

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

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**Appointment Of The Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board Chairperson**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use my Member's statement today to talk about the recent appointment of a new chairman to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

In January, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board recommended three candidates for the job – all of them residents of the Northwest Territories. Territorial MLAs were not informed in advance of the appointment to the board, and many of us had even written recommendations for those who were passed over.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly, we take our jobs very seriously. This appointment was seen as being a pivotal one, given the amount of resource development that is taking place here. Regular Members were planning to move a motion asking the Premier to call Minister Scott to register our concerns.

Yesterday afternoon, during a break in our proceedings here in the House, we were shocked to find that a non-northerner, a non-nominee was appointed and that the three northern candidates were passed over.

Mr. Speaker, in the year that I have been here, I have listened quite intently to the statements made by our Premier and our government regarding how our relationship with Ottawa is progressing. The action taken yesterday by Minister Scott is nothing but regressive and gives me no comfort in his or the governing Liberal Party of Canada's intentions in dealing with northern Canada. The colonialist approach has to stop.

We have to take control of our own affairs. Why do we continue to allow ourselves to be made the fool by Ottawa? Is it too much to ask for Minister Scott to pick up the phone and call our Premier and get a read on the politics of the appointment of a non-northerner, a non-nominee? I don't think so.

Politics is a funny business, Mr. Speaker, and I must admit, I had a good laugh when I watched Rick Mercer's Monday Report just six short weeks ago in which he made light of the fact that he and his comedy show had been to the Northwest Territories twice and that the Minister of DIAND, Mr. Scott, had not been here once.

It has been 10 months since the federal election. Thanks to Rick Mercer, Mr. Scott is finally going to come north next week. We will have many questions for Minister Scott when he visits us next week: Where is the economic development money announced in the Throne Speech last year? Where is the money to clean up Giant Mine? Are we expected to just stand by and watch DIAND govern and run our territory?

Mr. Speaker, right out of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, it states quite clearly in section 12(1): "The chairperson of a board shall be appointed by the federal Minister from persons nominated by a majority of the members." It would appear obvious that Minister Scott didn't get a chance to read this act. Where was our Member of Parliament in all of this? Does she work for us, the constituents who elected her, or does she work for Minister Scott in DIAND? Certainly, these are questions that all northerners have and should ask Minister Scott and Miss Blondin-Andrew next week when they are here. Thank you.

---Applause