

16th Legislative Assembly

Fourth Session

First Sitting

October 15 – November 5, 2009

OCT 15, 2009

Federal Infrastructure Funding

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we open up this fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to welcome Members back as well. Mr. Speaker, now that we've adjusted our capital planning process, this fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly takes on a much higher profile than in the past, as capital expenditures will be debated and approved by Members during our three weeks here.

This October also marks the halfway point for Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly, and seeing as we'll be discussing capital projects and infrastructure planning, I thought it would be wise to start this session with a statement about infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the government has delivered specifically on two key infrastructure projects in my riding of Kam Lake: the City of Yellowknife bypass road and the \$28 million renovation to Ecole St. Joseph School. Also within the city are projects like the Territorial Dementia Facility, the new data centre currently being constructed on Byrne Road, the Department of Transportation combined services building at the airport in Yellowknife and the K'alemi Dene School which recently had their grand opening in Ndilo.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, much has been accomplished in a short period of time and I want to thank the government for their efforts in advancing these projects. Mr. Speaker, as a government we are projected to spend upwards of \$500 million, half a billion dollars on infrastructure during the four years we are here. This is unprecedented spending in a time when our people, our economy and our future need it the most.

We still have the two years left to go, Mr. Speaker, and I want to go on record today as saying we need to develop a comprehensive, coordinated approach to trying to get federal investment for infrastructure in our Territory. We need to work with aboriginal governments, industry, and our neighbours in the Yukon and in Nunavut to further our collective interests. All this in an effort so that we can continue to heavily invest in infrastructure to improve the quality of life for residents here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it is abundantly clear we cannot do this alone. We need substantial investment in hydro development, alternative energy and transportation. We need the federal government. We need to have a game plan on what our asks are of the federal government and how it is that we pursue the federal government.

In my estimation, we've been doing only a satisfactory job, but I believe, given some time and some resources, that we can, and should, be doing more in Ottawa on all fronts, Mr. Speaker, with a comprehensive and a coordinated plan. Thank you.