencies. It was supposed to make recommendations on what reforms are required to ensure the board or agency fulfills GNWT objectives and provides effective programs and service delivery to GNWT residents. It would also make recommendations that would provide for a consistent framework for governance, accountability and fiscal arrangements.

It started off so well, Mr. Speaker. In fact, some of the best work I've ever seen from this government came in the first phase of this review. The bizarre thing is that the review was shelved over a year ago. Obviously the government seemed to have higher priorities, like the establishment of the macroeconomic policy division in the Department of Finance, or how they could miraculously find half a million dollars to sole source a contract at Human Resources.

If the decision was a matter of resources, why were we not informed of this? This work has to get done. It's of paramount importance as we navigate our way through the implementation of self-governments and what will ultimately become a new political reality here in the Northwest Territories. Obviously, with six months left in the life of this government, this work will not get done.

If resources are scarce, why can't we task the regional directors with the responsibility to get this work done? They know the regions; they know the communities better than any newly established commission would here in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

--- Applause