

**16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**  
**Third Session**  
**Second Sitting**  
**February 4 - March 12, 2009**

**FEB 23, 2009**

**Changes to Consensus Government**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak again today about consensus government.

Last Thursday I asked the Premier a number of questions about Cabinet solidarity and why it was that we conduct business the way we do. In my line of questioning last week I may have hit a nerve with some Cabinet Ministers, but believe me when I say it was not my intention to insult anyone or their abilities in any way. What I was doing in saying and suggesting that, is there is a better approach to how we govern.

With our system of government there is not a consensus manual or a guide. Our system of government was born and has evolved because of its elected leaders. From time to time adjustments need to be made. Because our system of government is one of convention, it is up to us to make any changes. I appreciate the Premier's offer to put communications on the table and develop protocols, but our problems run much deeper than what is on the table, as the Premier mentions.

I'm not looking to throw the doors wide open on a constitutional development and I was surprised that the Premier, in answering questions last week, would even suggest that. The fact is we can change the way we operate this government. What I was suggesting last week is all we need to do is take the lock off of Cabinet Ministers. I agree with the Premier that this is about more than protocols. It's having the courage to change the way we do things. Just because we do things the way we do doesn't necessarily make it right.

I don't make a suggestion like this lightly. Believe me that I have given this a great deal of thought. My background and my formal education is in political science and I arrive at my suggestion with the best interest of this House and of our residents in mind; those who are demanding sound decision making from this government, something to be sure we haven't seen much of in the first 17 months.

The good news is we can change this if we want to and it could be the change that gets us back on track, gets us back to the roots and true spirit and intent of consensus government.