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Infrastructure Negotiations with the Federal Government

Mr. Ramsay: I'd like to speak today about where the Northwest Territories is at on the federal government's agenda. I'm surprised this government seems to be taking, let's say, a more laid-back approach to devolution and resource revenue sharing, especially given our current financial situation and our desperate need for increased revenue streams. Our Territory has never had such a great demand for investment in transportation, energy, education, housing and community infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shame the last government could not get substantial investment infrastructure investment dollars into our Territory. As we're all well aware, they also made the decision to proceed with the Deh Cho Bridge project without any federal investment.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday our sister territory, Nunavut, signed a seven-year, \$242 million infrastructure deal with Ottawa. I'd like to congratulate Premier Okalik and his government on delivering for his territory much-needed infrastructure dollars. Mr. Speaker, seeing the size of investment in Nunavut makes me wonder about what our territory is doing in Ottawa and what our game plan is to try to secure some much-needed infrastructure money.

The list of projects here in the Territory is a long one: the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the extension of Highway 4 to Gordon Lake and beyond, the city of Yellowknife bypass road, the access road to gravel source 177 near Tuktoyaktuk, just to mention a few. It's not too late for the federal government to come up with some money for the Deh Cho Bridge.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that Nunavut is not the cash cow for Ottawa that the Northwest Territories is and will continue to be for years to come. We need to have our infrastructure needs addressed. The last government failed to get much done. I wonder: will this government follow in its predecessor's tracks? I certainly hope they don't. We can't afford to wait, as opportunities will pass us by if we're not ready for them.

Mr. Speaker, we can't afford to have that laid-back attitude. We need to be more aggressive in our discussions and negotiations with the federal government. We need to, as Conservatives like to say, "demand better". Our residents here, and Members on this side of the House, are waiting for this government to deliver on substantial infrastructure dollars for our Territory. Mahsi.