

**16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**  
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**Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy**

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to address the Minister of ITI's (Industry, Tourism and Investment) statement from yesterday when he announced the arrival of the new Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy, or SEED, which officially came into effect on September 2 of this year. He stated that it was in response to a major review of the department's business programs, which was completed in 2006.

I would like to thank the Minister for acknowledging the work of the EDI (Economic Development and Infrastructure) Committee. We were consulted and have allowed the policy to move forward. But what I want to tell you today is what the Minister didn't say he heard during those consultations.

There were concerns raised over the new policy, simply being that the old BDF was given a new paint job, topped up with some more money and called SEED. At the end of the day, will this new SEED policy take root? I highly doubt it, Mr. Speaker. There are no targets. There is no delivery mechanism, even though the last two governments have both tried to achieve the one delivery model for economic and business development in our territory.

The fact is that this \$2.5 million will start up some businesses, but how many will survive is the bigger question. Until the government comes up with a plan to address the high cost of operating a business in the small communities, especially utility and personnel costs, we might as well take the \$2.5 million and throw it out of a plane.

Where is BDIC in all of this? What are the government's intentions in dealing with BDIC? What is the ministerial direction today for BDIC? I was surprised to recently hear about the proposed ministerial advisory panel on economic development. At first glance it sounds like it would be nice, like it would work, but has the Minister forgotten about a duly formed and knowledgeable BDIC board and chairman, which to me would serve this purpose?

Today BDIC is losing staff. It lacks focus. It has no direction from ITI or this government. To me they're simply propping up subsidiaries and managing bad accounts. Is this what the government really wants for its business development corporation?

The territory needs a meaningful, comprehensive and coordinated suite of services for economic and business development in our territory. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.