

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

**Fifth Session  
Third Sitting  
May 11 - 20, 2010**

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### **Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Program**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the brief emergency session in March, I had the opportunity to make a statement on the proposed changes to the supplementary health benefits. Like many of my colleagues, I am feeling completely frustrated and very uneasy about the direction that this government is taking with supplementary health benefits.

Why is it so easy for this government to state that they want a system that is fair and equitable when this is just not a reality? Why is this government so good at upsetting people? Again today we saw another protest in front of the Legislative Assembly protesting a decision of this government. Does the government care?

Apparently not, seeing that Minister Lee has been given her marching orders by Cabinet and she is being too arrogant and too ignorant to see that by pursuing this direction, she is doing untold damage to her reputation as a people's politician.

I worked with Minister Lee on this side of the House for four years. She took no prisoners when defending her constituents' interests. Why now that she is in Cabinet does she continue to ignore the people? Perhaps Members in this House should look at putting Ms. Lee back on this side of the House. I'd be very interested in seeing just how fast Ms. Lee would run from her stance as Minister.

A politician who does not listen does not care. It is becoming very apparent that Minister Lee requires a wake-up call from Members of this House to remind her that she is listening to neither the Members of this House nor the public. Why make those who are most vulnerable pay when they need help the most? Make no mistake about it, this is a tax on the sick and the elderly. It is a gross misrepresentation of the laurels of this government to be fair and equitable to all they serve.

All of this for what? To divide people on racial lines, to save \$2.5 million a year. Mr. Speaker, it's just not worth it. Our values, our relationships, our social fabric are far more important than \$2.5 million a year.

I do believe we need to address those who have no coverage. This should be done. These costs should be paid out of tax revenues, or other revenues the government generates on a year-to-year basis. Why can't this be a solution, Mr. Speaker?

It is Cabinet's responsibility to manage these decisions, and given Cabinet's track record of decision-making, it's little wonder people outside in the public are so upset, again, at another decision this government is making.

It's the wrong decision. We need to park it. We need to find a new solution, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.