

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

## Fourth Session May 25 - June 2, 2005

**MAY 26, 2005**

### **Prince Of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Renovations**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today about a vital piece of our tourism product here in the Northwest Territories. Built in 1979 and named after the Prince of Wales, our Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is an absolute cornerstone of the tourism products that we have to offer. On the eve of what is looking like a very busy summer season, I am very concerned and alarmed that the centre sits in the state that it sits today.

As a young man I used to work at the centre and I have always held the centre in the highest regard. I have a great deal of respect and admiration for all of the staff that work at that centre. My concern is that I don't believe we are giving the centre the resources to conclude the renovations currently underway. We have booked \$8.5 million for renovations and it seems to be never ending, Mr. Speaker.

It has been difficult on staff and it is difficult on the visitors. I can understand and appreciate the difficulties in having renovations taking place, and the fact that not all of the exhibits and galleries can be open to the public. However, not unlike any other citizen of this city, when I get relatives in town to visit, the first place I want to show them is our world-class museum. A few weeks ago I took my uncle to visit the museum. I was shocked that not only were the north and south main galleries closed, but also the aviation gallery was locked and being used as a storage area.

I started thinking about just how many other people were being denied seeing all the fabulous artifacts and displays that were in these galleries. Why would we shut down three galleries at a time? Of course, I know it is going to be better when it is all done, but why is it taking so long? With the completion of Highway No. 3 getting close to being done, we will see an increase in road traffic this summer. Yellowknife is also gearing up to play host in July to the Assembly of First Nations national assembly, which will bring thousands of visitors to our city. If the museum is in the same state today as it was when I was there a few weeks ago, something has to be done.

In addition to the galleries being shut down, the carpet in the main public areas is in serious need of replacement. I will ask the Minister some questions about the renovations and what the plans are for the facility going forward at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.