

16th Legislative Assembly

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Budget Process Observations

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to use my Member's statement today to speak about yesterday's proceedings in regard to third reading of Bill 8 for the 2008 - 2009 budget.

As Members are well aware, the last four weeks have been a real battle between the Regular Members and Cabinet. We have moved an historic number of motions during our budget deliberations, and yesterday was the culmination of all of our efforts.

The budget is not perfect, but we were able to minimize job loss and get the message out to our constituents that consensus government can and does still work. Our Premier himself has gone through an amazing transformation — from the Premier who took a hard line early on and said no to any movement by government to address our reinstatements, to a Premier who did listen and at the end of the day breathed some life back into consensus government.

Premier Roland in the past has been nicknamed Captain Consensus, and he has on occasion in this House said that he is consensus to the core. So I'm very glad to see the Premier getting back to his roots. I want to thank Premier Roland for working with the Regular Members on the concessions, also Deputy Premier Miltenberger, whom I know played a key role in bringing the budget to the conclusion that we had yesterday.

I want to say thank you to the UNW for all of their efforts in assisting Members with research and advice, and also for their public relations campaign regarding the 2008 - 2009 budget. The last four weeks have been a gruelling time for Members — many of us far from home and families — and I want to thank all Members for their efforts and their dedication in arriving, finally, at a product we can accept.

None of our work here would be possible without the professional staff we have here at the Legislative Assembly. I want to thank our Clerk, Mr. Tim Mercer; Deputy Clerk, Mr. Doug Schauerte; and all of the Clerk's staff, research staff, and all of the other building staff and service providers who make putting on a budget session — and a session in general — possible. Thank you to you too, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.