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Deh Cho Bridge Project

Mr. Ramsay: I want to speak today about access to information on the Deh Cho Bridge project. I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation's office, which recently advised me that the cost-benefit analysis of the project is actually posted on the Department of Transportation's web site. Someone should tell the Premier, who also happens to be the Finance Minister, where that's at so he can have a look at it.

The document itself looks like it was co-written by the departmental staff, who have injected every possible benefit into its conclusion. Is this the detailed, up-to-date analysis that the Minister and the Premier have told Members about? Certainly, at \$160 million, this project would and deserves much, much more detailed analysis than what's included on that web site.

Now on to the concession agreement, which is the master agreement signed between the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the GNWT, which arranges for the development, the design, the construction, the operation, maintenance and management of the bridge. This agreement was signed by the last government three days before the election, committing the GNWT to the project.

I've asked for a copy of this agreement numerous times, because I want to see exactly what we're committing ourselves to, what we have negotiated in the agreement and where our potential liability may rest. I believe the Members of this Legislative Assembly have every right to see this document. Why is the government so reluctant to provide Members with a copy of the agreement? Is there something in there that they just don't want us to see?

Mr. Speaker, one option I will be entertaining is looking into getting this Assembly to subpoena the document so that we can see exactly what we are committing ourselves and every government for the next 35 years to. The former Premier promised Members that we would be given the information about the concession agreement prior to the government signing it. Obviously that did not happen, and this government seems intent on charting the same course of secrecy on the agreement.

The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, which the last government signed the agreement with, was to have “deemed equity” of \$5 million. I’m still not certain how any government could sign into an agreement with a corporation by just deeming them equity. I wish someone would deem me \$5 million in equity, Mr. Speaker.

The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation still, as I mentioned yesterday in my statement, does not have \$5 million dollars in equity. And things have changed now in the make-up of the equity stake in the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. I want to ensure that our legal experts are going over these agreements with a fine-tooth comb to ensure that our liability is minimized. At the appropriate time today I will have questions again for the Premier. Mahsi.