

## 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly

### Third Session First Sitting October 22 - 24, 2008

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#### Government Fiscal Prudence

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being the last day of the fall session, I wanted to speak again about where our focus needs to be as a government.

I recently had a constituency meeting where I heard from many constituents that are adamantly opposed to tax increases that will increase the cost of living. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, this is the biggest issue facing our residents. Obviously, I share their concern, and I'm interested in trying to find ways to make it less expensive for people to live here. That is why I will fight any proposed tax that increases the cost of living, whether directly or indirectly.

This government seems completely out to lunch when it comes to planning for the future. The government comes nowhere close to reduction targets it sets for itself. Then they reinvest almost as much as they reduce spending by. This is a very haphazard and dangerous pursuit. As a government we are living way beyond our means: \$170 million for a new bridge, \$115 million for a new school, \$22 million for a new garage, \$26 million for new office buildings, and numerous other niceties.

In case Cabinet has not noticed, there is the very real and pressing issue of the global economic meltdown currently underway. Just yesterday the Bank of Canada stated that Canada was on the brink of a recession. On paper, many people here in the Northwest Territories and around Canada have lost thousands and thousands of dollars in savings and RRSPs. The credit crunch will come. Commodity prices are sinking. The loonie has lost nearly 20 per cent of its value in the last month. All levels of the government will be facing tough times ahead, yet we walk aimlessly along, oblivious to what is going on around us.

I question why our Premier was not at the First Ministers meeting held in Montreal on Monday. That discussion centred around the growing fear and realization that governments are going to be faced with possible deficits. The federal government may have no choice but to cut equalization payments. This will severely impact our operations and our ability to look after our people.

Why is it that we continue to spend like drunken sailors, Mr. Speaker? We all play a part in this, and demands in our constituencies often call upon us to ask government for program enhancements, capital projects and funding. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put out the caution flag to government today and to the Members that we always need to keep in mind our need to live within our means. Thank you.