

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

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**Member's Statement On Current Financial Relationship With The Federal Government**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my Member's statement today to comment on our relationship with Ottawa. Having been a Member in this Assembly for four months, it is becoming increasingly evident that we have some huge financial hurdles to overcome if we are ever to get a firm grip on running an effective government here in the Northwest Territories.

The arrangement that we have in place today, Mr. Speaker, is something that has to be remedied. The fact that, for every dollar we raise in taxation revenue, we must give 80 cents of it back to Ottawa, is insane. The colonial mentality and the way Ottawa treats us as a territory has got to improve. Year after year, government after government, the same sad story continues to be told: We have to get a better deal from Ottawa – not just in our financial arrangement, Mr. Speaker, but with devolution and resource revenue sharing. This has been a persistent problem for years.

Why haven't we made progress on these important issues? Mr. Speaker, I believe that the common denominator is the Liberal government in Ottawa and the henchmen from DIAND. They are, in my opinion, the single biggest obstacle to our government and the way we govern and conduct our business. Perhaps, it is time, Mr. Speaker, that we develop some new approaches to dealing with Ottawa. It may be time to develop another business coalition or lobby to again remind them that we are here.

I certainly am not saying a Conservative or NDP government in Ottawa would treat us any differently. They may. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is certainly not helping us. They continue to ignore us in our desire to have more control over our finances, resources and future. We need to stem the colonial attitude and approach Ottawa has toward us. We have a new Premier, a new government, and, if I can say, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Handley does bear a slight resemblance to Mahatma Gandhi.

-- Laughter

In a search for answers, Mr. Speaker, maybe he can get some good sandals and lead us on a walk to Ottawa. Thank you.

-- Applause