

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

### Fourth Session February 1 - March 2, 2006

FEB 27, 2006

#### **GNWT Fiscal Management**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The topic I would like to discuss today is one that is very timely, seeing as we are within a few days of passing the 2006-2007 Appropriations Act. Over the past few weeks and months, I continue to be amazed at just how irrelevant our whole budgeting process really is. I will have much more to say about this when Bill 19 comes before the House.

In the fall, we -- and I am speaking of Regular Members -- got wind of a \$30 million corporate tax shortfall that the government was faced with. Instead of asking Regular Members or consulting them on what may be the best approach to cut spending, the government and Finance Minister set out to ask departments to reduce budgets by one percent.

Why this approach was chosen is anyone's best guess. What it did was send deputy ministers scrambling, looking at their department's operations and making what, in my estimation, were Mickey Mouse reductions. The best approach would have been consultation with Regular Members on picking some tangible targets for reduction. All departments cannot be treated the same. Some have some room for reduction while others have ample room, which gets me to the reason I am so upset with how it is that this government can just seem to find money on a whim.

Case in point: \$525,000 for caribou management and, just on Friday, this House learned of another \$450,000 that FMBS just happened to discover in its operation. The \$450,000 might end up being the best \$450,000 we have ever spent, but again, Regular Members are the last to know what is going on. I think the actions of this government on consultation leave much to be desired. Where are these pockets of money the Minister is finding? How much slush is really out there? Why go through reductions if you can just pull together \$1 million overnight?

Mr. Speaker, something just isn't right here. The more I see, the more angry I am getting. Mr. Speaker, I am a very patient man. However, my patience is wearing very thin when it comes to the way that this government is handling our spending and totally ignoring the fact that we are a consensus government. It seems to me that actions lately by this government would suggest that they believe they are beyond reproach. Mr. Speaker, the cavalier attitude cannot be allowed to continue. Thank you.