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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Friday, October 24, 2008**

Members Present

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya.

The House met at 10:02 a.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 5-16(3)
"OVER THE TOP" MARINE RESUPPLY

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about an exciting initiative being carried out by the Petroleum Products Division of the Department of Public Works.

The Petroleum Products Division provides fuel sales, dispensing and delivery services in 16 NWT communities not served by the private sector and in 20 communities of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. For many years petroleum products destined for Beaufort-Delta communities have been purchased solely from northern Alberta sources, transported via rail car to Hay River and then loaded onto barges for transportation down the Mackenzie River.

In 2005 the Petroleum Products Division began pursuing an alternative model designed to reduce the cost of delivering fuel to communities in the Beaufort-Delta. Instead of delivering fuel via the traditional route, this new Over-the-Top route saw diesel fuel and Jet A-1 aviation fuel purchased from North American west coast or offshore refineries and then transported along the Alaskan north shore by larger vessels and delivered to facilities in Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk.

The resupply routes for the community of Tsiigehtchic and for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation in Fort McPherson will also

change as a result of this new delivery route. In recent years diesel fuel has been resupplied via the Dempster Highway. This year the diesel fuel required for these two locations was delivered via the Over-the-Top route and is staged in Inuvik. The diesel fuel will then be trucked as required to the community of Tsiigehtchic and for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation in Fort McPherson.

The use of this new delivery route during the 2008 shipping season for diesel fuel and Jet A-1 aviation fuel has resulted in freight cost savings of more than \$2 million — savings that will be passed directly to consumers in Beaufort-Delta communities served by the Petroleum Products Division.

While it is true that the cost to purchase fuel has increased and the price of fuel has risen, the price of diesel fuel landed in the Beaufort-Delta communities is between 12 and 24 cents less expensive for consumers than it would have been had the fuel been transported via the traditional Mackenzie River route.

Because of our relatively small volumes and in order to meet GNWT specifications, it was necessary to purchase gasoline from Alberta sources and transport that gasoline via the traditional route. Because of that the freight cost savings achieved for diesel fuel and Jet A-1 fuel could not be duplicated for gasoline. The Petroleum Products Division will pursue this in coming years in an effort to achieve similar savings for consumers of gasoline.

This initiative is an excellent example of the kind of creative thinking that is happening within the Department of Public Works and Services. Through the pursuit of new initiatives, the Petroleum Products Division was able to make a small change that resulted in big savings for residents of the Beaufort-Delta.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NUNAKPUT CONSTITUENCY ISSUES

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this day, the last day of the fall session, I'd like to reconfirm why we are elected to represent our people in the Legislative Assembly, what we believe in and what we must produce as meaningful results for those whom we are elected by.

Like all northern leaders, our people elected us to listen to their concerns, work together, find solutions and lead by example. As MLAs we have a responsibility to best understand the challenges faced by our constituents to find the best solutions to address these concerns. We are expected to bring issues to individual Ministers, to the Assembly and to our standing committees to work together to produce results.

Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm the main issues I have been hearing from my residents of Nunakput from my time as the mayor and since I put my name forward and was elected to represent Nunakput as an MLA.

My constituents want economic opportunities. They want to participate in the NWT economy, support their families and provide future employment and business opportunities for their children and grandchildren.

My people want assistance to deal with the increasing cost of living in our region. Communities are at the end of the road. Air and marine transportation systems.... We lack access to reasonably priced goods and services compared to the rest of the residents in the other regions of the NWT. The skyrocketing prices we pay for energy, food and all life's basic necessities are impacting negatively on the health and well-being of our families.

My people are also looking for us to provide them with the best possible education and health services. We all know that quality education and healthy communities are key to a brighter future.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly I believe we all clearly heard these messages from our constituents. We got together to frame our priorities and terms of office. We are now expected to focus our undivided attention on finding reasonable solutions to deliver real improvements for our people. Our people want to have the tools to succeed. This should be our focus.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. In my opinion, there is a giant step we must all make to produce the best results for the people of the Northwest Territories. We must find the means to work together, to work with the federal government and our MP, to work with our community leaders. We must find a way to work more closely with aboriginal leaders across the NWT.

A few months ago Nunakput was honoured with a visit from the Prime Minister, Mr. Harper. I want to repeat his statements while visiting Tuktoyaktuk:

"Our government has launched an ambitious northern agenda based on the timeless responsibility imposed by our national anthem, to keep the True North strong and free. To this end, we will encourage responsible development of the North's bountiful economic resources. We will ensure jobs and opportunities and the health and good governance of northern communities. We will protect the unique and fragile Arctic ecosystem for the generations yet to come. Of course, we will assert and defend Canada's sovereignty and security in our Arctic."

We have the attention of the federal government, and now we have to ensure Canada's priorities in the North reflect our priorities. Politics is the art of compromise. It means listening to each other — meaning respecting the different perspectives. But it also means finding common ground and working together to produce results.

I urge the Premier and the Cabinet to reach Regular Members, to reach northern leaders, to build consensus required to advance the northern agenda to the benefit of all Northerners. We share a vision and must now represent the clear and supported vision of Canada and guide critical decisions on transfer revenues and responsibilities. Decades of pondering and positioning have taken place. Northerners are getting impatient. We want leaders who lead.

Mr. Speaker, our elders have made an important decision by listening to each other, discussing solutions, making informed decisions on behalf of our people. That's how we've survived. Actions always speak louder than words.

The clock is ticking. We have 35 months to go until the territorial elections. Our sleeves are rolled up, and we know the challenges, so let's get the job done.

Mr. Speaker: I'll have to remind Members that Members' statements are two and a half minutes long. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NWT MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently attended an open house for the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority's midwifery program. The event was well attended and highlighted the value of midwives in the Northwest Territories. There are currently three midwives practising in the Northwest Territories: two in Fort Smith and one here in Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah.

The Midwifery Profession Act, proclaimed in 2005, provides for the licensing, registration and regulation of registered midwives in the Northwest Territories. Midwives have been active intermittently in Yellowknife since 2006 and in Fort Smith for over ten years.

Midwives are health care professionals who provide low risk women with necessary support, care and advice during their pregnancies, labour and delivery and after the births. Their care includes preventative measures, detection of complications in a mother and child and accessing further medical assistance if there is a need. The midwife also has an important role as a health counsellor and educator, not only for the mother but also her family and community.

Midwives may practise in any setting, such as homes, clinics or hospitals. Women in midwives' care do not normally see a physician unless complications arise. That reduces the workload on general practitioners currently performing routine examinations on expectant mothers. Obstetricians and gynecologists are open to the partnerships with midwives to make sure that mother and child receive quality care.

Mr. Speaker, midwifery is publicly funded in five jurisdictions, including the NWT. The province of Alberta has recently allowed insurance coverage to midwife services. In Holland, England and New Zealand midwives manage 70 per cent or more of the births compared to only 3 per cent in Canada. There is a growing popularity of midwives here, and an increasing number of expectant mothers are being turned away due to limited funding for midwifery programs. Since January 2008, 16 Yellowknife women have been declined midwifery services due to lack of space.

Yellowknife Health and Social Services has funding for only one midwife position, although there is clear public support for more. Yellowknife Health and Social Services is committed to the success of a sustainable midwifery program. The midwife works closely with an obstetrician, family physician and nurses and has regular contact with midwives in Fort Smith. Clients can call upon the midwife 24 hours a day, seven days a week, unless she is off on call or annual vacation leave. The midwife is

presently responsible for 26 women requiring various types of care and fills her quota of new clients every month.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be fast. A detailed list of her responsibilities demonstrates a wide range of services provided by midwives and helps us understand how highly women in the community value her care.

At the appropriate time I'll be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services about midwifery programs in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONSTITUENT RESPONSE TO GNWT
REVENUE OPTIONS PAPER

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this last day for Members' statements for a while I would like to give voice to comments I have received in response to the revenue options paper put out by the Finance Department. The comments were many, and they were thoughtful and included questions such as: "Where is the analysis of the impact of cutting jobs on the GNWT finances? Why are suggestions from knowledgeable people being ignored, and why is critical research absent? Why are cost reduction mechanisms nonexistent?"

But to the suggestions, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, I received a consistent message that an increase in taxes is the wrong way to go. To quote one writer, "A focus on taxes is completely missing the boat."

Having said that, there is support for certain taxes, such as applying a surtax to companies that fly their employees in and out of the Territories for work; increasing the payroll tax while at the same time increasing the northern residents tax deduction as an offset; creating a road tax for resource development companies; raising corporate taxes, particularly for the mining industry; increasing the so-called sin taxes and make liquor and cigarettes very expensive; and lastly, instituting a 6 per cent hotel tax.

In addition, I heard concern about the cuts that residents expect will be part of the 2009–10 operations budget. Two more quotes for you: "Take a planned, comprehensive approach to cutting the public service" and "The last effort was inadequately considered and prepared."

We need to reduce our expenditures, no question, and our residents accept that, but they feel there are other actions besides job cuts that will accomplish the objectives. Their ideas: cut out wasteful government spending; decrease or eliminate print ads in newspapers and magazines; file annual or other reports electronically instead of by hard copy; eliminate non-critical jobs as they become vacant; establish a committee of frontline GNWT staff to identify cost savings; put in place the necessary agreement with the Government of Canada to allow us to nominate new immigrants, especially in the areas of medicine — doctors and nurses — and skilled tradespeople; establish an employee incentive program to reward staff who identify significant operational savings.

I will finish with one last quote, Mr. Speaker, which we would be well advised to heed: "In budgeting, reduce harm and improve services for the needy. Make this your one rule, and you will achieve social justice."

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROMOTING THE GNWT AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to address the conditions and opportunities this government needs to consider to become, once again, an employer of choice.

The job market in Canada is changing rapidly. This government needs to make some progressive changes if it intends to remain competitive in attracting and retaining well educated and motivated individuals. Over the next ten years a large percentage of Canada's workforce is going into retirement, and this is driving up wages for educated and skilled entry level employees. We cannot simply rely on higher wages to attract employees anymore. Our graduates are increasingly finding equal or better paying jobs down south.

Mr. Speaker, attracting employees in today's workforce means embracing progressive policies that recognize peoples' need for recognition and appreciation, for feeling that the work done is of some worth and that the employee is a member of a team with full awareness of the goals and objectives being pursued.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited with several employees over the last few months, including summer students, casual employees and term employees. Their comments are disturbingly similar. "It's a waste" is a common expression among them. They are referring to entire positions they have held; office resources such as energy, time and dollars;

and finally, talent and potential. There are many and convincing examples here, and the costs are clear.

What is needed, Mr. Speaker? These people suggest good communication with supervisors is essential, ensuring employees understand their jobs and, critically, why their job is important. They suggested an orientation that shows the new employee more than where the coffee room is. A teamwork approach is needed, and this requires explicit effort and development, with some clear idea of how the employee's position fits within the team.

Give the employees a small project that is their own or for which they are the lead. If the employee's job is inherently boring, such as filing, this is even more important. Summer students often complete their assignments in a very short time and spend the rest of their time surfing the Net. Supervisors should begin lining up tasks for them in the months before they arrive so they are engaged and challenged.

Finally, supervisors should become aware of new employees' particular interests, motivations and skills and ensure that their job engages these interests to the fullest extent possible.

Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. In the area of wastage of resources, these people suggest we encourage carpooling within divisions, creating a GNWT blog where employees can make suggestions for savings, and assigning a roving resource monitor for ensuring efficiency. This assignment could rotate among staff so that everyone is involved. Many employees who have suggestions for improvement in their department do not speak out for fear of retribution. We need to give these people a vessel through which they can anonymously express their concerns.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, our employees know the answer to this situation. Let's listen to them and make progressive moves to improve their workplace engagement. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDERS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Yakeleya: In May of 2008 a Senator, Aurélien Gill, an elder and former chief of the Montagnais, introduced a private Member's bill in the Senate. This bill proposed to introduce a third House, an

assembly for aboriginal people, into the parliamentary system of Canada.

Senator Gill believed that such a third Chamber would give the aboriginal people of Canada a voice in political decision-making. This idea has history. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommends the introduction of an aboriginal parliamentary act. The concept of an Assembly for aboriginal people was also discussed in the Constitution negotiations in the Charlottetown Accord.

Mr. Speaker, the intent of these recommendations, the intention of a private Member's bill, is to involve aboriginal people in the country's affairs and particularly in affairs that affect the aboriginal people themselves.

Please allow me to make this connection to the North. Over the life of the 16th Assembly I have repeatedly promoted the need for an elders' council. I have spoken to the need for the federal government to get out of the Big Brother role and allow us, as Northern people, to make our own decisions where our lives and our livelihoods are concerned.

I spoke about the model that Nunavut has adopted by establishing a permanent advisory council to get input from elders on traditional knowledge. This concerns the business we have in the Northwest Territories. We need to make connections between the past, with our traditions, and the future, by younger generations. We need a vision on how to deal with the land and the animals and how we make our living in our communities in the Northwest Territories. We need the full participation of aboriginal people and elders in the decision-making process that will shape our future.

Setting up an advisory council will ensure that traditional culture and the values of our people are reflected in government business. We need to ensure that the evolution of the Northwest Territories has a strong base in traditional knowledge and values and the wisdom of our elders is carried on through our policies and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, recently in the Sahtu we lost more elders to death due to natural causes. Each time we bury our elders, we lose our culture, our values and our history, and sadly, we're not putting that into our decision-making in this government for us to carry through.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking questions of the appropriate Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUBSISTENCE HUNTING OF BISON

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Today I want to talk about hunting buffalo. For years the Dene elders have hunted buffalo for subsistence purposes. However, today they are telling elders that you can't hunt unless you have a tag. At the same time, some non-native persons, southerners, are allowed to hunt bison — hunt for sport — because they've got tags.

Elders are confused by this. Traditional harvesting of bison by our Dene people has been going on for years. These elders are expert hunters who have traditional knowledge for hunting bison. Mr. Speaker, with caribou numbers down across the Northwest Territories, elders are once again looking to the traditional practice of hunting bison for food.

In the South Slave region this practice is allowed. If a bison wanders outside the Wood Buffalo National Park, elders can harvest them without repercussion. However, if an elder wishes to harvest bison in the North Slave outside the wood bison sanctuary, they are told they cannot do it.

Traditional harvesting of bison is already going on and has been going on outside the Wood Buffalo National Park for years. This should be allowed outside the wood bison sanctuary. Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear. I'm not talking about harvesting bison by just anybody. I'm talking about traditional harvesting by Dene elders — elders who have been raised on buffalo meat, elders who are expert hunters and can tell what kind of animal they are looking for and know how to shoot them. When these elders kill and skin their buffalo, there is nothing left; every part of the bison is used.

Giving a tag to an elder who has hunted bison all his life and telling him he must watch a two hour video on bison, telling him to study a piece of paper about bison horns so he doesn't shoot a cow, assigning him a guide who is supposed to be an expert and giving him a lab kit for samples for the killed bison is totally disrespectful to the elders.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Giving an elder a sample kit of the killed bison is totally disrespectful to the elder and to the value of the traditional knowledge they possess.

I understand the importance of conservation. I also understand the importance of preserving the value of traditional harvesting practices. Consulting with

and allowing these Dene elders who have hunted bison all their lives to hunt bison for subsistence purposes only addresses and satisfies those two important values.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POLICING SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Policing in northern communities is a very essential service that a lot take for granted. There are a lot of small communities — I believe there are some eight communities — that don't have policing services in the Northwest Territories.

I think it is paramount on this government that we do whatever we can to provide some service, regardless if it's scheduled service or, in most cases, ensuring that we have a process where the community feels that they can see the RCMP once in a while in the communities, either once or twice a week in every month, if possible.

Mr. Speaker, policing in Tsiigehtchic has always been an outstanding issue. We held a meeting this summer along with the Minister of Justice to talk about policing issues. The community has made an attempt to assist the RCMP by working along with the RCMP through the community justice committee to try to find accommodation for the RCMP to overnight in that community. But we're being told by the RCMP: well, the accommodation was great, but it doesn't have a phone, and we don't have communication access. As we all know, in this day and age we have cellphones; we have satphones. Communication should not be a reason to not overnight in that community.

The communities have tried everything they can to reduce the amount of liquor consumption in communities. Tsiigehtchic was one of the few communities that stepped forward to implement regulations under the Liquor Act to ask for prohibition in that community. For several years now the prohibition order has been in place, but without enforcement the legislation doesn't mean anything.

Mr. Speaker, the community has been working through the community justice committee to find ways to deal with crime, breaches of legislation, such as the Liquor Act. But without a secure police force and also ensuring the community feels safe, the community has found itself dealing with and responding to emergencies more and more.

I will be asking the Minister in regard to some of the actions that he committed to in that public meeting in Tsiigehtchic at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER PREVENTION OPTIONS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use my Member's statement today to draw attention to what I think may be a gap in our social safety net here in the Northwest Territories.

We probably have a disproportionately high rate of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the Northwest Territories. I think there need to be options that are made available to young women who are pregnant. Certainly, there is the legal option of having an abortion, but for those young women who wish to carry a pregnancy to term and who wish to give birth to a healthy child but find themselves in situations where they may be at risk and there are social pressures on them for either alcohol or substance abuse, I think we have a duty to provide them with an option.

Rather than building an institution around this need, I believe there could be caring homes and families in our territory and our communities that would provide a home for a young woman, to create a supportive caring environment. This would be something that would be available on a referral basis for a young woman who would choose such an option. During that time it would, in a healthy home, remove some of the social pressures on that young person and also provide a wonderful opportunity for the transfer of some knowledge and some guidance.

I view this as a potential gap in our social safety network. I believe that when we consider the costs, both monetary and human, the cost is in lives that would often be supported by this government by institutional or supported living for children and adults going forward in life who are affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. When we compare the cost of that support to what it might cost to provide what really is the equivalent of room and board on maybe a foster family type model.... When you consider those costs, both the human and monetary costs, I think that we the government could do more and should do something.

Like I said, I'm not talking about building an institution around this, and I'm not talking about exorbitant costs, but I believe we need to create options for young women who are pregnant and at risk. I'll have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later today.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
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.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IMPACT OF PROGRAM REDUCTIONS
ON NEHENDEH COMMUNITIES

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak again about the initiatives and the needs of our small communities and convey the needs of my constituency. My constituency has expressed over the past four weeks the frustration of getting services to our communities and frustration about the interruption of ministerial portfolios that has impacted delivery of programs and delayed and deferred initiatives. That's never popular with people who are waiting on programming.

However, I do want to say that I am a realist and that bringing up these issues doesn't... The main thing, I think, is that we continue to raise these issues in the House and give government a heads-up that they do need to accept and evaluate our needs, ensure that they fit into our existing guidelines and procedures and, if not, take the time to see if they can make it work.

I do want to continue to advocate for my constituency in that I'm supportive of nursing in Wrigley, the improved development of Highway No. 7, improvement to the nuisance management of the buffalo in Fort Liard and also a reassessment of how we provide housing. Small constituencies like Nahendeh that also have a depressed economy are — not by choice — impacted by changes in government priority, meaning that job cuts and reduced programs have a big impact.

Overall, I just want to say that the government's got to be aware that their decisions impact my communities tenfold, I would say. A reduction of one job is huge in a community that only has two community government jobs. Reducing programming has taken away job opportunities and contracting opportunities for our communities that have limited resources, Mr. Speaker.

So I would like to key in on that when allocating resources to our communities. Government's got to be aware and take in all the regional balances and the different impacts that it would have. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT ZERO-BASED REVIEW

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I continue to remind this government about the need for a zero based review before any tax increases.

I started this session several weeks ago raising the concerns of many of my constituents in this city regarding the way the government potentially wants to tax-monger these new ideas through our next budget process. Mr. Speaker, 23 days ago I raised this issue, and I would continue to raise this issue. The fact is the Finance Minister must listen to the people. They cannot bear being punished with further taxes. Good fiscal management needs to be the philosophy.

Again I say that we do not have a revenue problem; we have a spending problem, Mr. Speaker. I hope the Finance Minister is listening to all the feedback he has heard from this side of the House and certainly from constituents, as I have.

The fact is the knife cuts both ways. Yes, we might get a short term increase in taxes, but in the long term we'll erode our tax base. Think carefully, I say to the Finance Minister; think carefully. I stand firmly here today reminding the Finance Minister that almost every one of those should be dropped, if not every one of those. They should have had the red pen treatment and fallen onto the floor and been struck off long before public consultation was considered.

Mr. Speaker, the public at large can no longer bear unnecessary costs to a regular cost of living. This government has not proven to any degree that it is working as hard as it can with the sharpest pencils and doing government in the best and the most efficient way.

Mr. Speaker, they cannot take it, nor will I. I say to the Finance Minister: heed the warning of the public, because I can use the drumming of restless constituents who will demand responses — and measured responses. That discussion paper released by the Department of Finance has caused serious ripples in our North. People in industry are starting to second-guess this investment climate. Individuals are concerned about covering day to day costs. The tone of the economic environment in our North is struck and rung clearly by the Finance Minister.

I have a message for that Finance Minister: before you run out into that dark room and draw up the next budget, be careful which tax bell you ring and how hard it is rung. You cannot unring a tax bell that scares the investment climate and destroys the tax base. Be careful, Mr. Finance Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Robert McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to welcome my wife, Judy, and my son Ryan to the Assembly.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize and acknowledge the two pages we've had from P.W. Kaeser High School in Fort Smith: Mr. Carson Roach and Adam Gruner, chaperoned by Judy Vendorver.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: [Statement delivered in aboriginal language and then in English]. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize two pages who are working here: Alicia Mata and Patricia Wederwen from Gameti. I would just like to recognize their fine work here in the Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, today I would also like to recognize two hardworking young ladies from Katlodeeche First Nation. I was very proud to have two students here from my riding joining us this week, working as pages. I would like to recognize Miss Dawn Nessell and Miss Brandy Buggins and also their chaperone, who is Brandy's mother, Betty Buggins. Both these students are from the Chief Sunrise school and are avid readers who also enjoy sports and can often be found volunteering in their community. They both have plans to enter the field of education. I also wanted to thank the Legislative Assembly staff for their support and for the help they've provided this week, and I wish these two young ladies the best of luck and safe travels home.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Welcome, everyone, in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen,

Oral Questions

QUESTION 34-16(3) FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER PREVENTION OPTIONS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the issue of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the Northwest Territories. I don't know the exact statistics, but I daresay we are still among the jurisdictions that are the most affected by this.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to create a scenario. In a community a young woman comes into a clinic or a nursing station and finds out that she is pregnant. The workers in that community are concerned about social pressures and lifestyle issues that may

not result in a healthy child being born as a result of that pregnancy. The young expectant mother does not want to pursue the option of an abortion. What do we have in our network of health and social services that would allow that care provider or that community health worker or that nurse practitioner to refer that young person to a safe environment for the duration of that pregnancy if that was their choice?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened to the Member's statement with a great deal of interest. It's something I would like to look further into. I don't believe at the moment that we have a system, legislative framework, policy or program that would intervene in that way with the pregnant mother

I do appreciate what the Member is saying, which is to support a pregnant woman whom we know to be at risk and see what we can do to assist. I'd be interested in looking further into that.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I consider this to be important. The outcomes we have seen in the people we care for, who are children in our education system.... Many end up in our justice system and on long term support from this government as a result of FASD. It's far more costly than having the opportunity to refer those who wish to a healthy home environment.

When I was Minister of Health and Social Services, I had a chance to travel to Winnipeg, where they had a network of homes where people said: yes, we will receive young women into our homes; we will care for them; we will nurture them during this time of pregnancy.

Would the Minister suggest that's a role this government could play, or would it take a non-government organization to step up? Who could organize such a network of homes, of families who would be willing to participate in this way on a foster family type model?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I think the Member is aware of the work this government does and that the western provinces, Nunavut and Yukon do to address FASD issues. I have to admit this is the first time I've heard it. I was not aware that this was being practised in Winnipeg. Perhaps there are other jurisdictions that are doing something like this. I'd be very interested in seeing what the program entails, how it works and whether or not we could look into implementing something like that here. It sounds like something that would require a great deal of work to explore, but I'm certainly willing to give the commitment to the Member that I'd be interested in exploring that further.

Mrs. Groenewegen: The age of the young people we may be talking about may fall in that gap. I think foster care funding is only available to children up to the age of 16. I believe that income support may be available. That's for people who want to live independently, I believe.

Would there be funding available for a room and board type situation, a home boarding situation for a young person under the current programs that exist? Would there be funding available under room and board situations? It doesn't fit the foster care age group, and it may not fit the income support model either.

Hon. Sandy Lee: There will be no program or money that would be available to do something like that at this time. If we as the government or the Legislature decide that this is something we want to undertake, then it would have to be introduced as a new initiative with new funding. Unless a pregnant mother falls into some other programs under Income Security or something else for health reasons, we do not have such foster family programming for pregnant women at risk. I think it's something we could look into and explore further.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: We're very fortunate to have non-government organizations, NGOs, here in the Northwest Territories and here in Yellowknife that are very concerned about the fortunes of women and children

I would like to ask the Minister if she could, through some format, initiate a dialogue with some of these organizations that may have firsthand knowledge of these types of situations and come back with more information to gauge if there is interest and a need in the community for this type of service.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I am interested in collaborating with NGOs that might be knowledgeable or interested in this issue. As well as that, I think I will make a commitment to direct my department to do more research, gather information, look at the idea, explore it further and get back to the Member and Members on the other side.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 35-16(3) POLICING SERVICES IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to follow up from my Member's statement in regard to policing in small communities, but more importantly, the community of Tsiigehtchic, which I represent.

The Minister was at a public meeting, along with Minister Lee, where issues came up about policing

in Tsiigehtchic, or the lack of policing in the community, and what this government can do to try to find ways to remedy the situation. We know that it may be a while before we see a permanent police presence there.

I'd like to ask the Minister: has he been talking to the RCMP and come up with some ideas? I know there was talk about special constables. There was talk about increasing patrols. There was talk about overnight visits. Has he had an opportunity to talk to the RCMP or people in the Department of Justice to see if there are ways that we can find some mid-term solution to this problem? We're not going to have police placed permanently at the present time, so has he come up with some ideas on how we can assist the community of Tsiigehtchic with its policing problem?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's follow-up question on the Tsiigehtchic matter. We did have a good visit in the community. We had a public forum. There were a lot of questions and concerns brought forward from the community leadership and also from the Member.

I did follow up with the Member in a letter format. I think it's important to follow through with what we've committed to the community. I did that in a letter format. Just with the RCMP G Division there is ongoing discussion about how we can increase community visits on a schedule.

We're also exploring other options. The members come from Fort MacPherson. Is there any way that we can increase capacity so they can focus more on the isolated communities that do not have detachments?

Those are the options we're working with. We'll keep the Members informed of our progress on this particular file. It's important for the safety of the community that we focus on the communities that do not have an RCMP detachment, and Tsiigehtchic is one of them. We'll continue to work as diligently with the members of G Division and also the Member from the riding. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, there were two other parts to the meeting. One was dealing with the Liquor Act. Under the Liquor Act we do have prohibition orders that can be sought in communities that are dry. Tsiigehtchic does have a prohibition order. Again the question comes down to having the legislation and having the tools to stop the flow of alcohol to communities by prohibiting it. There also has to be enforcement of that legislation to ensure we are able to stop people from doing that by making people aware that it is against the law.

I'd like to ask the Minister: has he also had an opportunity to see exactly how we can do a better job of enforcing the prohibition order?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: That certainly was one of, I guess you could say, the hot topics in the community. There's a lot of smuggling of alcohol and drugs to the community. Certainly, we're in full support of somehow stopping that from happening. That has been a topic of discussion with G Division as well: how we can work with the ferries, ice roads and planes.

Those are the areas that are being explored as we speak, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to come up with some options on how we can mitigate matters and deal with those issues. It's not only the community of Tsiigehtchic but also other small, isolated communities. There's a huge problem dealing with this issue. We recognize that in our Department of Justice and are working closely with the RCMP G Division. I did meet with the chief superintendent on this particular matter, and it is one of their priorities as well. We'll continue to make our best effort to deal with this matter at hand.

Mr. Krutko: One of the other outstanding issues is that poor communities don't have police or a nurse. In order to respond to situations where we have to have a fast response.... There seem to be a lot of time delays, in some cases up to six hours.

One of the issues that came up was looking at working with the Department of Justice or working with the Department of Health to develop an emergency response program for Tsiigehtchic so that when the bylaw officer has to call somebody, he's got somebody's phone number and somebody has the keys to the health centre. Those types of things have to be accommodated, ensuring that we have a quick response to situations when the help is needed.

I'd like to ask the Minister: has he himself worked along with the Department of Health and Social Services, the RCMP and the community to figure out how soon we can have this emergency response plan in place?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, the issue of emergency response — the committee or the community — is one of the priorities of this government as well, because it does deal with the emergency factor. It does fall under Municipal and Community Affairs as well.

We continue to work with Justice and follow through with the issues brought forward from Tsiigehtchic. I myself, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the newly elected Minister of MACA — who is fully aware what has happened in the past and also takes on the lead role as the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs — are working together in a partnership to deal with this specific matter.

It is a territory-wide issue. It's one area I think we need, as a government, to focus on as an emergency matter to deal with those incidents that happened in the past with those small communities. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important for the departments of Justice, Health, MACA — whatever — to get back into the communities and assure them that these issues have been looked into and, more importantly, keep them involved.

I'd like to ask the Minister: does he have any plans or has he instructed any of his staff to go into Tsiigehtchic and give them an update on exactly where we're at with these issues so they can feel comfortable that we are following up on these matters?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I'm a firm believer in following up on the issues as well. We have initially discussed the potential of having a meeting between the three parties just to move forward on this particular item. Once we conduct that meeting, I'm more than willing to come back to the community and give an update. It will probably be me and other Ministers who are involved going to the community, to the region, and just giving a brief overview of what we plan to do as a territory-wide government initiative. Certainly, I can commit to the Member that we will follow through with what we've talked about earlier.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 36-16(3)
ENHANCING MIDWIFERY SERVICES
IN YELLOWKNIFE

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services and are related to the Member's statement I made earlier today.

In the last couple of months I have talked to a number of recent mothers who have utilized the midwifery services in Yellowknife. I've got to say that every one of them was extremely pleased with both Yellowknife Health and Social Services for putting in the program and the sole midwife who is in Yellowknife providing the services. Her dedication and her expertise are excellent.

The problem I have and that some of them have brought to me is that she's alone. She's on call virtually every day. She's got no time off. She's willing to do that, but I'd worry that at some point she is going to become burned out. To be effective

— as effective as that great program we have in Fort Smith — we really need two midwives in order to share the load.

I'm wondering if the Minister could tell me today: when will the Minister be establishing a second midwifery position in Yellowknife Health and Social Services?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe there is any question about the merits of the program or the skill sets of the midwife who is delivering the services here.

The issue, as the Member is aware and everybody here is aware, is that we are under extreme pressure in fiscal realities. In the Department of Health and Social Services that has meant we have to work really hard to make sure we protect the core services that Health and Social Services has to deliver. The midwifery program is not one of those core services. In fact, it's a service that in seven provinces in the country is not even publicly funded.

I agree with the Member. I was a strong supporter of the midwifery legislation, and I do believe there is a huge potential for this program to grow. But in the interim we do not have the money to expand this program. At the moment we're trying to hold everything we have and protect what we have.

Mr. Abernethy: Thanks to the Minister for that response. If I remember correctly, once upon a time the department had a midwife implementation committee that was recommending, and the department was recommending, four midwife positions in Yellowknife as well as midwife positions in Fort Simpson, Inuvik. There might even have been some in Norman Wells, but I'm not one hundred per cent sure about that.

I believe, originally, they were intended to be funded out of the Territorial Health Access Fund. I know that fund still exists. I also believe that it comes to an end in 2010–2011. Is the funding no longer there for at least one more position in Yellowknife Health and Social Services, at least for the duration or to the end of the THAF? That would give us two years of a second midwife in Yellowknife, which would help us demonstrate how valuable this program is and, hopefully, build a case for moving into the smaller communities where I think the benefits would be far greater, communities such as Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Hay River.

I know that there is money in THAF, and I know it's just short term, but will the Minister check into THAF to see if there's any more money that we

could pull out of that? A hundred thousand is all we need to get a second position in Yellowknife.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I don't think we need to demonstrate that this program is useful. I don't think we need to have any more discussions on that.

We need way more than \$100,000 to create the second position. A midwife position comes with a need for about three more positions, so it's about a four PY idea.

About the THAF funding. We do not have any extra room in that funding. This midwife position at Yellowknife health is currently being funded under THAF. As the Member knows very well, THAF funding will expire in '09–10. We do need to look at how we are funding these positions. This is a valuable position, but it's one that is an extra to the core services that this department has to provide.

I would commit to the Member that we will look at everything to see how we can use our money better. If the midwifery program is one of them, I would do that. But under the current financial situation, it is a difficult task.

Mr. Abernethy: I disagree slightly. I believe \$100,000 would be about enough to actually hire a second position. We don't need extra on call dollars and whatnot, because those on call dollars already exist, and they would just split between the two incumbents.

I am glad to hear that the Minister is saying that they're going to check out all options and explore all opportunities. I know that we have all these wonderful strategic investment committees that are talking about our future and reinvestment into the public service to meet some of our mandates. I believe this one would fall under Building Our Future. Has the Minister talked with the Minister responsible for Building Our Future about the possibility of obtaining about \$100,000 from that pot to build this capacity in Yellowknife and, once again, use it as a shining light on how we should be delivering these services in the other communities?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I believe the Members are going to get a chance to review all of the new initiatives under that strategic initiative committee and Building Our Future budget in November. I could confirm that every cent of that money has been subscribed to.

The midwifery program is something that we want to be able to expand to smaller communities, where there is, I think, even greater need for midwifery because of the fact that there's not a regular doctor service and other arrangements for women who are expecting to give birth.

I would like to commit to the Member, again.... I just want to be frank and direct about the fiscal situation

that the government and the Department of Health is operating under. In looking at all new initiatives, we'd be looking to protect the core services before we could expand to extra services. Midwifery, as good as it is and as much as I support it wholeheartedly, is still an unfunded program, and it's one that is an extra to the core service.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thanks to the Minister for that response. This program, midwifery services — hopefully someday we will get them into the communities like Simpson, Norman Wells, Inuvik, Hay River — will actually, I believe, save us a lot of money in the future. I think it's time for us to actually think outside the box. Let's find ways to get this \$100,000 that we need to create this second position and then pursue additional positions in the community.

You indicated earlier that you'll explore all options. Maybe I can get a commitment from the Minister at this time to look into the department itself. How many assistant deputy ministers do we need? How many directors do we need? We're awfully top heavy, and at the end of the day, we're about providing services to our people. Do we really need to be spending all these dollars on senior management in all of these departments and paying them huge bonuses when we should be delivering service to our people? This is a valuable service. Let's get in there, dig in there and find some money. Will the Minister commit to looking at the structure within the departments to see if there is any money there?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I'm happy to advise the Member that in fact the Department of Health and Social Services is one of the few departments that actually reduced their top management. We reduced the positions at headquarters by 13 per cent in the last round. We went from two ADMs to one ADM, and we have reduced a director position by one. That went unnoticed, but we did all of that in the last six months.

The second thing. While I support — and I do.... There's no question that a midwifery program is the way to go in the future, but there has not been any evidence to suggest that it is replacing some regular medical services that pregnant mothers in Canada still undergo. I do personally believe that birthing is way too medicalized, and the more midwives we could have, the better. But that's not how the system is being implemented right now. Midwifery continues to be an extra service to the core service. There's no evidence to suggest that it's saving us money right now.

But I will continue to review that and work with the Member, and I will look in every nook and cranny

for every penny I can find to support such a program.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 37-16(3)
IMPACT OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

Mr. Ramsay: I have a few questions today, and I guess the first question I'd like to ask is of the Premier.

I listened to CBC News yesterday. I heard that the Legislature got back to work over in the Yukon, and one of the first things that Premier Fentie did was set up a committee of deputy ministers to keep a watchful eye on what is happening with the global economic downturn.

Again, I found it interesting that our Premier didn't go to the Premiers' meetings that were held recently in Montreal. I'd like to ask the Premier: what is our government doing today to help assure residents of the Northwest Territories that we're keeping a watchful eye on what's happening globally to the economy?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: The fact is that the Finance Minister is on the situation, looking at it and having his staff do the review. In fact, he'll be updating us here in the next few days as to some of the impacts and updates from the fiscal situation that we're looking at.

Mr. Ramsay: The financial targets that were set at the beginning of this year by the government obviously didn't hit the targets on the reduction side that they were hoping for. They've rushed into a lot of other reinvestment scenarios that see them spending almost as much money as they've reduced.

I'm wondering: is the government the least bit concerned that this spending spree that we seem to be on is going to come back and haunt us? I know it's almost Halloween, Mr. Speaker. Is it going to haunt us?

Hon. Floyd Roland: When the Member says "they," let me remind him that we all had a say in the budget process itself. In fact, some of the targets not met were directed by the Assembly as we looked at how we were going to live within our means.

The goal is that we're still going to live within our means. The Minister of Finance has had his staff reviewing and keeping an eye on the situation. We will continue to work with the Premiers across the country to ensure that we're kept in the loop and

work with them on any initiatives that come forward. We'll always be happy to report that to Members.

Mr. Ramsay: During my Member's statement I also said that Regular Members, too, play a role in this, because every day — and I'm as guilty as the next Member — we stand up here and demand of government enhanced programs and capital projects in our ridings. We're asking for more money.

But I really do believe the government needs to come up with a worst case scenario. What if equalization is cut as soon as next summer? This is a reality that could hit the government hard. I'm wondering: has the government got any plans to deal with cuts to equalization or cuts to our funding that will see us have to scale back services? And where are our priorities on what we're going to look at?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Every year we as a government do a full review of our planning, expenditures, reductions and where investments should occur. That occurs on an annual basis. As we prepare for the next slate of that, which we'll be bringing to Members, that information will be pulled together. For example, were our estimates on corporate taxes on the mark or were they off? Were there adjustments? Payroll tax, personal income tax, all of those things we build on estimates, and they're proved out if our numbers are good or not. Later in the year we get the results back from the federal government. That's all part of the package and affects any changes that we will have to make going forward, looking at the business plans.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think it's important that the government keep its eye on what is happening around the world. Like I said earlier, the Bank of Canada is predicting that Canada is on the brink of a recession. I would hope that the government could at the earliest possibility brief Regular Members on where the government's exposure is in terms of credit and commodity prices. It's going to hit us. We're not going to be immune to what's going on. Will the Premier commit today to brief Regular Members on where the government's exposure is on this?

Hon. Floyd Roland: The fact is myself and the Finance Minister will be prepared to sit down with Members before we start the actual business planning process to give an update on where things are, where the dollars are, the impact on the Northwest Territories and the changes we will have to look at going forward as we look at those potential impacts that might be felt here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 38-16(3)
MEDICAL TRAVEL CONCERNS
IN FORT SIMPSON

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services some questions with respect to Medical Travel.

They have been doing a really good job. I've brought up some concerns in the past about travelling back home to my smaller communities. In the past I had issues about not having contact information when they get to the airport, and sometimes they get stranded. So they have taken the initiative of putting up collect phone numbers and posting it around so people can see it.

But we're still finding that constituents are showing up in Fort Simpson, and they're getting stranded. In fact, some people aren't really familiar with calling collect, either. They're not comfortable with it, maybe because of their skill level with the English language.

I'd just like to ask the Minister: what steps are given to the patients to ensure that they travel safely back to the communities without interruption?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for bringing this issue to my attention, because it appears that we could improve our programming there.

My understanding is that we do not have a contractor for medical travel in Simpson. It is going out for tender in the next couple of weeks. While they do not have a contractor in place, the department and the Stanton authority, which is responsible for medical travel, have been using patchwork efforts to organize transportation. Where patients are flying in charter planes, they would arrange with the charter companies to pick them up, and then taxi services or Deh Cho Health Authority staff will come.

It has not been a consistent delivery of service. I'd like to thank the Member for bringing that up, and I will follow that up. Hopefully, if we could get a contractor in place, we could have a more uniform and consistent service in that area.

Mr. Menicoche: It's about making the lives better for our constituents. Deh Cho Health and Social Services, like many government departments, they're clients as well.

The main concern now, at this time of year, is that it gets darker sooner. Constituents are landing in evening flights — 7, 7:30 — and the airport gets shut down right away by airport staff. So sometimes they really don't have an outlet for who to call or how to get transportation.

I was just wondering: does the current policy or guidelines require a call ahead of time to the community that the patient is traveling to, to advise them of their contractor and/or, in this case, that it's probably going to be Health and Social Services staff for the interim?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Yes. Right now the policy or the process is that the local taxi company is advised. They would like to get the call by 4 o'clock the day before for anybody coming. I understand it does work most of the time, but once in a while the passengers might arrive at the airport and not find anybody there, and they'll have to call the number that's indicated at the airport.

Mr. Menicoche: Like I said, at Fort Simpson Airport there is a phone number that people can call collect. Has the department looked at using a 1-800 system at all? I think we've raised it before too; I'm not too sure. Maybe it exists; I'm not too sure.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I think the 1-800 number question was to do with residents in our small communities who need to get hold of a health professional, if there's just one simple number they could call. The issue there, at the time, was with NorthwesTel having some difficulties.

With respect to this medical travel, I would commit to the Member that I will ask the department to review the process we have now to see if we could improve that any better. But, at the end of the day, having a contractor who could deliver that service consistently probably will be the better way, and I'm hoping we could have somebody take that on.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: I'm very happy to see the Minister is very attuned to the situation, because we do have patients traveling to and fro that require attention.

Just once again, I'm not too sure whether the clients are given a sheet with phone numbers on it to contact somebody when they arrive on site and there's nobody there to pick them up or to forward them on to the next point of destination.

Hon. Sandy Lee: It appears that in Simpson the Deh Cho Health Authority is in close touch with the Stanton authority. The community health rep or even the maintenance person, whoever has a vehicle, will go and meet whoever is arriving. That

is the process right now. I will review that to see if we can tighten that up any further.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 39-16(3)
MORALE ISSUES IN
THE GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE

Mr. Bromley: My question is for the Minister of Human Resources, following up on my Member's statement today. As I mentioned, I've become affected by the disillusionment and disappointment shown by a lot of our young people — our summer employees, our casual employees, our new employees — and they're lamenting the waste that they see.

I know the Minister made a statement the other day that they're embarking on a comprehensive human resource strategic plan, which I'm very happy to hear. How is the department going to ensure that all employees have input, specifically these new and potentially long term employees? Given their status as past employees, some of them are not with us. They were temporary, or they've become so disillusioned that they're no longer with us.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government we are very pleased that we were able to offer summer student employment to 281 summer students. I'm quite surprised to hear it appears the majority were disillusioned, because of the fact that we've taken extra steps to ensure that summer students were gainfully employed. We provided orientation opportunities for them, and we worked very closely with all of the departments to make sure that their employment was meaningful and allowed them to gain some skills that they could carry forward.

As well, we do provide the opportunity for exit interviews for summer students, and all of these interviews are compiled into a report that is provided to the government.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you for those comments. I am surprised that the Minister is surprised, if he indeed does have access to those exit interviews. I want to be clear that the students and young people and new employees that I talked to are clear in that they're very happy to have had the opportunity for employment. It is just the disappointment in the workplace — the missing teamwork and so on that I have mentioned.

One of the big ones is the incredible amount of wastage. I mention that again. The ENR, for example, apparently is the only department that has

mandatory double-sided photocopying and so on. What is this plan going to do to ensure that wastage of things like paper, employee potential, energy and so on is explicitly addressed?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it doesn't sound like it's a summer student issue; it sounds like it's a government operations issue. Certainly one of the initiatives of our government is to work on making our operations a lot more effective and efficient, including the reduction and elimination of wasteful practices.

Mr. Bromley: Once again, these are people that have thoughts and feelings about their employment. It is something we really want to take advantage of and address so we can improve our service to the public. One of the things they mentioned is the opportunity for a GNWT blog, where employees can log on and register their complaints and so on. What is the opportunity for anonymous contributions in order to protect these employees and enable them to make these comments and ensure we get a thorough assessment?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the Member referred to the human resource strategic plan that we're developing, which will be a ten year strategic plan, with our ultimate goal to reaffirm that the GNWT public service is the best place to work in the Northwest Territories. It's unclear to me what kind of retribution these summer students would be fearful of. We do provide them with an opportunity to respond through exit interviews. As we go through our consultation, if the general feeling is that we should provide a blog, an opportunity for them to respond, we are quite prepared to do so.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. A short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those comments by the Minister. A lot of the issues raised are government-wide issues, and I am hoping that this department and all departments will act to ensure that many of these things are addressed. They are brought up in real terms by our employees and our potential long term employees. I think it is well recognized by the Minister and others that we are not the employer of choice right now. We'd like to regain that status and both attract and retain employees.

So once again I would ask the Minister: is he willing to commit to working with the other departments on these issues, sort of beyond a human resource thing — just good management practices?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, management of the public service is a shared responsibility with all departments. We do have a deputy ministers' human resource committee, and we'll make sure that all of the departments are aware of this.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Before I go on, Members, I would just like to request your cooperation in the length of questions and supplementary questions. We have less than 20 minutes, and we've only had six questions asked. So, Members on both sides, if we can keep our questions and answers a little bit shorter. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 40-16(3)
ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT
REDUCTION STRATEGY

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my Member's statement a number of questions that had come from constituents, various residents that had communicated to me their concerns in terms of revenue, budgeting expenses and so on. I would like to ask the questions that I mentioned in my Members' Statement to the Finance Minister today. The first one is: where is the analysis of the impact of cutting jobs on GNWT finances?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, it is not clear to me if the Member is talking about government jobs, private sector jobs or just any job in general. We know there is an implication to transfer payments if people leave the North. We know that if there are layoffs in the civil service for whatever reason, there's a ripple effect in that area as well. There's been work done over the years in terms of the government — the plan we are taking with reductions both last year and as proposed for this coming year. But we're very sensitive to the issue of having a negative impact on the private sector, given all that is transpiring as we speak.

Ms. Bisaro: Thanks for the answer to that question. The reference, I believe, is to the analysis that is necessary for job cutting within the GNWT public service. I think there's been a lot of noise made about the lack of analysis done in the previous budget. I think this question deals with that previous budget, but I would like to know from the Minister: what kind of analysis is being done for the cutting of jobs for the operations budget upcoming?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, a lot of that initial direction was set and laid out as we concluded the budget for this current year. As we look forward to '09-10, we are looking at, as has been pointed out very clearly, living within our means and what it's going to take to do that, both on the reduction side and looking at revenue options. We are very, very sensitive, as is every other government and individual, to what's happening in the economic landscape around the world and in Canada with the markets, the interest rates, the fiscal tightening up and moving into an economic recession. So we have to look first and

foremost at what we can afford, how we maintain our core services, as the Minister of Health was talking about, and what choices we have to make at the end of the day to live within our means.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I didn't get the answer I was looking for.

The second question that was asked by a constituent is: why are suggestions from knowledgeable people being ignored and critical research absent? I think constituents are concerned that albeit we have a Program Review Office, there is very little analysis prior to job cuts being proposed. There is very little research — in this case "critical research" is the statement — in terms of proposed job cuts. I would ask the Minister again: what sort of analysis, what sort of research are we doing for the job cuts which are liable to be coming up in our new budget?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, once again it is not clear to me what critical research may mean. There are things we're doing in our planning with departments, with Cabinet, across the board looking at the fiscal realities, program needs, living within our means. There has been work going on basically non-stop, and that work will continue. In due course we will be coming forward in the next number of weeks with our business plan, and this February we'll come forward with the results of all the work with the budget.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. A final short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me give an example, Mr. Minister. If we are proposing to cut four jobs from a particular program, what analysis is done to determine that those are the best four jobs to be cut? What research is done to determine that the program is or is not valuable and should be maintained?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: That work is done as a matter of course. Ministers are involved, deputies, all the way down to the managers and employees. Choices are made as we look at fiscal targets. We look at what we consider fundamental, essential services, core business versus those that wouldn't make that definition. So that work is an ongoing process.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 41-16(3)
TRADITIONAL HARVESTING OF BISON

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the importance of the traditional practice of harvesting buffalo by Dene elders for subsistence purposes. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Can the Minister tell me if sections of the current Wildlife Act speak specifically on traditional harvesting of bison, or is there any regulation on the same issue as it pertains to the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, the NWT Wildlife Act governs activities in this area and the consequential Big Game Hunting Regulations; in particular, in this case, I understand part V, subsection A of the schedule to those Big Game Hunting Regulations.

Mr. Beaulieu: Here's my question, Mr. Speaker. My question is fairly specific. I recognize that the current Wildlife Act may not exactly talk about the bison in the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary. However, I'm wondering if the Wildlife Act with any accompanying regulations has anything covering the traditional harvesting of bison by Dene elders.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, there is a bison strategy that has been taking more time than was initially contemplated. That's going to be coming out in the next number of weeks, and we'll be able to have that discussion. We currently have arrangements with the people from Providence and the people from the Tlicho in terms of tags, the management of the herd issues, the hunting zones and how they deal with resident, non-resident and big game hunters. There is consultation about some proposed changes as a result of the Tlicho self-government agreement that is being consulted on with the North Slave Métis as well the Yellowknives. So there are a number of pieces in place that we have to deal with, and there's other work currently underway.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if the department acknowledges and incorporates the role of traditional knowledge into its policies and legislation; for example, any regulations that may be required as a result of the management strategy?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: We're going to, as a matter of course, work very closely with the aboriginal governments and the appropriate wildlife boards, both at the community level and with the Wek'eezhii board. We're consulting with the North Slave Métis and the Yellowknives. We're going to work closely in terms of the proposed changes — the bison strategy and regulatory changes — and how to best manage the herd. There was a recent assessment done. The herd numbers are down about 21 per cent. So we do have issues to talk about, especially as the bison tend to migrate northward.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to working with interested Members on this side of the House on this very important matter so an arrangement or an agreement can be put in place to allow Dene elders to harvest bison outside and northeast of the Mackenzie Wood Bison Sanctuary for subsistence purposes?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Yes, we are interested in working with the Members. This is a threatened species. There are specific restrictions and criteria that we have to use and follow. There is work underway, but yes, the commitment is that we will work through the appropriate committees as we come forward with the various strategies and proposed changes.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 42-16(3)
PROVISION OF
INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to ask the Minister of ECE, regarding the staff, how they are treating people while giving help or assistance on Income Support and regarding the way they are being treated.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. With all the communities we serve — 33 communities — we do provide client service officers to deal with those clients in the communities. Where communities may not have client service officers, we do have visitations on a regular schedule. If there are any issues or concerns, that should be brought forward to the regional representative of the income support assistant as well. Certainly, we provide all income support related issues to these clients in the communities on a regular basis. Mahsi.

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to me that he will speak to all staff on how they are treating the people in my riding? I'm getting more than one call in regard to staffing issues. I'm not going to name names; I just think people should be treated with respect, and they don't deserve being ridiculed. They don't want to go and get help; they want to be working. But the staff should have a little bit more respect for the people and who they are serving.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I appreciate the Member's addressing this issue to my attention today. If it is an issue, we need to deal with it as a department.

Certainly, the respect should always be there between the community members, the clientele and Education, Culture and Employment employees. We do an orientation package for all employees on how to deal with the clients. Even at stressful moments or most critical moments they need to deal with it at a professional level. That is what we're faced with, and we'll continue to do that. I certainly commit to the Member that I will look into this matter in his riding. Mahsi.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Again, the people we represent are not happy with going there. Just remind the staff that we work for the people, and it's not the other way around.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: This message has been clearly laid out here in the House, and I'm sure people are watching as well. My staff are fully in gear, watching this process as well. Certainly that message will be carried over to the department and on to the region as well. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 43-16(3)
IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CLIMATE
ON TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, three well established tourism businesses in the Yellowknife region are closing the doors, if they have not closed them yet. I don't feel comfortable mentioning their names, because I know only one, as of yesterday, gave notice to employees, and I can't speak to the other two specifically.

Their issue for closing their doors, they told me, is the economic climate, the slowdown in tourism, and there is concern that the support levels might not be there from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Setting that sort of framework up, my questions are directed, of course, to the Hon. Bob McLeod, Minister of ITI.

I don't want to cry doom and gloom, but this is not a good situation in this climate, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what the Minister of ITI is doing to make sure if there is any way to turn some of this around. What type of work is he doing so other tourism businesses don't follow the same lead as these three well established businesses, by closing their doors because of this problem?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The tourism industry is facing a number of challenges these days for a number of reasons: partly the volatility of the financial market, the currency

exchange rate, and there seems to be a trend to move away from the consumptive sports — hunting and fishing — toward more adventure, ecotourism opportunities. As a department we recognized this several years ago, and we put forward a number of different diversification and marketing programs to help existing operators develop new tourism products.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I would like to see if the Minister would expand as to what marketing program he has. Does he have a financial program that can help these tourism companies switch their types of products? Typically a hunting lodge, as an example.... They weren't necessarily in the eco business, and this is a big shift on how they market their lodge and market their products and timing. What is available, exactly, to these groups?

Hon. Bob McLeod: The Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program was introduced last year. In total, \$687,000 was approved for ten businesses and organizations this past year. We have regular banking days, and the total program over the three year period is about \$2.5 million.

Mr. Hawkins: Some of the problems I have heard is potential cash flow to make sure they can keep their business afloat during these rocky times. Does the department consider any type of option like this?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Through the BDIC board we do work with different companies and through the business programs of this government. We make every effort to work with them to get them through this difficult period.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not trying in any way to catch the Minister off guard, but is he is aware of any type of financial dollars that will be lost if some of these loans in respect to the BDIC.... He knows the companies I'm referring to. Does he have any idea or is his department doing any reconciliation about the type of loan dollars that would be lost when these companies go out of business officially?

Hon. Bob McLeod: I don't have a specific number, but I do know that we've been working with some of the operators to continue operations for several years. I expect some of the individual operators would have some significant loans, but I don't have that information right now.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 44-16(3)
INVOLVING ELDERS IN THE
EDUCATION SYSTEM

Mr. Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about the elders in a parliamentary system that would require further discussions on a constitutional level. I want to talk with the Minister of Education and Culture about education and culture and do it one step at a time. Can the Minister look into a PTR system with our education schools in the Sahtu region in terms of how we involve elders in a system to help youth? Especially, can the Minister consider that as an option to get elders into our education system?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Time for question period has expired; however, I will allow this line of questioning. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. With the Department of Education, Culture and Employment there have been some concerns in areas of delivery for funding allocation to enhance or promote aboriginal language and cultural areas — the programming. We did issue a Ministerial directive in 2004 to deal specifically with the delivery of these courses where the elders also could be hired in this area. It does highlight specific areas of aboriginal language and instruction programs and also involves our community resource people. Those are the areas we're focusing on right now.

With respect to the PTR the Member is alluding to, it's an area we could possibly look at as a long term plan. We need to consult with the communities, as well, on how we could effectively deliver these programs. I think we're doing that in the communities with the Ministerial directives at the present time, but certainly the PTR issue could be a discussion at a later time as well. We certainly deliver all these programs to the schools.

Mr. Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister to reconsider and put this as a priority with the PTR for elders and the residents in our schools. As I said earlier, we are losing the elders fast in our regions, in our communities. With them we lose the knowledge and values of our people. I would ask the Minister if he would strongly consider pushing for an initiative on the PTR to be discussed at this Assembly so we could talk about it seriously in the House.

I do appreciate the Minister's directive in terms of language and culture in our schools, but we need something more permanent to include elders in our education system as teachers and professors to help our education, both academic and cultural.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, certainly the elders are important to the educational system,

especially in the schools and also at the community level. We will continue to strive toward enhancing and also promoting more of the cultural based programs, enhancing our language at the school level and part of the curriculum development as well.

With respect to the course delivery — the program delivery at the community level — it does highlight the importance of involving the community members, the community elders. We understand that there are quite a number of years of experience and knowledge, and also their language, that could be delivered in the schools.

We will continue to work with what we have right now. We need to improve in that area. We need to hear back from the communities, because we work closely with the local school boards, the regional school boards, the councils. We will continue to do that and also work with the Members. The PTR issue is certainly an item of discussion to be taking place as well, but we need more discussion or consultation on the PTR if that's the case.

Mr. Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister commit that PTR discussions could possibly be brought up in the preliminary discussions and business plans for the upcoming years? I know it's a lot of work. I would ask the Minister if we could possibly bring some discussion to the business plans — have a PTR for elders that would be included in further discussions, that would identify funds to have elders brought into our schools.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, currently the business plans are in process right now, and with the PTR this is all preliminary. We need to do more groundwork in this area, because we do have PTRs in different areas as well. As I indicated earlier, we need to work with the community educators, the school boards, the councils at the community level and our government department to move forward on that matter. We need more time to deal with the PTR issues. But, certainly, we do provide program delivery in the community at the current time, and I think it has been successful. We'll continue to deliver that program

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Mr. Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I'm advocating strongly for the elders in terms of doing the right thing for our people in communities. How long have we been trying to get elders into our education system? There have been so many doors closed in their faces.

Mr. Speaker, I want again to say to the Minister that you have an opportunity and the Assembly here has an opportunity to do the right thing and get the elders into our schools. The doors have been slammed in their faces by the federal government,

the territorial government. The PTR system might be an avenue that would say: yes, we will have elders in the residences. They are dying out fast.

I would ask the Minister again: would he strongly push this department to have elders in our school system? It's long overdue, and it should be done as soon as possible. Not more years to study. Would the Minister commit — hopefully within the life of this government or sooner — to implement a PTR into our education system for elders?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: One of the areas we're looking at for the elders is.... They are currently being penalized for working in the schools, because of their pension being deducted. We're doing what we can as a department of the GNWT to remedy the situation. We need to utilize their service. That's what we've been hearing when we visit the schools and the communities.

At the same time, we do hire quite a number of elders in the schools as required to conduct on-the-land programs. We'll continue to do that as well. With the PTR, like I said, Mr. Speaker, we'll have that discussion at the departmental level. In order to proceed forward, we need more discussion in that respect.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Before I go on to the next item of Orders of the Day, the Chair is going to call a short break.

The House took a short recess.

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: We'll return to Orders of the Day. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is requesting unanimous consent to return to recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Unanimous consent granted.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

Mr. Jacobson: Today I'd like to recognize Ms. Allison Baetz and Ms. Caroline Kaufman from Inuvik. I know both their parents. Welcome and thank you for being here for this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Written Questions

QUESTION 1-16(3) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HIGHWAY NO. 4

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Transportation regarding operations and maintenance of Highway No. 4. Can the Minister tell me:

- 1) What is the total length of the all season section of Highway No. 4?
- 2) What is the total paved or chipsealed section of Highway No. 4?
- 3) What was the Department of Transportation's O&M budget for Highway No. 4 for the 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 fiscal years?
- 4) What is the total number of full-time residents on Highway No. 4 according to the last census?

QUESTION 2-16(3) COMMUNITY FUEL RESUPPLY

Mr. Bromley: My question is for the Minister of Public Works and Services.

- 1) What have been the costs of the resupply of fuel this year by community, and what is the cost per litre by fuel type for each community?
- 2) Are there still communities to be supplied, and if so has the fuel already been purchased and at what cost per litre by fuel type for each community?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 2-16(3) REPORT ON MATTERS REFERRED TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its Report on Matters Referred to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures. In a letter dated January 15, 2008, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Paul Delorey, referred a request from Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Chair of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, to the Standing Committee

on Rules and Procedure. The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning expressed concern with regard to the government's response to formal motions made in the House in response to direction from a standing committee.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is tasked with reviewing such requests and may offer recommendations, including changes to the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

In a letter to the Speaker dated December 6, 2007, the Priorities and Planning Committee pointed out that in most cases it has been the practice of previous governments to respond to motions made by standing committees by corresponding directly with the appropriate committee rather than providing a public response in the Assembly. The members of the Priorities and Planning Committee believe that a formal motion passed in the Assembly requires a formal response tabled in the Assembly. They refer to Rule 42(10), setting out the government's responsibility to respond to petitions as a suggested course of action.

In discussing the issue, members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recognize that any correspondence received by committees from the government in response to a motion would be considered privileged and in many cases confidential. It would therefore be a breach of the rules of the Legislative Assembly to share that response with the public.

In their discussion members of the committee felt it would be advantageous to have the government respond publicly through a motion adopted by the House. The committee felt that this would provide the public with a logical conclusion in situations where a motion was adopted by the Assembly after public debate on the floor of the House.

It became clear to the committee that it would be necessary for a motion to be worded in a manner that would require the government to table a response. In those cases, where a motion is adopted that offers general support to a principle or organization or which is outside the responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories, there would be no requirement for a response included in the wording of the motion.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures offers the following recommendations for the consideration of the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

Recommendation No.1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Rule 49 of the rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by adding the following as section 49(3):

A motion adopted by the House and requesting a response from the government will require the government to table such a response within 120 days or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days.

Written questions

In a letter dated March 27, 2008, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Paul Delorey, requested that the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures review Rule 39 of the rules of the Legislative Assembly and provide some clarification and recommendation on the length, format and procedure that should be used in putting forth written questions.

The Speaker requested clarification in order to provide proper direction to the Members of the Assembly and to ensure that the business of the House can proceed in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

It was agreed by the members of the committee that the purpose of a written question was to pose a question which would be likely to require a detailed or complex answer or an answer that would not reasonably be assumed to be within the present knowledge of the Minister. A written question is intended to obtain information for the Member, not to supply that information to the House.

Examples of written questions that were discussed by committee members included such things as detailed statistical analysis, information requests on specialized or technical matters and requests for information that would require input from regional offices.

It was noted by the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures that there are presently no rules governing the length and format of written questions and that there have been instances of members improperly posing written questions in an effort to extend debate on issues or asking a written question that should more properly have been raised during oral questions.

There are ample opportunities for Members to pose their questions in question period or to ask their questions on a subsequent day.

Members agreed that the use of written questions has strayed from the intended purpose and offer the following recommendations for consideration by the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

Recommendation No. 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Rule 39 of the rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by adding the following:

39(3): The Clerk shall ensure that the written question conforms with the Rules and practices of the House.

39(4): A written question may only contain the one initial question and four supplementary questions.

39(5): A Member may only have five written questions on the Order Paper at any one time.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that this Committee Report 2-16(3) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

Motion carried; Committee Report 2-16(3) referred to Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker: Committee Report 2-16(3) will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabling of Documents

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the Ministerial Benefits Policy.

Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy, tabled.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Annual Report 2006–2007.

Document 8-16(3), Health and Social Services Annual Report 2006–2007, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Pursuant to section 21 of the Human Rights Act, I wish to table the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2007–2008.

Document 9-16(3), Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2007–2008, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 5-16(3) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PROCESS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 27, 2008, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Assembly formally move to conduct an Executive Council accountability review process within the next 12 months whereby the Premier and Members of the Executive Council shall report to and be accountable to Members of the Legislature on progress to date and plans for the remainder of the term of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MOTION 6-16(3) MINISTERIAL BENEFITS POLICY

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, October 27, 2008, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Tabled Document 7-16(3,) Ministerial Benefits Policy, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Motions

MOTION 1-16(3) APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS (MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 23.(1) of the Human Rights Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint a Director of Human Rights to carry out the responsibilities set out in the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management is tasked with recommending an individual to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation to the Commissioner;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Ms. Thérèse Boullard of Yellowknife be reappointed as Director of Human Rights during good behaviour for a term of four years by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly.

AND FURTHER that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of appointment to the Commissioner.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MOTION 2-16(3)
APPOINTMENT OF
HUMAN RIGHTS ADJUDICATION PANEL
(MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 48(1) of the Human Rights Act provides for the establishment of an adjudication panel composed of at least three persons appointed by the Commissioner on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management has considered a number of qualified individuals for appointment and reappointment as adjudication panel members and the designation of an existing member as Chairperson;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that the following persons be recommended to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for appointment as members of the Human Rights Adjudication Panel during good behaviour for a term of four years:

- 1) Mr. James Posynick of Creston, BC; and
- 2) Ms. Karen Snowshoe of Inuvik, NT;

AND FURTHER, that pursuant to Section 50(1) of the Human Rights Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories the designation of Mr. Adrian Wright of Yellowknife as Chairperson of the Adjudication Panel.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MOTION 3-16(3)
APPOINTMENT OF
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS
(MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 23.(1) of the Human Rights Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, may appoint one or more Deputy Directors of Human Rights to carry out the responsibilities set out in the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management has recommended an individual to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Deborah McLeod be reappointed as the Deputy Director of Human Rights during good behaviour for a term of four years by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of appointment to the Commissioner.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MOTION 4-16(3)
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO FEBRUARY 4, 2009
(MOTION CARRIED)

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on October 24, 2008, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 4, 2009.

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to February 4, 2009, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion she gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays?

An Honourable Member: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a nay. Motions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the Ministerial Benefits Policy motion that I gave notice of earlier today.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker: You may proceed with your motion, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MOTION 6-16(3)
MINISTERIAL BENEFITS POLICY
(MOTION CARRIED)

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Ministerial Benefits Policy has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the Ministerial Benefits Policy requires detailed consideration;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question is being called.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Oral Questions
(Reversion)**

QUESTION 45-16(3)
REGISTRATION POLICY REGARDING
RIGHT-HAND DRIVE VEHICLES

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a couple of questions today for the Minister of Transportation to get to the issue of right hand drive vehicles and their registration here in the Northwest Territories.

I do believe that rules have to be applied equally and fairly across the board when dealing with our residents. In a case that was brought to my attention over the summer, there was a vehicle purchased back in May of this year. It was taken to be registered at Motor Vehicles here in Yellowknife and was denied registration. It still hasn't been registered to this date.

At that time, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Transportation had said that no other right hand drive vehicles would be registered in the Northwest Territories, but it has come to my attention that the department has registered other right hand drive vehicles subsequent to saying no to this individual.

I would like the Minister to perhaps just give me an explanation of what their policy is when it comes to right hand drive vehicles.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The emerging issue of right hand drive vehicles and the number of them that are coming into our area has been a concern for some time now. Most of these vehicles are coming from Japan.

We have been working toward and looking at developing a policy over the past spring. Earlier this summer we decided that we needed to move forward and put in a policy that requires right hand drive vehicles to be inspected on a 12 step safety and equipment inspection. Prior to that, we did not have a policy that applied to right hand drive vehicles, and there was a vehicle that was refused for registration because they did not have a safety inspection. There was another vehicle that was approved because they were safety inspected in another jurisdiction, and that one went forward and was registered.

Mr. Ramsay: The vehicle in question was over 15 years old, and according to national standards, that vehicle would be able to be registered in Canada.

It's insured. It was able to get insurance. There is a bill of sale. It had all the necessary documentation.

I'm just wondering, after this happened, what would allow another right hand drive vehicle to be registered in the Northwest Territories when this one couldn't.

Hon. Michael McLeod: It's a relatively simple situation, where one vehicle had a safety inspection and the other one didn't. We approved the registration of the vehicle that had the safety inspection, and we required the other person who came forward to go through a safety inspection. And we did put the policy together to define what that would mean.

Mr. Ramsay: What does the Department of Transportation base its safety inspection on? Is it tagged to another jurisdiction? How does that work? How they did arrive at what vehicle is safe and what vehicle isn't safe on the road?

Hon. Michael McLeod: First of all, we need to comply with the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. We have also looked at what the other jurisdictions are doing. We have talked to the transport officers in our departments and also talked to those in the public sector who work in the area of safety.

We look at all the vehicles that come from other jurisdictions, including right hand vehicles now, that are required to have compliant parts. A lot of these vehicles are coming because of the ability to sell them fairly cheaply in this country. However, they don't always have adequate safety parts on them, including proper windshields, bumpers, headlights, reflectors, so those things need to be in place. We've put together a policy now that incorporates a testing or compliance part to it, and it seems to be working well.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: I thank the Minister for that. I certainly do understand the aspect of public safety on this. It seems, in terms of dealing with right hand drive vehicles, the department seems to be making things up as they go along. On the Internet, on the website, there are no policies or information posted for residents who are entertaining the idea of purchasing a right hand drive vehicle. Will the Minister make sure the information gets out there for the public so that if they are looking at purchasing a right hand drive vehicle, they know what the rules are, they know what the policies are that are at play here in the Northwest Territories, and it's not just a case by case basis and policy on the fly?

Hon. Michael McLeod: We certainly will commit to doing that, Mr. Speaker. We've nailed down the inspection requirements; we have informed all our staff.

My assumption was that it was also in public information so that people know what the process is. We'll commit to looking at the Internet and other sources of having that information brought forward.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 46-16(3)

ASSISTANCE WITH ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES FOR LOW INCOME HOMEOWNERS

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could direct his staff to look at the small communities where they are considered to have a high cost construction season. It's almost over now, and some of these people are locked into the high cost of fuel from just generally high costs in small communities. Would the Minister direct his staff to quickly get materials that will make the houses more efficient — wood stoves, weather strips and whatnot — that are needed for our low income families in the small communities?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're moving forward as fast as we can on providing energy efficient homes in the Northwest Territories.

A couple of days ago we announced our new EnerGuide 80 design requirements that will have energy efficiency at the forefront. We are also embarking on doing evaluations of all our public housing units across the Territories. We have 2,300 units, and we would like to do a rating on all of them and see if we can do some upgrades so that we can save some of the heating and energy costs and provide energy efficient homes.

We are also reviewing the situation of how we can assist the people who own their own homes and have private homes that may need upgrades and energy efficient programs. There are other programs available through this government; however, the Housing Corporation is doing its own review to see how we can help.

Mr. Beaulieu: I'm referring to home ownership, of course, where the individuals have to pay their own operating costs. I was wondering if the Minister could have the staff concentrate on the home ownership section, especially for homes where individuals are responsible for their own heat, power and so on but are deemed to be low income, within that income window where individuals will get assistance from the Housing Corporation.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We're trying to focus on all the different aspects of energy efficiency, from public housing to home ownership programs, including people with low incomes. We would certainly be glad to work with the Member if there are any outstanding issues or concerns regarding people in his riding.

We have programs that most of the people can apply to currently and that may assist. But as to a specific program designed for energy efficiency for homeowners, that's something we haven't been able to firm up yet. We're working on it and would be glad to share that once that's done.

Mr. Beaulieu: I guess I'm more or less thinking about a specific group of people: homeowners in small communities who have low incomes. I don't really need a specific program. I suppose the Housing Corporation has consolidated all of their programs into 14 programs, and each of those programs is supposed to be able to encompass the assistance towards all home ownership clients or all housing clients.

I'll ask the Minister again if they could take a portion of CARE and concentrate first on home ownership clients who are paying their own operating expenses, before getting into the public housing end, where the operating cost is paid by the Housing Corporation or the government.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We certainly can move forward on the recommendation the Member has provided.

We're actually looking at more than just the CARE program. We'd like to see if we can bring things forward through the strategic initiative exercises that we have ongoing. We are considering that, and those things will be brought forward during the business plan. That will be packaged up, hopefully, with the CARE program and should help the homeowners across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the Minister could communicate that to us in writing as soon as possible.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We had intended to come forward through the business planning process. However, if we can have all our initiatives firmed up so that we have a good understanding and some comfort that this is what we are going to do and if we have the dollars that are required, we would be glad to share that with the Members in writing.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 47-16(3)
SUPPORT FOR PLAN OF CARE
COMMITTEES IN COMMUNITIES

Mr. Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, over the last several months I've been working with some families in the Sahtu region. We develop policies at the Legislative Assembly. They are brought forward by the Cabinet, and we go through the policies and have them implemented in different programs. These policies are well written, they're well thought out, but when they hit the community at the community level, there seems to be a disconnect there.

One of the things I want to talk about is foster care. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services about when children are taken out of the communities as to the point of contact. In my community I have received several phone calls. There seems to be a disconnect with the department and the policies, and some of the different organizations are blaming each other.

I want to ask the Minister in terms of a similar program they have in Fort McPherson; I think it's called Plan of Care. Is that something that the department is thinking about implementing in our region? Because that was supposed to happen in the Sahtu.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Plan of Care is something that has been provided for with the recent amendments to the Child and Family Services Act and is one that we would like to see implemented in every community.

The department staff have been going to the regions to work with community leadership and the communities to help them set them up. We have not had as much response as we would like. We will continue to work with the communities to support them to get this set up, because it is a good avenue for the communities to participate and have some say on the children.

Mr. Yakeleya: It has been over how many years that the community has been saying this in terms of Plan of Care? My community of Colville Lake, over a number of years, has been saying this. The chief has called me; people in the community have called me. They've said, "Why don't we get to work and get them to talk to us? They come in here and they scoop up the children and they bring them outside."

I guess we're waiting for the implementation of a good program. We've heard some good things from Fort McPherson. When are we going to see dollars that match these good words? It's long overdue. Again I ask the Minister of Health and Social Services — the community is ready — to get this

Plan of Care implemented into our communities ASAP.

Hon. Sandy Lee: As the Member is aware, this is relatively new legislation. The last Standing Committee on Social Programs worked to implement that.

The second thing is that all of the tools and the legislative framework are there. We just need to work harder to get the communities to come on board. There's not a lot of money allocated for that. It's a situation where community leadership and interested parties could get together, and we will give administrative support in that regard.

Lastly, what I want to say is that in some situations in our regions, families agree.... In Sahtu they have agreed to the arrangements that we have had for the children, even if they had to be moved out of communities, because in some cases they are with extended family in another community in the same region. These are very private and confidential family issues that we can't really talk about here.

Mr. Yakeleya: I do respect the confidentiality of this issue. But when the communities, such as my community, have elders come and talk to me.... The chief has come and talked to me; the families have talked about it with me. They ask how come the community hasn't been notified and it hasn't been discussed.

Small, close knit communities certainly know what's going on. The elders said to me, "Why isn't that child being looked after by our community? We could have done it."

Again, the SCRIPT program is in place. How come, when we have this program, it's not supported by resources? I'll ask the Minister: would she look carefully, in terms of the resources that should be with these programs? Because right now... [English translation not provided] ...there's no money.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I think I have a good idea which community of the region the Member is referring to. I'll commit to the Member that I will revisit to see where we are with that in terms of the conversation we've had with the community leadership. I will lend as much support as I can to make that Plan of Care Committee be established in that community.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just had a couple more oral questions, if I could. Are you still on item 7, Mr. Speaker? If not, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7.

Unanimous consent granted.

QUESTION 48-16(3)
TERRITORIAL WOMEN'S
CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, in the news earlier this week there was a story about two women who had escaped from the women's jail in Fort Smith. It caused a great deal of concern, especially here in Yellowknife. It wasn't too long ago that we had a fire that left eight families out in the cold at Bison Estates, and the person who committed that crime was in this facility and escaped. This was a very serious crime, and I'd like to ask the Minister how it is that an individual who commits a crime like that ends up in a jail where she can basically walk out the door.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This certainly has been an issue within our department. That particular individual had been placed in the Fort Smith facility in remand. They were waiting for their court hearing. That is part of the reason they were stationed out of the Fort Smith facility.

Mr. Ramsay: Again, I think having individuals in remand for an extended period of time and in locations where they're not secure.... If they can just walk out the door, that causes me a great deal of concern, and it should cause the public some concern. Why would an individual like this be remanded in a facility where she could basically walk out the door?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, as the Members would know, we have a women's corrections facility in Fort Smith, the one and only in the North. We're limited to holding our inmates, depending on their cases.... If they're charged and going through a process where they're before court proceedings, we have to hold on to them in a particular facility. That's the only facility we can hold our inmates in. We have no other options.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I hear the Minister on this: it's the only women's facility we have in the Northwest Territories. But for persons who are in remand, who are charged with serious and heinous crimes, why would you keep them locked up in a facility where they could climb out the window or walk out the front door? That doesn't make any sense to me. It's not good from a public safety standpoint. Why wouldn't an individual like this be sent to the South into remand at a secure location where they couldn't walk out the door or escape through a window that's unlocked?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, when this whole incident occurred, they had to go through the court proceedings, and they had to be remanded because there was a court appearance that was coming up. There was a need to hold this individual

in the North because of the court proceedings. That is part of the reason why we had to.... We do have the facility in the North, although it may not be fully secured. Because of the safety factor of the facility, that's part of the reason why we had to have these ladies in remand.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, it doesn't leave me with a great deal of confidence in our justice system if, when a woman in the Northwest Territories committed a very serious offence and was remanded, we would put her in a facility where she could escape out the window or she could walk out the front door. That's what I heard the Minister say. That's not good enough from a public safety standpoint.

In this case it's a woman charged with a very serious offence. It's lucky people didn't die that night when that fire was set. Why is she remanded in a facility where she could walk out the door or climb out an unlocked window? That's what I'd like to know, and that's what the public deserves to know.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: This particular issue is of great concern to us, as well, at the Department of Justice. We are doing what we can. We have brought forward a proposal for a new facility in Fort Smith to deal specifically with a secure facility. We are in the process of having a truly secure facility in the River Ridge area that's across from the women's corrections. We're doing what we can at the present time to expedite the process so that we do have a secure facility to store these female inmates. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 49-16(3)
ISSUES RELATED TO THE
BEAUFORT DELTA HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. When we have a dysfunctional system and it starts to break down, as government we usually try to intervene and basically bring it back up on its footings. I'll use the Stanton hospital, where they hired a public trustee to intervene with the major deficit that's being handled by the Stanton hospital.

Presently there are some 45 vacancies in the Inuvik hospital, yet they've been running deficits year after year. In this House we've been passing supplementary appropriations to bail them out. When you have 45 vacancies in a health system, that tells me there's something wrong.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: what is she doing to intervene like she did at the Stanton hospital, where she appointed a public trustee? How soon can we see the appointment of a public trustee to the Inuvik hospital?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: The Stanton Territorial Health Authority has been under the management of a public administrator since 2002, I believe. What I did was appoint a new public administrator in May of this year.

With respect to Beaufort-Delta, there is no plan to dissolve that board and appoint a new public administrator. As the Member is aware, the Strategic Initiative Committee on Refocusing Government is reviewing the work of all the boards under Health and Social Services; Housing; and Education, Culture and Employment. We will have to wait to see the outcome of that work.

I do take the Member's point that it is my job to make sure the boards are functioning at their optimum level, and we are doing a lot of work with Beaufort-Delta in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I should also note that vacancies don't usually save us money. Often vacancies cost us money. Having vacancies does not mean we don't deliver the work. We do deliver the work by locums, staff-fills, floating nurses or doctors. So often vacancies do cost money. The boards try to fill vacancies as much as possible. But there is a lot of pressure in getting health care professionals into our communities.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, to have 45 vacancies in a health system is not healthy. Someone is paying for 45 positions in a system that.... Basically, it was passed in a budget in this House to cover the costs of 45 individuals to fill those positions. If they are bringing locums and whatnot in, again that tells me there is really something wrong here.

I'd like to ask the Minister again: not waiting for a review of a committee, will she seriously take a look at the health crisis we have at Inuvik hospital, realizing that it's running a deficit, it has 45 vacancies, and basically it's not doing what it should be doing? Why are you not intervening in regard to finding a way to improve the system by approving a public trustee to oversee the problem at Inuvik hospital?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, all of our health authorities are under pressure in terms of the capacity and the ability to recruit and retain health care professionals, especially in areas of physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners. We as a government are working to encourage as many as

possible of our northern trained nurses and nurse practitioners, midwives and whoever to be able to go to the regional centres. At the same time, the Department of Health and Social Services and Beaufort-Delta are working closely together to look at our operations and numbers and finances to see what is causing the deficit and what we can do to ameliorate that situation going forward.

Mr. Krutko: All health boards in the Northwest Territories are not running deficits. There are two health systems in the Northwest Territories: the Stanton hospital and the Inuvik health system. There are only two places that have been running deficits for the last number of years. The other three systems have — and in some cases, had — surpluses, and good surpluses.

For me to stand here and hear the Minister say that it's a problem right across the board.... It's not a problem right across the board. The problem is in two locations: the Stanton health centre and the Inuvik regional board of health. I'd like to ask the Minister: why is it that you continue to allow this practice to continue, knowing that services aren't being delivered and that you have 45 vacancies and they're running a deficit?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that the two authorities that are under the most pressure and having a significant deficit are the ones with a hospital. Stanton has a hospital and Inuvik has a hospital. Hay River and Deh Cho have hospitals too, but it's a different level of hospital care. I think there's unique pressure in running these hospitals that causes deficits.

The second thing is, whether there's a board or not or a public trustee doesn't seem to.... That's not a factor that helps or doesn't help deficit situations.

I do want to assure the Member that I am working closely and paying attention and am involved to help the Beaufort-Delta authority figure out and get to the bottom of what is causing the deficit and deal with that issue. I will be working closely with the Member to look at all options.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the problem that I see happening, especially in the Inuvik region, is that what's going on at the Inuvik hospital is having a direct impact on services outside the Inuvik hospital in other communities. It's affecting the delivery in the communities I represent, where we're seeing health centre closures. We have seen notices posted throughout our community, and that is because of the major problem that is happening at the Inuvik hospital.

I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it that you're telling our communities, "Sorry; we can't

provide you services, because we don't have the resources to allow you to operate"? Where you're closing down health centres, now we find out you've got 45 vacancies that aren't filled in the Inuvik hospital. That, for me, is exactly what the problem is. What are you doing to ensure that this does not have a direct effect on the services that are being provided to our communities when our health centres are being told that they're being closed for non-emergency patients?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, as the Member is aware, there are a variety of reasons why some of these health centres had to reduce their services to core services. None of the health centres have been closed; it's just that on certain occasions they have to reduce the services to core level. There could be anything from nurses having to travel for training or an HR issue or somebody who was to show up for new employment did not, or sometimes we have pumps breaking down. There are various reasons why some of these units have to be closed.

I think the situation here is that we do have a significant issue with recruiting and retaining health care professionals. I believe the Beaufort-Delta, under its board leadership, is doing everything it can to address that. I'm committed to working closely with the Member and the board, and I have made a commitment to come back with some proposals that we could consider to address that situation.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 50-16(3)
GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE
TO CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It's on the condition of our economy and what the potential for problems might be in the Northwest Territories.

I know the Premier did not attend the national round table of Premiers and leaders, but it's recently been announced that the Yukon is taking action to at least monitor the situation. They are developing a round table themselves, for that jurisdiction, to give them an early alert and try and come up with some solutions. What is this government doing to monitor this situation and come up with a plan before it's too late?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, earlier today there was a similar question, and my response was that the Department of Finance is involved in monitoring, looking at the environment we are in and preparing to make a presentation on the status that we are in here in the Northwest Territories. For

the record, the Yukon is putting a deputies' committee together to do their work, not a round table — a deputies' committee to do the monitoring. Our Department of Finance is doing that work for us.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, given the situation that we are becoming more and more reliant on the export economy — diamonds and oil and gas — what's the expectation of the Premier, having heard the situation on the market again this morning getting quite serious: global concerns and national concerns about recession...? What's the expectation in terms of the diamond industry and the oil and gas industry for the Northwest Territories?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity to meet with the presidents of the diamond mines over a week ago to touch base with them and look at setting up a cooperative agreement on further initiatives we can jointly work on; for example, establishing the workforce in the Northwest Territories by reducing the fly in/fly out component, looking at additional training areas. That's something we're working on.

The other area with the mines that they've shared with us is that the cost of fuel has a big impact. They've been watching the markets and shared with us their concerns. We know, as well, the rate of return that some of the oil and gas areas of development are producing right now; there'd be an impact with that. That would mainly be felt, along with the federal government, on the royalties side as well as by the companies themselves. We've been working with the industry and, again from our side specifically, working through the Department of Finance to look at our numbers to ensure we're still in a healthy situation.

I must remind Members that during the budget we had in June, we talked about the dangers that were potentially out there — that we must look to living within our means. That was the budget we presented to Members, and the Finance Minister is continuing along that path.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you for those comments from the Premier. I know that our public is acutely aware of this issue and also acutely concerned.

We apparently purchased fuel near the peak of the cost — the bump we went through — to resupply our communities. There's a potential for some serious downturns in our industries. Will this government be preparing a thorough update and response to this, at least for discussion in the business plans or certainly at our next session?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as we go through our process, first and foremost between me and the Finance Minister, we'll be making presentations to the standing committees as we go

into the business plan process. Following that, departments themselves, specifically as the Member has touched on.... On the petroleum side the Department of Public Works and Services would have all the information on how they've had to deal with the pressures they've had to look at.

Part of the problem — and the Member has touched on it, in a sense — is that when we purchase our product, we are purchasing it off the market. At the point when it was delivered to our communities, the prices were significantly higher than they are now. We won't be able to adjust those until the next refuelling cycle, which in some communities may be through winter roads and in other communities the next barging season. That's the difficulty the Department of Public Works and Services' Petroleum Products Division faces when it comes to providing a level of service in our communities. But that will all be available to Members when we sit down and go through the process in the next business planning cycle.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate those comments from the Minister. This, again, is a very serious issue.

I'd just like to note that the Yukon will be holding round table meetings with various associations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Yukon Communities and so on, so it's not just an internal process. Will the Premier commit to including a public process where our residents can participate in a response to this situation as required?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, a number of departments have functions established that allow for public input. I know that within the Department of ITI the Minister responsible has an economic table advisory group that he can go to in these times. The Minister of Finance has gone out with a discussion paper about revenue options and got much feedback about that. Much of the feedback is coming as of late with the impacts that are being felt by individuals and companies as a result of the economic turmoil we are facing globally.

Myself, I have met with, for example, the president of the NWT Chamber, the president of the NWT mines, and the Construction Association on a number of occasions, and we'll continue to use that avenue again to get more feedback about the work we are doing as the Government of Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 1
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
HISTORICAL RESOURCES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 1 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act, read a first time.

BILL 2
SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL
INVESTMENT DISPUTES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 2 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 2, Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act, read a first time.

BILL 3
INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN MOBILE
AIRCRAFT EQUIPMENT ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 3, International Interest in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 3 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 3, International Interest in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act, read a first time.

BILL 4
PUBLIC LIBRARY ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 4, Public Library Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 4 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 4, Public Library Act, read a first time.

BILL 5
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik

Boot Lake, that Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 5 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act, read a first time.

BILL 6
SPECIES AT RISK (NWT) ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 6, Species at Risk (NWT) Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 6 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 6, Species at Risk (NWT) Act, read a first time.

BILL 7
AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 7 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
HISTORICAL RESOURCES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is seeking consent to give second reading to Bill 1. Are there any nays?

An Honourable Member: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: I only hear one nay. You may proceed with your second reading, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Historical Resources Act to empower the Minister to perform

functions now assigned to the Commissioner. In addition, provisions pertaining to the Northwest Territories Historical Advisory Board are repealed, and the remaining provisions are renumbered.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 1 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

BILL 2
SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL
INVESTMENT DISPUTES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 2, Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 2. Are there any nays?

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: I hear two nays. We will not proceed with Bill 2.

Consent not granted.

BILL 3
INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS IN MOBILE
AIRCRAFT EQUIPMENT ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 3, International Interests in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking consent to deal with second reading of Bill 3. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with second reading, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 3, International Interests in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill implements the 2001 Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Aircraft Equipment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 3 has had second reading

Motion carried; Bill 3, International Interests in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

BILL 4
PUBLIC LIBRARY ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 4, Public Library Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 4. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with second reading of Bill 4, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 4, Public Library Act, be read for the second time.

This bill empowers the Minister to designate public libraries and to enter into agreements with library authorities in respect of the operation of the libraries. The bill also sets out the rights of library users and the powers of library authorities and the Minister and provides for the repeal of the Library Act. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 4 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 4, Public Library Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

BILL 5
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 5. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with second reading, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act, be read for the second time.

This bill would permit members of designated professions to incorporate under the Business Corporations Act subject to requirements relating to the ownership and voting shares of the professional corporation. Such a corporation would be required to obtain an annual permit from the governing body of the profession in the Northwest Territories. Members of a profession who are shareholders in or employees of a professional corporation are subject to the same professional and ethical responsibilities as other members of the profession in respect of their dealings with their clients and their governing bodies. The governing bodies would be empowered to make bylaws or rules respecting professional corporations, and the government may

make regulations to implement the act. Finally, the bill provides for transitional matters and consequential amendments in respect of the Dental Profession Act. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 5 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

BILL 6
SPECIES AT RISK (NWT) ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 6, Species at Risk (NWT) Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 6. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with the second reading.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 6, Species at Risk (NWT) Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill establishes an integrated and cooperative system for the conservation of species at risk to prevent species from becoming extirpated or extinct.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 6 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 6, Species at Risk (NWT) Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

BILL 7
AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 7. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with second reading, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Student Financial Assistance Act to raise the maximum aggregate of the principal amounts of all student loans that may be made by the Government of the Northwest Territories by \$3 million for fiscal year 2009–2010 and thereafter. A minor amendment is also made to

one provision to improve the French version of the term "ordinary place of residence."

Mr. Speaker: Bill 7 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

Mr. Speaker: Item 20, Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills.

Colleagues, before we disperse today I would like to extend the thanks of the Legislature to the pages who have served us so well during this session. I have said it before but it bears repeating: it is such a pleasure to see young people in our Chamber and participating in our legislative system. Our thanks to students from schools in Fort Resolution, Hay River North, Hay River South, Fort Smith, Hay River Reserve, Inuvik Boot Lake, Inuvik Twin Lakes, and Gameti. Thank you, as well, to the schools, the chaperones and the staff who make this program possible.

I'm pleased to report on the Assembly's initiative to provide Legislative Assembly broadcasting services to the communities of the Northwest Territories. Although we still have some work to do to enable us to provide our signal to all communities, our staff have been working in close contact with the 24 communities that are currently receiving our signal. During this four week sitting we have broadcast our proceedings in ten of the 11 official languages of the Northwest Territories. The Assembly would like to thank the community representatives who have assisted us with this project. We will continue to work diligently to expand the service to all the communities using all of the official languages of the Northwest Territories.

I am fully aware, colleagues, that our work as Members does not cease when we leave this Chamber. As we return to our constituencies, to Ministerial duties and to our homes and families, I wish you all safe travels. May you exercise sound judgment as you work for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to also urge Members to mark Remembrance Day, wherever you may be on November 11, and to enjoy the holiday season, which will soon be upon us before we know it. I look forward to reconvening this House on February 4, 2009.

With that, Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, Orders of the Day for Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Returns to Oral Questions
- 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 6) Acknowledgements
- 7) Oral Questions
- 8) Written Questions
- 9) Returns to Written Questions
- 10) Replies to the Opening Address
- 11) Petitions
- 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents

- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
Motion 5-16(3): Executive Council
Accountability and Performance Review
- 18) First Reading of Bills
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
Bill 2 - Settlement of International Investment
Disputes Act
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of
Bills and Other Matters
TD 7-16(3): Ministerial Benefits Policy
- 21) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22) Third Reading of Bills
- 23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until February 4, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 1:37 p.m.