

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

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**Member's Statement On Establishment Of A Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, during Committee of the Whole, we were discussing the developments of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline office. The process setting up this office is \$850,000, and it is contained within Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1.

I would be the first one to say that this office is much needed and overdue. I do realize the importance of this office for most of my colleagues and for the ridings they represent. However, Mr. Speaker, I have some degree of difficulty in understanding why it is that this cash-strapped government, by my count, that has today over 20 persons dedicated to this initiative government-wide, comes back to this House looking for \$850,000.

This project is a multi-billion dollar project that will impact the lives and future of many of our residents and our territory. Where is the leadership from this government? Why are we scrambling at what seems like the eleventh hour when we have had prior knowledge of this for years?

I would have preferred if the government went out and collected the positions and funds attached to these positions, and coupled these positions with the existing Mackenzie Valley development section to form this new readiness office. As a government, we must ensure that there is coordination.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I do not see the coordination. I just see the growth of our public service, and this causes me to be very concerned. I am of the mind that, given the size of our workforce, especially in the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and our billion dollar budget, the government should be able to coordinate and come up with the \$850,000 and the PYs for this new office initiative.

It just seems to me that it is so easy for the government to come back two months after a budget is passed to try to get \$850,000 via supplementary appropriation. Why was there not any planning for this office? We knew it was coming. I will have questions for the Minister responsible at the appropriate time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.