



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 28

16th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Pages 3003 - 3034

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 12, 2009****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 1:35 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 67-16(3):
GNWT APPROACH TO REGULATORY
IMPROVEMENT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be before this House to announce the GNWT's approach to improving the regulatory system for NWT's lands, waters and resources.

The people of the Northwest Territories have told us they want to have a say in the decisions that affect them. They want a regulatory regime that encourages resource development, ensures the environment is protected and provides benefits to residents now and in the future. Ensuring we have the tools, processes and resources to effectively guide and participate in decisions about how this land is managed is a key priority of this government.

We have a unique system in place here in the Northwest Territories rooted in the settled land claims. It is a system based on shared responsibility and cooperation that provides a framework for governments, communities, industries and other organizations to work together to ensure development occurs in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Far from being a weakness, this inclusive approach provides that all Northerners, especially in our more remote communities, have a voice in decision-making. We do not need to apologize for that uniqueness.

Mr. Speaker, this government has developed a comprehensive approach to regulatory improvements that includes a number of target improvements to the regulatory system. Several of these improvements can be undertaken in the short term and will produce immediate results. We have communicated to Minister Strahl that we want to engage with Canada and collaborate to ensure the interests of Northerners are considered if changes are made.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT supports a fully implemented, integrated system of land and water management in the Northwest Territories as called for in the settled land claims. Such a system would function in the public interest, allow for efficient decision-making by Northerners and facilitate the eventual devolution of authorities to our governments. Unfortunately, right now, all the pieces of that system are not in place. And the parts that are in place are not always fully implemented.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot agree with those who would suggest that eliminating or restructuring the regional land and water boards is required. These boards are created for a reason to ensure that Northerners, especially those in the communities, have access to the regulatory system. Instead, we need to ensure that the existing structure is properly implemented and supported. This would create more certainty and predictability of Northerners and other users of the system.

Mr. Speaker, board appointments is one area where immediate changes can be made. The federal government's commitment to examine the board member appointment process is a good start. We believe the delegation of authority for the GNWT to appoint our own board members would speed up the appointment process. This would help ensure board quorums are maintained. It would also be seen as a move towards devolving authority to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

During all of the regulatory improvement initiatives, stakeholders have repeated concerns that there are currently no clear processes or timelines for decisions made by responsible Ministers under the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act. As a responsible Minister, I share those concerns.

Clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities for regulatory authorities would ensure the processes were transparent and timely and would help to alleviate those concerns.

Recent federal announcements of funding of \$900,000 for the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program and a \$300,000 training fund for regulatory boards is a start on addressing some of the capacity needs of the integrated system. However, it is more important that consistent, predictable funding for all elements of our existing regulatory system be put in place.

Mr. Speaker, an efficient and effective regulatory system will create benefits and increase the quality of life for our residents by providing certainty to all parties with an interest in how resources are managed and developed in the NWT. Our government has developed an approach to regulatory improvement design to help us realize these benefits. We look forward to sharing and discussing our proposed approach with Members, aboriginal governments, key stakeholders, and the public during the coming months.

Governments need to continually improve their way of doing business within their own areas of responsibility. The GNWT is no different. We are continuing to look for ways to improve in those areas where we already hold authority, but as Northerners, the GNWT, aboriginal governments, and northern stakeholders need to work together to ensure that the federal government takes our interests into account when it makes changes to a regulatory process that we will someday inherit.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BEAVERTAIL JAMBOREE IN FORT SIMPSON

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week people have been getting together in Fort Simpson for the Beavertail Jamboree. Celebrations kicked off last weekend and today is a big day with a community feast, official opening ceremonies, and tonight there will be fireworks. Our hardworking organizers have arranged a mix of events to get people outside in the fresh air. It's time to enjoy the longer days of sunshine.

People will be coming into Fort Simpson from all over the Deh Cho, and Tulita, Fort Providence, Yellowknife, and even northern Alberta. The tradition of the Beavertail Jamboree began 32 years

ago and the festival is as lively as ever. This may be one of the longest continuous ones in the North.

There are activities for the youngsters and folks of all ages. Events have changed over the years, but this year some of the old favourites are back. One of these is a beard growing contest and another, for the more active, is dog team racing that starts tomorrow. There's a free lunch followed by youth games, the corporate challenge, and the youth talent show -- and that's just Friday. Saturday there's another dog team race, snowmobile and snow cross events, and save some energy for one of the main events: the adult talent show. The talent show is my favourite event. I often enter the jiggling contest with my daughter Diedra Villeneuve.

---Applause

Thanks to all the many volunteers and organizations that have contributed to the festival. In particular I'd like to thank Ms. Cindy Browning, president of the Beavertail Jamboree Committee. She has helped with the jamboree for the last nine years. Also I would like to thank the Members of the jamboree committee: Ms. Connie Villeneuve, Troy Bradbury, Ms. Darleen Sibbeston, and apologies to those that I missed. Corporate sponsors and the many volunteers deserve a very honourable mention.

I encourage everyone in Fort Simpson to come out and kick up their heels. I hope that the weather is great and everyone has a happy and safe weekend. Good luck to all. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEER AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NWT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last six weeks I've gone on record and recognized a number of voluntary sector non-government organizations. Specifically I have talked about the Centre for Northern Families, SideDoor Youth Ministries, the Salvation Army, the Yellowknife Association for Community Living, the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors, the YWCA, Sport North Federation, the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, Ecology North, and the John Howard Society of the Northwest Territories. This is a short list of the different voluntary sector non-government organizations providing high quality and incredibly important services to the people of the Northwest Territories.

If there were more days, I would have highlighted more; important organizations such as, but not limited to, the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic, the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association, and the NWT Seniors' Society, to name just a few.

These organizations provide incredibly important services to the residents of the Northwest Territories. Often they can be more responsive to the needs of our residents due to the limited bureaucracy and the desire to be flexible, and acknowledge the differences in situations and clients rather than adhere to rigid guidelines that the government often has to. These organizations are a key element to the health and overall well-being of residents in the Northwest Territories. Fortunately the 16th Legislative Assembly has indicated that supporting a healthy and sustainable voluntary and not-for-profit sector is a priority for this government. It's about time.

I'd like to applaud the Department of Finance and MACA for taking an important step in holding a Volunteer Summit last weekend. I believe that this summit was important and will help obtain needed input from these organizations on how to improve the relationship and funding processes between them and the GNWT. This goes a long way to improving services to the residents of the Northwest Territories.

I did receive some feedback on the summit and I'm happy to say that some of the attendees have indicated they are feeling much more optimistic than they have for a very long time about the potential for the government and the voluntary sector to move ahead on relationship building and funding. This is an important step. We as the 16th Assembly must not lose the momentum that has been built and the positive step forward that we and the voluntary and not-for-profit organizations have taken.

I look forward to working with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of MACA, as well as representatives from the different organizations, as we move forward on these initiatives. Once again, I would like to offer a huge thank you to all of the volunteers and staff of the different voluntary and not-for-profit organizations in the Northwest Territories who help make the NWT a great place to live.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ISSUES CONCERNING SENIORS IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I hear the needs of my seniors in Nunakput communities I wonder if the government is taking them seriously or the status quo. The government must get serious about spending for our elders and seniors.

In Nunakput, the community of Ulukhaktok constituents have initiated and completed a petition to get this government committed to build a badly needed seniors facility. Caring for our elders and their well-being must be a pillar of this government. The community of Ulukhaktok elders really have no place to gather. They often gather in the hamlet, the Northern Store, or the restaurant. In addition to these severe shortages of facilities specifically for seniors housing and care.

Previously I expressed my community's concerns with the growing cost of living that is eating away at disposable incomes, especially from our elders. I also expressed the growing concerns with the government's reduction of services, projects for seniors during this session. We have heard government's plan to strip benefits and services from seniors. What I find unfair is this government is not considering that in Nunakput the cost of living is 81 percent higher than Yellowknife. Even for such an enormous difference, the government continues to use formulas such as per capita, market conditions. This is wrong. Ulukhaktok needs an elders facility just as much as Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Hay River.

For as long as I can remember there's always been talk about two different types of Northerners. There are ones from larger communities and ones from the smaller communities and economically disadvantaged communities. I challenge this government to bridge these together.

During my various leadership positions I will continue to try to improve the life of our elders. Things such as better quality and less expensive foods, better living conditions, facilities, and health care. I challenge this government to implement plans for real changes for real problems.

Lastly, I wish my colleagues an enjoyable spring and to all my Nunakput constituents, especially my good friend Patrick Joss.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIFE FIELDHOUSE AND
RECREATIONAL COMPLEX

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to congratulate the City of Yellowknife Council, which approved the plans and awarded a construction contract for the fieldhouse indoor recreational complex. After six long years of planning and deliberations, Clark Builders Construction and Ferguson, Simek, Clark will begin construction later this year. The project will employ 50 workers and is scheduled to be completed by August of next year.

The new facility will be located in the Kam Lake riding next to the Multiplex. This is a \$17 million facility that will include two full-sized indoor soccer fields, a three-lane running track, and children's playing area. I've spoken about the need for our residents to get more physically active. A facility like the new fieldhouse will give residents and visitors another excellent venue to be physically active.

The current demand for recreational space in the city exceeds capacity by 30 percent. This will be a much needed addition to the city's recreational facilities.

I'd like to acknowledge the hardworking members of the Fieldhouse Development Committee, who worked tirelessly to prepare the final recommendation for city council. Those are: Councillor Bob Brooks, the chair; Mark Aitken, the vice-chair; Mayor Gordon Van Tighem, John Carr, Ryan Fequet, Craig Hockridge, Mike Roesch, Terry Brookes, Judy McLinton, and from the city administration, Mr. Max Hall, Carl Bird, and Grant White and also, Mr. Speaker, the rest of Yellowknife City Council. I know that Yellowknife families and their children and many Northerners from outside of Yellowknife will benefit for many years to come in partaking in exciting games and sports that will take place at this new facility.

Once again, congratulations to Yellowknife City Council and residents who have this great new facility. It is an exciting project. I wish you all the best with the construction, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CRACK COCAINE ADDICTIONS AND LACK
OF TREATMENT FACILITIES IN THE NWT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, medical staff alerted me to an alarming situation related to crack cocaine addictions right here in Yellowknife. While the degree of crack addiction in our city is itself horrendous, in major

Canadian cities where similar degrees of addiction have developed, addicts increasingly suffered from other even more serious consequences.

Mr. Speaker, here is what I am hearing from one concerned physician who is working on the front line of infectious disease in the North. He notes that "outbreaks of TB and syphilis pale in comparison to what I now see emerging on our city streets. Further, intravenous crack cocaine use is becoming increasingly widespread in Yellowknife. This ominous development has a number of serious implications. Intravenous crack cocaine needs to be injected frequently to sustain its high. On the streets of Vancouver, addicts will routinely inject crack one to two times per hour. This need to inject frequently led more than any other factor to an explosion of HIV and Hepatitis C in Vancouver's downtown east side with now well known results."

In Yellowknife, he notes that this is like a pile of kindling waiting for a flame. Mr. Speaker, what are we doing about these addictions and increasing potential for an epidemic of diseases? On October 29, 2004, a motion was debated and passed in this House to get more addictions programs on the ground here including for youth. Quoting here from Hansard for that debate, MLA Sandy Lee had this to say, "I tell you, if we let this stuff spread without any kind of aggressive campaign, we are going to pay for it. We could be the kind of place where people from down south will send their people up here because we have such a great program, we are on the ball and we are dealing with it."

What has changed in the ensuing five years, Mr. Speaker? Not one thing. As mentioned in the 2004 debate, our only addictions facility was the one in Hay River. Unbelievably, the exact same thing is true today. We have one facility, the one in Hay River. The Health and Social Services website says, presently the NWT does not have a residential addiction treatment program for children and youth located in the NWT, but provides access to these services in southern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as noted by a Yellowknife physician, quote, "Our homeless population is highly addicted already and the introduction of IV crack use is the flame that will cause an explosion of HIV and Hep C here."

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, the physician's statement, our homeless population is highly addicted already and the introduction of IV crack use is the flame that will cause an explosion of HIV and Hep C here. Mr. Speaker, we knew five years ago that serious

and effective action was needed. The situation is now compounded by a lack of action and an accelerating and loaded predicament. Can we expect this Minister of Health and Social Services to act quickly to prevent this potential outbreak now? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
AFFORDABLE AND ADEQUATE HOUSING
FOR SENIORS IN TU NEDHE

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to speak about the important issue of providing affordable and adequate housing for senior homeowners in Tu Nedhe. Mr. Speaker, as I talked about earlier this week and many times during session, housing is a huge problem in my riding. It is very personal and often stressful for the constituents. I will continue to work on this, particularly trying to address seniors' homeowner repair issues. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work with the Minister and both communities on homeownership concerns for seniors in the area of cost efficiency and comfort. For seniors that own their own units, I will continue to work on repair and renovation issues on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 90 percent of the seniors' home repair and much needed renovations can be addressed through a program that provides up to \$25,000 in repair and renovations to the homeowners. I will be seeking an innovative community-based approach for addressing the home repair and renovation issue for both Tu Nedhe communities with monies available. I will be seeking \$1.6 million of infrastructure funding to put towards this initiative; \$600,000 for Lutselk'e and \$1 million for Fort Resolution. This is based on the total amount of senior homeowners in each community. With barge date and material take-offs, time is of the essence. So this is something that I will be working on immediately.

Mr. Speaker, to start the process, inspections need to be carried out and this will determine the scope of work for each unit for the procurement of materials and supplies and the hiring of technical and other staff that must be planned immediately. Mr. Speaker, with this initiative, planning and support is needed from the NWT Housing Corporation staff to assist the communities with this innovative approach. Later on, I will have follow-up questions for the appropriate Minister, the Minister of Housing. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT REGULATORY PROCESS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the Minister's announcement today in regards to GNWT's approach to regulatory reform, we are trying to find ways to improve it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back in history. I first got involved in aboriginal politics in 1985. From that, there was already in place land use planning work going on by way of land use planning commissions set up in the Northwest Territories. In the 1980s, we had planning boards in place. A lot of the legwork was done. At the same time, there were negotiations going on in regards to the Dene-Metis comprehensive land claim. In 1988, the Dene-Metis signed an agreement-in-principle which clearly defined what regulatory systems they wanted to see in the Northwest Territories by way of land and water management systems, land use planning boards, looking at the establishment of wildlife management authority and also the Dene-Metis, through the comprehensive claim process, were involved in the work that was going on in regards to land use planning for the Mackenzie Valley. Yet, Mr. Speaker, since then, the Gwich'in have settled their land claim based on the Dene-Metis model. Following that, the Sahtu and now the Tlicho, but, Mr. Speaker, other groups are still negotiating their agreements in regards to the Dehcho Process. The Dehcho Process is basically developing a land use planning system which will be consolidated to the land claim agreement which should be the basis of any plan regardless if it is a land use plan for development, a land use plan because the regulation requires it, but yet we don't seem to be supporting them on that effort.

Mr. Speaker, there should be a land use plan completed for all regions in the Northwest Territories so that we can have a basis so that when the developer or individuals from our communities know what is going on out there and make industry and developers aware of what the sensitivity of the region is by way of the land use plan identifying those sensitive areas. Mr. Speaker, again, we still haven't come forward with concluding that process which is clearly defined.

Mr. Speaker, my view is, the biggest challenge we are facing in regards to regulatory reform is just having the funding available and the capacity in our small communities to deal with the regulatory process. I use an illustration in regards to the communities in the Northwest Territories. Whenever an application comes forward...

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. KRUTKO: In regards to communities in the Northwest Territories to take part of development applications which are going forward before the Environmental Assessment Review Board, basically there is a clause in the agreement which clearly states that, as part of the review, they have to consider the social and economic impacts on small communities. It is in the legislation. Mr. Speaker, the community of Kakisa had to take the regulatory board to court to tell them why they are not following their own rules. By doing that, the government is now opening up a process to ensure that small communities have the capacity to not only be involved in how do you intervene on a regulatory process but also having the capacity to basically do that.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is anything majorly wrong with the regulatory process in the Northwest Territories. It is only 10 years old. It is a young regulatory system, but for us to be dictated by people in Ottawa or basically have a consultant come up here from Calgary to tell us what is good for us, I don't agree with that. I think the process is in place. We should ensure that we follow the systems that have been negotiated going on 30 years and allow that process to take hold. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY SERVICE PERSONNEL

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to acknowledge the emergency service personnel, particularly NWT firefighters, both career and volunteer members and both municipal and airport squads. Service personnel stand by for us 24 hours a day, seven days week, ready and willing to do dangerous work if called upon. These men and women train and prepare to be ready for action at a moment's notice. They have specialized skills and knowledge that enable them to do an outstanding job, often in difficult weather and in treacherous locations. They put life and limb at risk to keep us safe and to keep our homes and businesses safe. But sometimes all they can do is control a situation and businesses and homes are lost. Unfortunately, in the course of their work, firefighters sometimes get injured and occasionally fatally.

On March 17, 2005, the City of Yellowknife lost two firefighters, one a veteran, one a rookie, as they fought a fire in the line of duty. They gave their lives for this community as they performed a job they both loved. We won't be here next Tuesday, Mr. Speaker, so I want to specifically remember and

honour Cyril Fyfe and Kevin Olsen, two exemplary firefighters who were both fatally injured on March 17th, four years ago.

In their memory, I recognize and honour all NWT emergency personnel as they go about their jobs today and every day. To each and everyone I say thank you for protecting us, thank you for taking risks for us. To my colleagues I say as you return to your communities over the next few days and weeks, take the time to search out and visit your local firefighters and thank them personally, and on March 17th stop and take a moment to think of those who we have lost. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REGULATORY REFORMS AFFECTING TERRITORIAL RUNWAYS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, historically we know that air transportation is an essential service in the Northwest Territories, especially in the Sahtu region. Having a runway that is the appropriate length is critical to the air transportation companies so they can operate safely and provide the best type of aircraft to service our communities.

Mr. Speaker, amendments to the Canadian aviation regulations have been introduced. The proposed amendments deal with take-off weight limitations, operations on gravel runways and other potential changes that will have an impact on NWT airports. These changes come into effect in the Northwest Territories in December 2010. That's 21 months and counting, Mr. Speaker.

What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that many of the planes currently owned by aviation companies serving the Sahtu will not meet the new requirements. They will be restricted to flying with nine passengers or less on a scheduled flight, making the...(inaudible)...inefficient. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation is currently upgrading the airport runway length in Fort Good Hope and Tulita to approximately 4,000 feet. While community leaders and the aviation companies in my region appreciate the efforts to improve the airport runways, they feel that the current length is not long enough to accommodate more cost-effective, safer aircrafts like the Beech 1900. The joint company in partnership with Fort Good Hope and Deline want to purchase this plane because they believe it's the perfect fit for their operations and complies with the new regulations. What they need from this government is a commitment to extend the runways in the Sahtu to a minimum of 4,500 feet to accommodate this type of aircraft.

The Department of Transportation has responded by saying that the current runway extensions are sufficient and suggested that the company consider purchasing other aircraft that can land on a 4,000 foot runway. Mr. Speaker, the communities, along with North-Wright, have examined the suggested options put forward by the Department of Transportation and feel that the Beech 1900 is the way to go. They believe that the department's position not to extend the runways to 4,500 feet is short-sighted and doesn't take into account the future needs of the aviation industry in the Sahtu.

Mr. Speaker, aviation companies in the Sahtu region are working hard to provide safe, reliable service to the Sahtu communities. They want to upgrade their fleet to include new aircraft that comply with the new regulations and better serve the Sahtu.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, they want to upgrade their fleet to include new aircraft that comply with the new regulations and better serve the Sahtu. But, Mr. Speaker, the current approach taken by the department in extending runway lengths is standing in their way.

Mr. Speaker, airports are the prime source of transportation for the people in the Sahtu. They do not have the benefit of an all-weather road that can move people, goods and services to and from the region. For that reason, it's critically important that the airport infrastructure supports the needs of the communities they serve. I urge the Minister to work with the Sahtu aviation companies and community leaders and consider extending the runways in Fort Good Hope and Deline to a minimum of 4,500 feet. By extending the runway lengths now it will serve the communities in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUMMARY OF ISSUES CONSIDERED
DURING THIS SESSION

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been a long six weeks. Mr. Speaker, I came here six weeks ago with many concerns. From my perspective, we have made progress.

There were issues around communication and how consensus government is working. We have

embarked on a process to bring more clarity to how we communicate and work together. As I've shared in the House before, consensus government has many good aspects, but there are also some anomalies that undermine the spirit and intent of consensus. Some of these are processes and some are entrenched conventions or attitudes, but we look forward to more work and dialogue on this as we collectively consider the principles of consensus government.

I came here with very serious concerns about the direction of the proposed changes to the Supplementary Health Benefits Program and the impact of these changes on seniors, persons with disabilities and those families who have members with chronic health conditions. Those proposed changes are being taken back to the drawing board for further analysis and consideration and that is a good thing.

I came here with many concerns around the direction of the Board Reform Initiative. This is another initiative that created a lot of concern and input from the public, which is a good thing. The input is a good thing and that is active democracy. Again, the approach to board reform, I believe, has been altered to not throw out the fundamental of looking for efficiencies, but a more consultative, bottom-up, as opposed to top-down, incremental approach to potential changes.

I came here with serious concerns about our government's approach to the unsolicited proposal for the NTPC merger with ATCO. I am reasonably assured that the sequencing and this review, along with several others related to the supply of affordable and reliable energy to our residents, will progress with involvement from Regular MLAs and the public. I look forward to the results of these reviews.

Some disappointments are related to the fact that I don't think we found any really tangible initiatives on behalf of northern residents and of businesses to address the cost of living and the conditions of these economic times, but there is still time for those and it is not too late.

I would tell you that I am somewhat disappointed with the lack of enthusiasm from the other side with respect to the milk subsidy and the return of the housing subsidy from ECE to NWT Housing Corporation, but I do sense that the door is not completely closed on those as well.

Some have referred to the interaction between Cabinet and Regular Members in a negative context. I see this tension and the back and forth as a necessary reality...

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I see this tension and back and forth as a necessary reality as Regular Members represent the interests of their constituents, and as a part of our role in holding the government accountable.

To end on a positive note, I appreciate all the Members' engagement in the important issues that have been raised during this session. I leave hopeful and encouraged and ask Cabinet Ministers not to forget us while we're apart, and until we meet again, don't do anything we wouldn't do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROGRAM REVIEW INITIATIVE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the key goals established as Members of the 16th Assembly was to work to ensure that we have effective and efficient government. I fully support this because any way we can make sure government is more relevant to the needs of the people, I believe we demonstrate effectively that we are providing value to the work we do here for the people of the North.

One of the priorities that was established is to meet these goals through what we define as effective government, efficient government and value for government through our program reviews. Mr. Speaker, the Program Review Initiative for government was committed to be undertaken to do analyses on our programs that we do. As everyone knows, the program review office has been established within the Department of the Executive and staff were assigned to carry on this work through the established mandates and target areas. Mr. Speaker, that still leaves some questioning what official areas they are talking about.

Although I support the principle of this work very strongly because it needs to be done to make sure that we are working hard and efficient, if truth be known, one-third of our term has gone by and I fear that this initiative may be lost to wishful thinking and we may never have time to fully implement the values of the work that's being done. Members still hear that progress is being made, but we want to make sure that we're an equal partner in this process.

More importantly, on top of the issue, the gathering of this information is critical for us to program our wishes, our goals, and our dreams going forward for the needs of the North and to make sure that our economy is running properly. Is our government running efficiently and effectively? I sometimes wonder, but the information still hasn't come across my desk. That alone points to the fact, is it? I don't know.

The work of the program office is a critical component to the value of work that we do here. I ask the Premier and the rest of the government, and of course the overview committee for refocusing government, to make sure they get on this work while we leave here in the next while; sorry, before we return here in May, because this will be critical with the upcoming business planning process that will begin tomorrow.

The business plan process creates a new life on its own because the bureaucrats within the system are already starting to prepare the draft business plans that will come up in the summertime that will be moved forward to committee members in the fall. That's why it's so important not to miss the next opportunity, because we will have to wait a full business year before we get to deal with this again.

The message I really want to get across here is MLAs need to be informed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Michael McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE LATE JONAS NADLI

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to commemorate the life of Jonas Nadli. This is the third senior to pass away during this session from my riding.

Jonas was born at Mink Lake on April 4th, 1931, to Elizabeth Matto and Louie Nadli. He had five brothers and his mother, remarried to Joseph Minoza, had two sons after his own father passed away. Together they had one son, Leonard, who was better known to all of us as Gozoah.

As a young child Jonas spent many years in the mission in Fort Providence. When his brothers and himself were allowed to return to the community or to his home, he spoke only French and that certainly created a language barrier for them with his inability to communicate with his parents. He had to have one of his older brothers translate for him. It was very difficult, and most of the time when they talked to their parents it was through gestures,

including trying to tell their parents that they were hungry.

Jonas Married Angelique Thom on July 15th, 1955, and together they raised a son, Michael. Michael and his wife, Shirley, have two children, a son named Danny and a daughter named Rosslyn. Michael is the former grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations.

This July would have marked Jonas and Angelique's 54th wedding anniversary. Throughout their life together they lived a very traditional lifestyle in places like Horn River, T'elemia, Leshamie, Big Point, Big Island, and, finally, Fort Providence. Living on the land allowed Jonas to become a very skilled hunter, trapper, provider, and the survivor of many hardships.

Because he loved the traditional lifestyle and had a deep passion for what he did, small challenges such as harsh winters did not slow him down. All his trapping and hunting was done by dog team and he always had a very good, hardworking team of dogs. Because he was very skilled in hunting, many people depended on him. He fed many hungry families over the years. Many people have eaten fish from his nets, rabbits from his snares, meat from successful hunts, and shared tea around the campfire and listened to his many stories and jokes.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Adults and youth alike loved to travel with both Jonas and Angelique and live with them wherever they set up their camp. He taught many young people the skills of being a good hunter and a provider and a trapper. More importantly, they were very good role models to our young people. Jonas and Angelique spent a total of 10 years working at our youth camps and very much enjoyed passing on and teaching the traditional ways of life.

This past fall Jonas became very ill and throughout the Christmas season, and finally after Christmas he was forced to spend some time in the hospital. He was there for about a month and he certainly wasn't comfortable in an environment such as a hospital setting, but he managed to endure his time there and he had a lot of strong support from his family.

Jonas was a very humble man, a very quiet man. He touched many hearts in the community of Fort Providence and throughout the Deh Cho. I think all of us are very thankful that we were given the chance to know him and I want to offer my condolences to his friends and his family.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize and thank Pages from Hay River South. David Stanga and Zachary Biggar are both Grade 9 students at Diamond Jenness Secondary School and I'd like to thank them for doing a great job this week.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: It's my pleasure today to recognize a Page as well; a constituent and a very hardworking Page, Mr. Stuart Hamre, who has been with us off and on for the last six weeks. Thank you very much to all the Pages.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: I have a constituent who is working here as a Page as well, Ms. Madison Phillips. I would like to thank her and the rest of the Pages for all of their hard work over the past six weeks. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 320-16(3): CRACK COCAINE ADDICTIONS IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Given that we have an increasing and accelerating condition of crack cocaine addictions in Yellowknife -- especially with the concentration of diamond dollars, not unexpectedly -- what is Health and Social Services doing to address that problem?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of programs and services that the program provides to those who want to address

their addiction issues. The Member knows that we have a treatment centre on Hay River Reserve, Nats'ejee K'eh. We also have out-of-territories service committee, a treatment committee where those persons who need treatment from elsewhere would be placed there. We also have programs in the city. We have counselling services, the Stanton Territorial Hospital Authority has more acute mental health service, the Tree of Peace has a front-line service working with their client groups on addressing addiction issues. There are a number of programs and services that we provide to address this issue.

MR. BROMLEY: I'd like to call on this Minister to draw on her full knowledge and recall some of her past work in this area before she became Minister, as well as her current knowledge. I assume there's no change. At least, I haven't heard any change from what there was in 2004 when she passionately called for an addiction treatment centre in Yellowknife. More specifically, what are we doing to prevent the HIV and Hep C epidemic typically associated with IV use of crack cocaine, as is now common in Yellowknife? What programs do we have in that area?

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very well aware that the Members have very busy schedules, so I'm not going to ask the Members to read the entire body of work that includes all the statements I made. I want to state that I was one of the few Members on the other side who did not necessarily say that we need a treatment centre was the answer to everything. I said that because I consulted with a lot of people involved in working with people with addictions and a lot of them will tell you that building a treatment centre is not the answer to everything or the answer to a lot of things. It's nice to have, but something like crack cocaine are very highly addictive and specialized drugs. We have facilities elsewhere that can provide those services better.

On the Hepatitis and other conditions, I want to state that the department has been working really hard to track down and treat those who have STIs. We have hired an extra STI coordinator to address that issue. Tuberculosis cases have all been identified and examined. We have to continue to work on this highly addictive issue area and the work continues.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's response there. Obviously, however, the work is not working or we wouldn't have this accelerating rate of crack cocaine addictions that our hospitals are seeing. So additional work is needed on this and perhaps addictions centres are one way to go.

Specifically on the prevention side of things for the HIV and Hep C potential that we have, is the

department going after harm reduction techniques such as has been used in Vancouver? I realize it's a big city situation, somewhat different, but harm reduction techniques have been demonstrated to be working in this situation and our medical staff obviously think what we're doing now is not sufficient. Are harm reduction techniques being considered and pursued?

HON. SANDY LEE: I have read with much interest the same e-mail that the doctor has sent to the Member and myself, and I'm interested in pursuing further what the doctor has to say. Having said that, the government is not at the moment considering the harm reduction proposal that the Member is suggesting, which is the sort of self-service IV clinic in Vancouver. That is not an option that we are considering. However, a small group of people in Yellowknife, the front-line workers are aware of who are our most in need of help in our streets in Yellowknife that the doctor is referring to and we need to continue to work with them to provide the support and services they need so that we avoid contamination or a spread of disease.

I should let the Members know that HIV rates in the Territories remains very, very low. We are lucky in that regard, but all the people working on the front line are aware of the potential danger and there's a lot of work done to address that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that assurance from the Minister. I'm wondering what sort of monitoring we're doing for HIV and Hep C in association with crack cocaine addiction, if we have any way of monitoring that.

HON. SANDY LEE: I realize that these are not all the same conditions, but the recent outbreaks of syphilis and tuberculosis have taught us a lot. It has allowed us to set up a committee of resource people, including those from the affected community; a homeless person or whoever it is that are most exposed to it. We have professionals and people on the street working together to identify people who are most at danger and working and having the STI nurses and coordinators and the front line workers talking to them, being in touch with them, and to make sure that they're provided with the services that they need. In the long run we do need to have something like a day drop-in centre or something like that, where people could be more protected and have more services available to them. We are working on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 321-16(3):
SENIORS FACILITY IN ULUKHAKTOK

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going from my Member's statement today with my elders facility in Ulukhaktok and how important it is to the community. For the Minister of Housing. Will this government place the substandard living conditions for seniors as the highest priority or are they going to continue stripping benefits and services like they have been during this session? Will the government commit to develop and work with me for a seniors facility in Ulukhaktok or are we going to this legacy of neglect?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'm just trying to figure out what the Member is referring to in terms of stripping benefits and services from the Housing Corporation to the seniors. I don't believe any of that has happened. In fact, the last couple of years we've expanded our programs to accommodate seniors and remove the cap that limited the assistance that was provided to seniors historically. Now our seniors can access the same programs and services as anyone else.

The Member also asked a second question as part of this as to providing facilities for seniors. We do look at and analyze requirements for seniors in all our communities as part of our consideration. However, we do not provide seniors facilities that are considered to be institutions. Certainly we can have a discussion with the Department of Health. The facilities that we provide are usually in the area of existing upgrades or replacement units and the focus is on independent seniors, seniors that can look after themselves.

MR. JACOBSON: Would the Minister, you know, since he brought it up about existing units, everything's been given to the bigger communities. Nothing's been ever given to the smaller communities such as in my riding of Nunakput. So how could he say that in the first place? Everything's in the South Slave. Or in your riding. Sorry. All I'm asking for is if this government could try. It doesn't have to be a full-fledged elders facility; it could be a four-plex for elders.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I would have to undertake to put a list together for the investment that's been made in the Member's riding to show that there has been no intention or no neglect of investment in his communities. We certainly will, and could, and, as was requested, follow up and look at seniors facilities. We in the Housing Corporation cannot put a seniors facility that is a higher level than independent. That would have to

be done through the Department of Health and I can convey his request to her. But I can assure the Member that we have additional dollars that are being negotiated right now. We are putting a list together of needs. We've heard from his communities. We have seen petitions from the Member and members of his community. We're taking that into consideration. Until that's finally signed off with the federal government, it's difficult to provide him an actual listing. He will have an opportunity to review it and see what the investment will be in those communities that he represents.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I look forward to seeing this \$50 million in new dollars from the federal government's stimulus package for housing. Could the Minister commit to working with me in the future in regard to getting that structure built as soon as possible?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Absolutely, we'd be pleased to work with the Member. We make a commitment to share the information of investment that's going to be made as a result of the new agreements with the federal government on the Northern Housing Trust. There are certainly conditions that we would have to keep in mind. Of course, first of all, as I mentioned before, we need to ensure that these houses are independent units; houses for seniors that can look after themselves. We also are not in a position to add to our public housing stock, so we do not have any operating dollars as of yet. That's our next political challenge, to have those discussions with the federal government. I would be pleased to work with the Member and I've already committed I'll share the information to him and the rest of our colleagues across the way here to ensure that they're completely aware of the dollars that are being spent in their riding and their communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer. I look forward to seeing your design. We could work together in going over them. All I want to bring up today, we want our elders to stay home. We don't want to send them out of the community. We want them to stay home and live a happy life and not send them out to Inuvik and the stressful environment where they never get to see family. That's all we're asking. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. I didn't hear a question there.

MR. JACOBSON: It was a good point.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 322-16(3):
POTENTIAL FOR PRODUCTION OF
GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard a good expression on the radio this morning. They used to say that government should be leaner and meaner. Now they're saying leaner and greener. I think that's a great phrase: leaner and greener. I appreciate the initiatives that have been announced and undertaken by this government to look at alternate sources of energy. We heard about the biomass, about the pellet boilers. We've heard about electric heat from the hydro surplus in Fort Smith. I have been contacting the Minister and will be asking him again today, what has the government done to examine the potential for geothermal heat in the Northwest Territories. I have a constituent who is a third generation business owner in Hay River that would very much like to get involved in the installation of geothermal heat technology and equipment and so on in Hay River, but in order to do that he needs a building, a public building that he can use as a prototype. There are very large sums of federal money available for such a conversion and I would like to ask the Minister of ENR what work has been done on geothermal.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Geothermal is one of the alternative forms of energy that is being considered. There is money in the budget to advance some of the groundwork. We are looking initially particularly in Yellowknife where they have done a lot of work already and trying to make sure that we can assist, if possible, as they look at all the mine shafts and the potential to capture some of that heat. As well, over in Nahendeh and around Simpson, in that area, Liard, it seemed to be a high potential for geothermal as well. If the Member's constituent is interested, we have staff that are listening to this, if I can get the name later from the Member I'll make sure we have a follow-up with this individual as well.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: My constituent is assembling the equipment and the necessary infrastructure that he needs to begin these installations. I believe that Hay River is also a community that would be a good candidate for geothermal. Is there a public building in Hay River

owned by the GNWT that we could do a test pilot project on? Let me suggest the courthouse.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We are going to be investing a significant amount of money on biomass in Hay River over the next year or so. She has posed the question that she's kindly answered for me. We'll see where that fits. I don't know what kind of process or cost is entailed. I know the federal government is putting together a, has a Green Fund of a billion dollars that is project based, application based. We're waiting to see what the criteria is, to see if we could possibly access some of that money as well. I will just restate the commitment that the staff will track down the name. I'll get the name from the Member and we'll follow up to see what's possible.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'll be happy to provide that name and I would like to ask the Minister if he or officials in his department would be willing to meet with my constituent to discuss this. I think that between some small contribution by the territorial government and a rather large contribution by the federal government we could do a prototype. The issue is that in order to do the prototype it has to be a publicly owned building. It cannot be a privately owned building. So that's why we need some buildings that would be candidates to give this a try. Would the Minister agree to have his officials or himself meet directly with my constituent to see if a building could be identified?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We're looking at a number of innovative technologies. For example, an air-to-air heat exchanger that appears to be working well and has great potential applicability in the Northwest Territories, especially maybe in the southern part. I will confirm once again that I'll have officials follow up with the Member's constituent to get a better sense of what is being proposed, potential costs, look at something in writing so that we can do a proper kind of assessment and see what kind of support may be possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 323-16(3):
RUNWAY EXTENSIONS IN
FORT GOOD HOPE AND DELINE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I clearly outlined that we have a serious problem in the Sahtu in regard to our runway length in Fort Good Hope and Deline. We've been working closely with the Department of Transportation to see how we can address this. There has been much correspondence with the department and the communities of Deline and Fort Good Hope and their major partner in the airline,

North-Wright Aviation. I would ask the Minister if he would continue working with the communities of Fort Good Hope and Deline to find solutions that would address the runway extension that we're asking for in Fort Good Hope and Deline.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm assuming when he says solutions, he's talking about new investment in the runways to extend them. That's the challenge at this point. There are a couple of things that we haven't formally been able to analyze that is the actual cost and how we would find the resources to invest in the capital portion of extending the runway. We also need to clarify what it would entail in terms of additional resources or additional operations and maintenance dollars for a runway that exceeds 4,000 feet. That is something that we're compiling right now and we'd be glad to share it with communities.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister is correct in terms of the things that need to get done to ensure that these runways in the Sahtu, specifically Fort Good Hope and Deline, receive the additional, if they could get the additional 500 feet of extension on their runways. I would ask the Minister in terms of working with the Sahtu beneficiaries own airlines in regard to looking at this issue here. Would the Minister address this problem by giving some serious consideration to include the extension in the 2010-2011 capital plan?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I don't think we're at a point where we have enough information and we're convinced that we're going to get support from our colleagues to include the dollars for an extension in those two communities. The challenges, the new federal regulations that require demonstrated ability to start or take off from a certain length runway and to stop, there are two types of aircraft that are really needing to have certification. That means they have to be able to demonstrate that in a test flight. That's the twin otter and Beech 99. We've gone as far as to contact a couple companies that can provide that information. We're waiting to hear back. Providing that the response is positive, we may be able to continue with the current operation levels, the current flights that go into these communities with the aircraft that service them. That's our hope that will resolve the issue.

MR. YAKELEYA: The people in the Sahtu certainly want to continue flying around in Twin Otters and Beach 99s and small aircraft all their lives. What we're asking is working with the Minister here in terms of they have done their homework, they have contacted the various airlines in terms of

the required aircraft that could meet or exceed the safety standards. The best fit right now for the people in the Sahtu is the Beach 1900. I guess I would ask the Minister and the colleagues here, when you look at the need here in the Sahtu, the people...I have to fly in those small aircraft around the region. Same with my people. We can look at it. We have a good fit here. I guess I'm looking at where in the government we can work in terms of saying we can get the extra 500 feet in Fort Good Hope and Colville Lake so we can meet the safety standards of the people in the Sahtu region where there's the most need. So I ask the Minister here in terms of looking at the extension here, if he could pull out all the stops and see how we can get the 500 feet of runway in terms of making this a go in the Sahtu. My people need the extension.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The Member's constituents need the extension to buy a certain type of aircraft. There are other communities that need airports. I have to be able to balance the investment. At this point we're advising the company that's requesting it to look at a different type of aircraft that can fly larger planes into the area that have certification that demonstrate they can start and stop on that length of runway. We just extended two runways in the Member's riding. There is a Fairchild Metroliner. There is a Dornier 228. There is a Dash-8. All of these planes can land. We have to have more discussion. We would have to be convinced that there is a way we can resource it.

Mr. Speaker, we committed several times already to meet with the community representatives as they come to the Native Conference. There are other people that will be involved. For example, the federal government will sit at these discussions. We can explore it and have more discussions in detail. I am expecting we should have some of our findings as to what it would cost to build and operate. It is going to be a very big challenge, I think, to commit to the Member today, without any of the backup information, to say yes or to anything additional in the area of capital. We need a very strong business case. I don't have that yet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is correct. We, at this time, don't have a strong business case for the government. Mr. Speaker, the runways that we are asking for in Fort Good Hope and Colville Lake are going to provide safety for our people in Fort Good Hope and Deline. We are not on an all-weather road like some of the communities, so we have to look at our priorities. There are some communities that do need it. Some communities in my region certainly have an increase in aircraft, the oil and gas activity and the

mining. Mr. Speaker, yes, we did look at the Dash-8 in the community. It will cost \$10 million for the community to build a hangar. It is 37 passengers. I don't see a Dash-8 going into Gameti, Wekweeti or any other communities around here to look at a scheduled service for small aircraft. I think we have to be somewhat realistic and look at the needs of the Sahtu that have been so long ignored or forgotten in terms of bringing up our standards here.

A thousand feet of runway that we have in Fort Good Hope and in Tulita are appreciated but we are looking at seeing if we can get 500 extra feet on Good Hope and Deline to bring in a Beech 99 that could help the community. If we could do that, Mr. Speaker, I think we can go a long way with the Minister. Again, I would ask the Minister to keep an open mind when we come together on some discussions. There is money out there. Would the Minister again inform his staff that we have for those communities, with the people in Deline, Fort Good Hope and North-Wright Aviation to look at solutions for the runways?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we are not preventing the Member's constituents from buying any type of aircraft. That is up to them. They can buy any kind of aircraft they want. They would still need to build a hangar. The hangar is not the issue in this case. Mr. Speaker, it is unfair for the Member to say we are neglecting his constituents. We are just in the process of extending two runways in his riding. We just redid the Norman Wells Airport. We are proposing a \$13 million airport relocation in his riding. Mr. Speaker, the issue of runway is something that we need to address. We need more information. I will continue to work with the Member on it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 324-16(3):
HEALTH HAZARD ALERT REGARDING
GROUND BEEF AT
YELLOWKNIFE DIRECT CHARGE CO-OP

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It gets to a health hazard alert that was issued on the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency's website yesterday that included a retail outlet here, the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op in Yellowknife, on range fed ground beef.

Mr. Speaker, when I was alerted of this warning this morning -- and there are other Members as well that were alerted to the warning -- the first thing that crossed my mind is not just my family but many other families in Yellowknife have consumed ground beef from the Co-op over the past five

weeks. Mr. Speaker, we sent some questions to the Minister and the Minister subsequently issued a public health advisory. But in the interim, Mr. Speaker, I did phone the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op just to get the facts on what range fed lean ground beef was. It is a different product altogether than ground beef. I was surprised when we see this public health advisory on an E. coli warning issued by the office of the chief medical health officer that states to the public, do not consume ground beef products purchased at the Yellowknife Co-op between February 8th and March 10th inclusive as these products may contain E. coli. Mr. Speaker, this is not entirely true. I would like to ask the Minister of Health if they contacted the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op prior to issuing this public health advisory. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, I want to just confirm with the House and advise the public that all necessary steps have been taken since this public advisory or the warning came out from CFIA. All of the products were removed from the store. There is no sign that any of those products have ended up in any other stores. There have not been any cases of E. coli related incidents. The public health officer is talking to the public through the media to answer questions and get as much information as possible out there.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Member's specific question, the CFIA website is fixed to range fed ground beef but the public health officer has included all ground beef products sold between February 8th and March 10th. The reason why the public health officer has done that is because the grinding process at the Co-op dealt with not only this product but other products as well. There is a small but possible possibility of cross-contamination during the grinding process. In order to be absolutely safe and to make sure that our consumers do not have any chance of consuming this product, we are asking the public to take back or throw out any ground product bought from the Co-op between February 8th to March 10th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I guess better safe than sorry is always the best course of action, considering E. coli is not a bacteria that one wants to be messing with. It killed seven people in Walkerton and made sick another 2,500 people in Walkerton. It is not something you take lightly. Again, airing on the side of caution is a good thing.

In a news story that just recently got published on the CBC News site, that Yellowknife Direct Charge

Co-op says that, on this free range beef, they will take it back and people can get a refund of the product. But if the public health or chief medical officer in the Northwest Territories is suggesting that there could be some cross-contamination of all beef products from the Yellowknife Co-op between those dates, how is the retailer going to be giving refunds as the Minister had discussions with the retailer about giving refunds to consumers that have bought this product over that period of time, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I think it is important to note that the public should take all caution and to look in their freezer to make sure that there are no products of those dates from that location. There is a very low chance of E. coli contamination, especially if the meat is cooked thoroughly, but we just want the public to be cautious. I think the public health officer is the first and foremost responsibility, as is for me as a Minister and this government. I am advised that the warning right now is to have the public look at the products that they have to see if those were purchased in those dates. The public health officer is advising that they throw those products out or they could go back to the Co-op and see if they could have the money refunded. It is not an unusual practice to go broad in some of these recalls. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to get some clarification on a portion of my first question. That was whether or not the chief medical officer or her office or the Minister and the Department of Health and Social Services had gotten in touch with the retailer and made the retailer aware of the press release that they were going to issue, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I could confirm that the public health officer as well as the environmental health officer had been in close contact with the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op. There has been close cooperation. It is the environmental health officer who has identified the possibility of cross-contamination during the grinding process. It is on that advice that the public health officer decided to include all ground beef products. I could assure the Member that the health officials are working closely with the Co-op to make sure that we serve the interests of the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking to the general manager at the Co-op just prior to coming to the House today. That was at about 1:15 or 1:20. At that moment in time, he hadn't heard from anybody from the Department of Health and Social Services. When exactly did the office of the chief medical officer get in touch with

the retailer and include the retailer in this process and the subsequent issuing of this public health advisory, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I could undertake to get the Member that exact information, but the information I have is that the environmental health officers have worked with the Co-op to change their practice so this situation will not occur. On that basis, Mr. Speaker, that is the information I have now. Any further information that the Member or the House may require, I would be happy to get back to the Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 325-16(3):
IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW
REGULATORY PROCESS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up to the statement made by the Deputy Premier earlier today when he talked about the government's response and actions relative to the McCrank report and regulatory reform. The Minister stated that we have developed a comprehensive approach to regulatory improvement. I am really pleased to hear that we have looked into this and that we have developed a comprehensive approach. I have been asking for some time to get an answer on where we stand relative to the McCrank report. I would like to ask the Minister, now that we do have this approach and it is somewhat consolidated and it has been developed, where is this plan going in terms of going forward? What are the details or how we are going to get that out there? What is the Minister expecting that we are going to do as we go forward? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things, as we indicated, is we are trying to build a table to make sure that we get all of the appropriate Northerners and the federal government are on the table to look at next steps. In terms of the work that we have put out there and I have referenced today in my Minister's statement, the intent is to put that document on the web in its entirety, as well as we are going to be sending out packages to the aboriginal governments and we are going to be starting the process of discussion and looking for feedback on what we think should be the next steps in the recommendations that we are putting forward. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that response. I note that the Minister mentioned groups in his response and that the document is going to

go on the website. That is great, but they are going to be contacting various and sundry groups. I think that is great as well. How can any interested individuals in the public or any groups that are not contacted by the government provide their comments or their perspectives on this process and on the document that is going to be there? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, there will be ability through e-mail or written submissions to send in feedback and suggestions. We will look at them all, and all will be sort of added to the mix and considered as we move forward.

I would like to point out that the issue is not so much the report or response to the McCrank report. That is just the latest federal effort to try to look at improvements. For us it is the broader issue of making sure that we have a system that is effective, integrated, properly resourced and running the way it was intended the way it was contemplated and designed 10 years ago. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I totally agree with his assessment that, yes, we do want to actually get something up and running, and running efficiently, that was set in place many years ago. We have been waiting for a long time for that. In terms of the compilation of the comments that come back and the consultation that is going to take place, when might we expect to see some sort of a final report which encompasses all the comments which have come in? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we would be glad to provide an update to the committee and Members when we next gather at the end of May. I have also indicated that we are prepared and interested to sit down when we have more time to look at further discussion on the specifics and the recommendations themselves and the different areas of focus to have time for detailed review and discussion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. Yes, I think Members have taken him up on his offer to discuss the document in detail. I think there are going to be some interesting, philosophical debates on many of those parts of the report. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not once there has been a report done and all the comments have been compiled, is there an intention on the part of the government to forward this to the federal government and basically tell them how we think we should go forward? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Our approach is that we are partners in this process with the federal government. We expect the federal government to recognize us as such. We have been in discussions and correspondence with Minister Strahl. We are going to continue to correspond with him. We are going to be sharing the information that we are bringing forward with his officials and the department. We want to make sure and the reason we are moving the way we are is because there is a need for us as the Government of the Northwest Territories, the public government in the Territory, to have our position out there in anticipation of Indian Affairs possibly putting out a position on their own without fully engaging all their partners and other stakeholders. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 326-16(3):
RESULTS FROM THE VOLUNTEER SUMMIT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of MACA and in follow up to my Member's statement from earlier today. I have heard some really positive remarks on the Volunteer Summit that was held last week and I am optimistic that the feedback that was provided by the participants was clearly heard by the government. I am curious. When will some of the detailed feedback on the summit be provided to both the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure and the Standing Committee on Social Programs, as mandates of the different voluntary sector organizations cross both of the mandates of both of these committees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Volunteer Summit this weekend was very successful. I had an opportunity to go there on Friday when it opened up. There was a lot of enthusiasm in there about discussing the options for volunteers across the NWT. The draft summary is being put together right now. That will be distributed to a lot of the participants in the summit to capture all of their feedback and make sure that we captured all of their input into it. Once that is done, we will provide copies of the final report and final draft to Members and the public. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: I was wondering if I can just get a bit of a timeline on that. I am curious how long it is going to take before we can see some of those results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the timeline will depend on how quickly the participants get back to us with their feedback. Once that is done, we will put something together. We are looking, hopefully, at four to six weeks at this particular point. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: I would like to thank the Minister for his response. Now that the feedback and input has been sort of received from the sector during the meeting itself, how do the two departments plan to move forward and incorporate these recommendations into the day-to-day business and partnerships with these organizations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that is one of the reasons that, once we get the feedback from them, it will open up options as to how we can conduct business better with them. We are looking at having all of the positive feedback come back from the participants and we can use this in going the next step, how we can engage them on a more regular basis instead of waiting once every few years to have a summit of this sort. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 327-16(3):
PROCESS TO INVOLVE REGULAR MEMBERS
IN PROGRAM REVIEW INITIATIVE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I talked about my concern about not feeling as if we are fully in the loop of the work being developed over in that program review office. This concern is shared by a number of Members over on this side of the House. My questions will be directed to the Minister responsible for refocusing government. Mr. Speaker, what the issue really comes down to is while the program review office is out doing their work, long before all of the scope of the work is defined and they have galvanized their opinions on what should be done, or change whether it is a policy or program should be adjusted or dropped, when will Members be able to go through this line by line and be included in on this program review and have our opinions validated and certainly considered through this process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the committee on Refocusing Government, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that that process has already started, that there has been involvement in briefings and there will continue to be. The Program Review Committee is working. We do have two

Members from P and P on the committee, two committee chairs from EDI and from the Social Programs. We would be happy to provide a briefing on work to date with the P and P as soon as that could be arranged. There is work to date. The program areas of review in health and education have been, I believe, shared. The specific detail of what is actually being reviewed and the findings and the work to date, we'd be happy to brief the committee on. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I'm actually coming from it at a ground-level point of view, not at 10,000 feet in the air about, you know, yes, we're reviewing the programs, we're reviewing education way up here. Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking from a ground level, nuts and bolts, everyday point of view.

Mr. Speaker, what the issue really comes down to is what are the details that are being reviewed and would the Minister provide that to all Members so we can go through those long before any galvanized position is made by saying we're going to cut here and don't worry, trust us. When will that detail be forwarded to us? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, there is a value given where you are in the process to looking both at the forest and the trees. I agree with the Member that we have to do both. We need to provide the broad context and oversight and direction. As well, as we get down to the actual practical realities and implementation issues that we're looking at and programs that we're looking at, it is in considerable detail, and I'll restate the commitment to share that information. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: In talking to one of my colleagues here who sits on that joint committee where they involved some Members from our Priorities and Planning, I mean, I still get a sense that not a lot of work has been accomplished to date. Again, it's all about high-level work. The fact is we all came into this Assembly in the context of gangbusters saying we want to do government better, we want to do it more efficiently, we want to make a difference. Mr. Speaker, my fear is that this work is going to be done so slowly and it's going to be so protracted from our day-to-day work that it won't get implemented in this term. When can we actually see clear, defined elements of recommendations for our opinion to be able to implement them in a timely way? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, that's like suggesting to somebody go ahead, back up. Sometimes you get confusing signals. We are hard at work on this. One of the challenges for the Refocusing Government committee -- and I don't think anybody will differ on this -- one of the big challenges, especially over the last six weeks, is actually finding enough time to be able to do justice

to all the work that's being done. We've booked some meetings now coming into April to have a full half-day to look at the program review, to look at some other issues that we're also tasked with, with housing and with board reform and those types of things. As I indicated to the Member, we'd be more than willing to sit down and come and brief committee with the work we have to date, get feedback, get some suggestions if there are concerns about where we are going and the work that's underway or areas that folks may think that we've overlooked. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Although I can emotionally accept his offer to brief committee, I'll have to leave that up to our committee chair and, obviously, our committee staff to accept that formally. Mr. Speaker, it's the detail. Like everyone says, the devil is in the detail, and I want to make sure that that detailed review doesn't go past us in such a high level that we miss it. The fact is, I don't want it to miss the next set of business plans that are, I hate to say it, already being worked on, that are coming forward in the summer for finance review that will be offered to Members in the fall. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that that detail is provided. If I could get that clearly emphasized, and I'm sorry, once again, but the clear detail that emphasizes what specific areas in education and health you will be reviewing to make sure that we're on the same page and we're all going forward on this concerted effort together. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I'll commit to ensure that we're on the same plane that's going over at 10,000 feet; that we're in the same vehicle that's on the ground as we go through the terrain that's before us; that we're sitting in the same room as we develop business plans; and that we sit in this same Legislature to provide direction to government. We have every intention of bringing forward all that work and we are aiming fully to be able to lay out that and all the other work so that it can be considered for business plans. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 328-16(3):
CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT FOR
SENIORS HOME REPAIR PROGRAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about the need to address senior citizens' home repair in Tu Nedhe. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Housing. Can the Minister agree to signing a contribution agreement with the communities of Lutselk'e and Deninu Kue for the repair of the

homes of the seniors in that riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. I'd certainly be willing to sit down and have that discussion with the Member and the community leaders to see if there's a way they can deliver or provide some of the repair projects. Mr. Speaker, however, the projects would have to fall within our criteria and our program design. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I was actually looking at programs that the Corporation is currently delivering. With that, can the Minister direct his staff to start the process of developing some sort of contribution agreement that would be signed between the NWT Housing Corporation and the communities, whichever organization in the communities that are eventually picked? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We certainly support communities working on housing projects. We have a number of agreements. We have universal partnerships with a number of communities. We work well, in most cases, with the communities that deliver our projects. I would be glad to see what the Member is proposing in the form of a proposal. Before I direct my staff to start signing agreements, we'd be, I think, better served if we had more information as to what the request is from the community. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister agree that this work should...I'm telling the Minister this work is necessary and this money can be spent in the community. Can the Minister agree to start the process or give direction to his staff to start the process this fiscal year so that if there are materials that have to be ordered -- it has to be shipped in on the barge into Lutselk'e -- if the work can begin before the end of this fiscal year of March 31, 2009?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that's a very short time frame. I don't think we can meet that. Even in terms of providing what the allocation that we are suggesting for the communities, I'd think we'd need to have some further discussion in terms of what we have committed to providing in terms of investment for the communities that he represents. We'd need to see what portions of this the Member is anticipating his communities are going to want to deliver. There needs to be further discussion. I certainly can instruct my officials to start gathering the information so that we can have

more discussion on it. However, I can't commit to meeting the March 31st time frame. That's not enough time for us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to attending a public meeting in both Tu Nedhe communities with me before the snow is gone? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Housing Minister has just been in the community of Fort Resolution very recently. We have also committed to going into Lutselk'e and that has yet to be scheduled. We're still working on that. We'd like to be in all the communities across the Territories over the next while and almost everyone has provided a request, so we're trying to schedule them all. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 329-16(3):
STATUS OF RENOVATIONS AT ELDERS
CARE FACILITY IN FORT SIMPSON

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Last fall I asked about a capital project which was the renovations to the seniors care facility in Fort Simpson. I'd just like to know how much work has been done towards that. It's a facility that's constantly been full for the last six, seven months. We've got lots of elders that actually have to end up staying in Yellowknife for longer and longer periods, so these renovations are critical. I'd like to ask the Minister at what stage is this project? Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm afraid that I don't have that information on me right now. I'd be happy to undertake to give him an update and give him more detailed info. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to ask the Minister the same question. No, Mr. Speaker, the elders care facility in Fort Simpson, as I indicated, has been full for about six months straight. I've got many, many elders in my communities that are coming to Yellowknife and they are staying here longer and longer periods only because there is no bed space in Fort Simpson. I'd like to convey to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, that this project is a priority and the expansions must take place. I'd like to ask the

Minister, does she have any information that she can share as to the project status?

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I'll have to make a commitment to look at it. I was at that facility not too long ago and I am aware that they had to do some renovations; for example, changing the floor and such to accommodate some of the residents there that need certain lighting and certain kinds of flooring. I have to say I'm not aware of the major work that had to be done or that that facility is full. I'm learning a couple of new things here, so I would have to undertake to look into that and get back to him with more thorough answers. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to ask the Minister about the expansion plans of the elders care facility in Fort Simpson. The current plans may not include extra and additional bedroom space, so I'd like to convey to the Minister if she can certainly talk with her officials and ensure that an assessment of the available bedroom space is part of the facility expansions and/or do an immediate assessment, because my elders are spending more and more time in Yellowknife. Elders don't have the ability to travel from the smaller communities for extended visits, medical visits in the community of Fort Simpson there, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister make this assessment about available bed space in Fort Simpson?

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, I will look into that and get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to ask the Minister about the plans to expand the facility. It may not include bedrooms, so I'd like to ask the Minister to request that her staff and I think the work of the Public Works and Services, as well, Mr. Speaker, to do a good assessment of the available bedroom space that is needed for the facility to accommodate our increasing elders that need that bed space and need the service in Fort Simpson.

She says she's not aware of it, so I'd also like to ask her to do an internal assessment, maybe done by the chief executive officer of the Dehcho Health and Social Services and/or her internal staff to do that assessment, that critical space analysis there, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have all of the specific information on that facility to give the Member information, that's why I'm undertaking to get back to the Member on that. Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the House that the department is undertaking an overview review of all of the facilities and their usage, and I'm sure that all that

information is available. I just need to be able to get it for the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 330-16(3):
NON-SMOKING POLICY AT
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I may have alluded to this question previously in this session, but I want to get a little more direct with it here today to the Minister of Justice. Now, I am not a huge proponent of smoking. As a matter of fact, anybody who knows me, I am not a supporter of smoking in any way. I wish everybody could kick the habit and not smoke, but people do smoke. And we, as a government, in most government workplaces make provision for those people, employees who smoke, to go someplace on the grounds a fair distance away from the building. Even here at the Legislative Assembly you can walk out to the end of the green mile there and you can smoke at the end of the...The green line, I mean.

---Laughter

...and you can smoke on the property. But there's a new rule coming in place for correctional facilities in the Northwest Territories starting on April 1st, and that is that neither inmates nor staff can smoke anywhere on the government property. They cannot bring tobacco on the premises in any way, shape or form. Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the Minister of Justice, is this somehow treating the staff of the correctional facilities in some form of discriminatory fashion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the areas that we've looked at as a department. I guess it's part of the choice that individuals have to make, whether you're working at the facility or being an inmate at the facility. Certainly as the wellness of the workers, the second-hand smoke, the third-hand smoke, even though the individuals that smoke out in the selected areas, they come into the building and you can still smell the smoke off them. There is second and third-hand smoke you can still smell it off of them. Those are the areas that have been brought to our concern. That's an area that we've been working on. Yes, April 1st is when it's going to start. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The time for question period has expired; however, I will

allow the Member a supplementary question. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have no issue with telling the inmates they can't smoke. Sorry, but, you know, if you're incarcerated, you're in a confined area or areas, even if it's outdoors, and I don't have a problem with that. I'm asking about the staff who work with the inmates who smoke. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has said that staff might go outside and smoke and then come in and smell of smoke. What about teachers? Teachers must go outside for a smoke and come back into the school after a smoke. Nurses at the hospital must go outside for a smoke and come back in and be around patients. Can school children, can patients in a hospital smell smoke on their care providers or their supervisors? There seems something a bit out of step about this particular rule. What investigation has the Department of Justice done to determine whether or not this is, in fact, somehow discriminatory against those who work with corrections inmates? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I think what it comes down to is obviously the health hazard of the other workers within the facility. We have to start somewhere. We can't have it in all buildings as of April 1st, but certainly we are starting within our corrections area. There have been complaints brought to our attention that individuals going out to have a smoke coming back in and second and third-hand they can smell it off a person. Certainly it is a health hazard that has been brought to our attention. So those are the issues that have been brought forward. So that's been acted upon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Short supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Smoking is a health hazard for any public servant or any person, for that matter. It is a health hazard. Yet all other public servants are allowed to smoke on government premises. It's been years since anybody has been allowed to smoke inside. Smoking inside is not the issue. The issue is why can't corrections officers smoke on the property outdoors?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That area again has been brought to our attention, not just by of course the workers, but people who do visit the facility as well. We took all those into consideration when this...I guess, we're putting a stop to smoking on the premises. It has been an ongoing issue and finally I think we've made the decision to say, okay, well, we'll follow through with what's been brought to our attention.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what avenue the government would have to check with anybody to see if this is some form of violation of human right. Like I said, I don't think anybody should smoke, but I just don't see why corrections workers should be singled out and treated differently than any other government employee when it comes to this matter. I'd like to know if the Minister would undertake to find out if this has ever been raised anywhere else in Canada or as an issue of a human right.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Certainly we can undertake to do some work in this area in other jurisdictions as well. April 1st is certainly in a few weeks. Obviously we are moving forward on this particular target, but certainly we will do more research in that area. I will commit to the Member to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize the Yellowknife Rotary Club and the event that they bring here to our Territory and our Legislature. They're bringing a bunch of students that represent Alberta and certainly the Northwest Territories in a program called Northern Experience. The students by name are: Geordan Vine from Edmonton, Megan Fraser from Lloydminster, Levi Bourque from Nisku-Leduc, Lorne Ghostkeeper from Edmonton, Chase Goebel from Edmonton, Marcha Duvenage from Vermillion, Lauren Zeilke from Edmonton, Jerome Ang from Morinville, Anna Brandt from Jasper, Colleen Thomas from Whitecourt, Alexa Saleh from Whitecourt, Corrie Lance from Calgary, as well as Jen Potter from Drumheller, Alex Rockwell from Calgary, Shane Pullam from Lloydminster, and a name that will be no surprise to our Premier certainly is Sam Roland, originally from Inuvik. Our northern students as well are Nicole Anderson from Fort Smith, Rebecca Kaufman from Inuvik, Ramona Menicoche from Fort Simpson, George Bailey from

Behchoko, and Caleb Milne from Hay River. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize my niece Ms. Ramona Menicoche, who lives in Fort Simpson. Welcome to the gallery. This is where your uncle works.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank a couple of the Pages from Great Slave riding who have been here with us on and off for the last six weeks: James, or rather J.J., Gardiner and Katherine Thomas. Thank you for your assistance. It's been great.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'd like to recognize Ms. Nicole Anderson coming to the Assembly from Fort Smith.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'd like to recognize the good work of the Rotary Clubs in the Northwest Territories and across this nation, and recognize Caleb Milne, a constituent of Hay River South.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: It is a pleasure to recognize youth from Inuvik, both Rebecca Kaufman and, of course, my son as I refer to him as, Samuel Roland.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Welcome to everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 8 on the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Oral Questions
(Reversion)****QUESTION 331-16(3):
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
NORTHERN ABORIGINAL STUDENTS**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Several years ago, the then-Minister of Education Jim Antoine indicated in this House that education is a treaty right. The First Nations have taken comfort in that and trusted the GNWT. Recently the Dene Nation has taken a more active interest in education. They discovered that NWT students are only eligible for six years of student financial assistance, but the southern First Nation students are eligible for 10 years of student financial assistance. For instance, Alberta students are eligible for two extra years for a master's and two or three more years for a doctor's degree. Would the Minister explain to me in this House why it is that NWT First Nations students receive four to five years less SFA than southern First Nations students do?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through our SFA Program in the NWT, our jurisdiction has one of the best benefits programs that we offer to students. In comparison to other jurisdictions, we are ahead of them. I can just give you some examples. We did some research in our neighbouring Alberta Education Trust Fund as a prime example with the First Nation. Through the SFA rates determined the number of courses enrolled approximately \$5,000 to students overall to complete the degree, \$1,000 per year. So above and beyond, the student would have to pitch in from their own pocket. Not only that, we have off-reserve individuals, one person, \$1,200 per month, and on-reserve individuals are capped at \$1,200 per month.

There is also a deduction that's made on these; there are conditions for absenteeism that are monitored through universities; two-day grace period, doctors' notes required for sick leave. With our SFA Program we do not monitor those types of absenteeism or sick notes. We are above and beyond them.

There is a limitation on \$50,000 for their loan limit. Ours is at \$60,000 and we did increase that from \$47,000 to \$60,000 so we can service master's students and so forth. So there are certain caps on southern programs that our...I think with our

program we have the strength of delivering even more than other jurisdictions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Very short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Would the Minister tell this House what the Minister has done so that NWT aboriginal students will receive student financial assistance grants for master's and Ph degrees like the First Nations relatives in the South?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We do provide grants to students up to six years and another up to \$60,000 for loans that can be remitted as well. We do offer an attractive benefit for students to either obtain a degree program, master's program, even to PhD level. Upon their return they can certainly be remiss on their loan. Even though we say it's a loan, it's paid off by itself as well. We do provide as much as we can through the SFA Program and not only that, but there are other First Nations scholarship programs and university scholarships. There are a variety of subsidies available to them in all jurisdictions.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister is correct that students are eligible to get six years of student financial assistance. Again, in the South for the First Nations students, they're eligible for 10 years; two years for a master's and two or three years for a doctor's degree. Will the Minister commit to developing and implementing a plan so that aboriginal students will have the added years of SFA grants for master's and PhDs for the next school year?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We do offer the subsidies already through grants and through loan opportunities. With a southern comparison, as an example, the certification program is capped at 10 months, the diploma is capped at 20 months, and the degree program is capped at 40 months. So there is a distinct difference. Ours is open up to six years. They can take a degree program to six years. Here, with the southern program, it's 40 months. So there is a big difference and I think we are providing as much as we can to the northern students. We continue to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've contacted one of the students who are taking a master's degree and she's having a hard time with getting her master's degree. Will the Minister commit to reporting to this House at the next session in June on the progress he's making in providing additional years to student financial grants for master's and PhD degrees for the First

Nations students for the next year? Will the Minister commit?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We can certainly provide information that we have within our department. The students are down south. We have over 1,400 students down south. We're proud to say we are sponsoring all these students down south and we continue to do that. That's a worthwhile investment on the part of the Northwest Territories and part of this government, and we continue to strive for excellence.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 332-16(3):
NORTHERN TRUCK DRIVERS AND TRUCKS
SERVING DIAMOND MINES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a few questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. About a month ago I got in touch with the Minister in regard to some complaints I was hearing from local truck drivers and truck operators and their inability to get work on the ice road. It's understandable, given the economic downturn and the lack of loads going up that road -- it's down substantially this year -- that there would be some scaling back there. However, there's still a number of southern-based companies and southern drivers that are getting the work on the ice road. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could get us a detailed analysis of where these trucks originate. Of the 350 trucks, where do they originate?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been getting most of our information to date from the diamond mines, and certainly there's been a dramatic reduction in the amount of truck traffic on the ice roads to the diamond mines. I think the high was about 12,500 loads and this year it's down to a little over 4,000. The information that's been provided from the diamond mines is that the majority of trucks that are hauling equipment and goods to the mines are from the Northwest Territories. I'm not sure where the Member got the figure of 350 trucks, but certainly the diamond mines have assured us that the majority of the trucks are from the Northwest Territories.

MR. RAMSAY: My apologies. That was 350 truck drivers registered to deliver loads to the three mines. I'd like to know exactly where those 350 truck drivers originate from. Of those drivers and the information that was provided, 75 percent of those are through northern-based companies. This is where we run into a problem, because northern-

based money doesn't mean they have northern based-employees, truck drivers, and northern-based trucks. While there are trucks sitting empty here in Yellowknife that should be getting the work, a company -- and I don't want to mention any names here, but it's a joint venture with a big trucking outfit in the South. It's got an aboriginal name and most of the money ends up going south. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he can find out exactly where these 350 truck drivers originate from and where exactly the trucks originate from and then we can get a good idea of what is what.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I appreciate the Member raising this question because this is an area that we've had several discussions with the diamond companies that have signed the MOU with us. This is one of the areas that has been identified as a concern with contractors from the mines. One of the things that the diamond mines had committed to was to work with the contractors to ensure that they were using northern drivers and trucks. So whatever information the Member has would be helpful in helping us resolve it. As well, I'll work with the Minister of Transportation, who has specific information about trucks that are operating in the Northwest Territories.

MR. RAMSAY: There are people who have a tremendous amount of money and time invested in buying trucks and being truck drivers and they depend a lot on the ice road season. This economic downturn that we're experiencing right now may or may not be here next year at this time when the ice roads open. I think it's important that from here forward we try to ensure that if there are trucks going up that road, they're based in the Northwest Territories, they're driven by drivers from the Northwest Territories, and any plan that the Minister can come up with would be welcome. I would like to ask him if he would be interested in developing some kind of strategy that would see northern truck drivers and northern trucks doing the majority of that work and not just northern-based companies who hire their trucks from the South.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We do have socio-economic agreements with each of the three operating mines which provide for northern preference, northern hiring, and certainly I'll communicate that with the mines and we'll work very hard to make sure they are working towards these targets.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 333-16(3):
PROCESS IN RESPONDING TO HEALTH
HAZARD ALERT REGARDING
CONTAMINATED MEAT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on the questions from my colleague Mr. Ramsay earlier on the contaminated meat. More specifically the E. coli 0157:H7 strain apparently in lean range fed ground beef from the Co-op. I'd just like to note that I received a notice from a Yellowknife resident at about 11 o'clock this morning and sent a message to the Minister about it inquiring at 11:13. At about 1:10 I received the notice, the advisory on the issue. I'm wondering, was it the Yellowknife resident's e-mail to me and mine to the Minister that actually brought this to the Minister's attention or do we have a failsafe mechanism in place to ensure that timely notice is received by our chief medical officer and acted on in a timely way?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the process is that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, as soon as they are aware of these products, would contact the retail store or wherever the outlet is first so that they can remove the products, then they inform the public health office to make sure that the public health office would inform the public and take necessary public measures. I can advise the Member that I first learned of this this morning, as well, and that the department was working on preparing the public message and taking steps to make sure that the products were removed and such. Also, the environmental health officer is involved in the process as well.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. Perhaps the Minister could just review the process and ensure that, in fact, it is working in a timely and efficient way. There was only one product in this case. It was the 18 kilograms of lean range fed ground beef that arrived pre-packaged, so there was no packaging and no possibility of contamination. I am wondering, in a situation like this, and perhaps even immediately today where we have a Co-op with almost all people using the Co-op are registered members and almost all purchases are registered by computer so there is actually a registration -- we are talking about 18 kilograms of, say, 40 packages -- if in fact the department could work with the Co-op and alert the very people who purchased this product. Is that the sort of work that the department is willing to go to, to protect our people? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: It is a little scary that a business would know everything about what you bought, but I can see the Member's point. If they wanted to, they could run a number and see exactly what we bought for any given time. I think we should note, though, that there are customers who shop at the Co-op who are not necessarily members. They are allowed to buy products. They used to anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to tell the Member and Members of this House that I will review the process to follow exactly what happened. It is always good to, if at all possible, tighten the process.

The second thing is, as I explained to the Member for Kam Lake earlier, I understand it is always a fine balance between giving enough information so that all the necessary measures are taken as a safety measure, but also we don't want to create undue fear on the part of the public. The environmental health officer has been working with the Co-op and that office had expressed some concern that we should make sure that there is no potential for cross-contamination. That is why the warning went out for all ground beef products that were sold there. I will review the process and get back to the Member on the findings. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate the comments from the Minister but, again, I would like to point out that these were pre-packaged. They did not arrive here for packaging, so it wasn't processed here. That is where the panic sets in. As the Minister says, unnecessary panic is a concern, so let's not encourage that panic. Finally, would the Minister actually follow up on this potential for contacting the very people who purchased those products? Rather than panicking everybody, let's get right down to the people who purchased the products. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SANDY LEE: All of the information I have is that the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op is doing all things in a responsible manner and doing everything they can. I am sure that we could talk to them about the possibility of doing that. I will follow up on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 334-16(3):
PROCESS IN RESPONDING TO HEALTH
HAZARD ALERT REGARDING
CONTAMINATED MEAT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In answering questions that I heard earlier to the Minister of Health and Social Services, she said that part of this public health notice that went out just after one o'clock today said all ground beef products at the Yellowknife Co-op. She had mentioned the fact that there could be some cross-contamination on the processing but, Mr. Speaker, I am at a little bit of a loss because that ground beef product comes in pre-packaged packages. It is not mixed in with any of the other ground beef products, which would lead me to believe, Mr. Speaker, that the department did not call the retailer. If they called the retailer, they might have figured that out, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister just tell me when the department or when the office of the chief medical officer talked to the retailer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My information is that the public health officer works with the environmental health officer and the environmental health officer is working with the Co-op on this. I will get back to the Member on the details. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague from Weledeh, Mr. Bromley. We shouldn't be out there scaring the public and recalling all of this beef if that is not necessarily the case. If that is not the case, what this press release that the Department of Health and Social Services has sent out is going to scare the daylights of our public, it is just not true. That was pre-packaged beef. It was one product. Why don't we do our homework before we send out a press release, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I have already committed to Member Bromley that I will review this process and get more detailed information. Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important to note that the public health officer on their legislation have vast powers and authority and so does the environmental health officer. They make the calls and they make the decisions. For now, the focus is on protecting the public and making sure that all necessary precautions are taken. I will commit to review the process and see if there is any room for tightening the process. I think it is really important to know that we need to make sure that our independent officials do their job first and that their foremost and first priority is to protect the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 335-16(3):
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
FOR NORTHERN ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't quite get the answers I was looking for from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Student financial assistance for First Nations aboriginal students that want to obtain a doctor's degree have eligibility funding only for six years. Like in Alberta, some of them have 10 years' eligibility. I am looking at a way that the Minister can look at his department so that First Nations students in the Northwest Territories can also be eligible for up to 10 years of funding. That is what I'm looking for. Will the Minister look at that?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the program that we do offer through the grants and loans contribution to the students, one can look at it as up to six years plus the loans. When you look at the total over the course of the program delivery, it could be more than 10 years that we sponsor these students. I think that is the avenue that we need to look at. I think we have a generous package that we offer to northern students. We continue to improve in our areas where it was \$47,000 for loans, now we have upped it up to \$60,000. I think, Mr. Speaker, this is the area that we are quite unique compared to other jurisdictions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, for the aboriginal students who want to obtain their master's or doctor's degree, the eligibility is six years again. I talked to a student who is getting a master's degree. She is having a very difficult time. The Minister makes it sound so easy and makes it look so wonderful that they can do it, but this person is having a difficult time to get funding from this government...

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a question, Mr. Yakeleya?

MR. YAKELEYA: Will the Minister look at and review the eligibility in terms of the aboriginal students who want to obtain a degree?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we can certainly look at the individual case that the Member is referring to, what kind of struggles there are and challenges. We do have various avenues that we can sponsor students. As I highlighted, there are grants and loans and also through our

own income security area, they can qualify for certain subsidies as well. We can certainly look at it on a case-by-case basis if the Member can provide that information. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are probably other cases, so that is why I have asked it in a general context. Would the Minister look at the eligibility in terms of First Nations students who want to obtain a master's or doctor's degree? I can certainly give him specifics, and he certainly can look at it, but I am looking at it generally overall in terms of aboriginal students who believe that they have Treaty rights to education. Would the Minister look at the general overall program?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we do provide a general overall program, the subsidies to the students, whether they are aboriginal or non-aboriginal students who are Northerners, up to six years plus. Then they can take out the loan that was remiss as well when they come back to the North. They don't have to pay it back. We do have a generous package. I am not sure what else we can provide. Even the southern jurisdictions, in comparison our package is more attractive. It has more strength than other programs down south. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will challenge the department and the Minister to review this SFA in terms of the eligibility here. I believe that the southern part has more strength than the government here. I will ask that he would review and see where he can strengthen it in terms of this eligibility in terms of six years. Alberta has 10 years. I want to challenge the Minister to see if he would look at a general overview and come back with an analysis of what he found out.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, certainly we can provide more research with our neighbouring Alberta. We need to find out if it is all grants, because I am sure there is a loans portfolio as well. That is what we offer right now, grants and loans. It could be more than 10 years that we can offer students from the North to attend university down south to get their master's or PhD. We do provide that opportunity for them. We will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 8-16(3): DEHCHO PROCESS AND PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Written questions are for the Premier.

1. Please provide to me the number of meetings and phone conferences he has had with the Minister Chuck Strahl of the federal government, INAC.
2. Will the Premier advise how many times these discussions were in topic to the Dehcho and the Dehcho Process?
3. Can the Premier provide the negotiation position that our Cabinet has with respect to the Dehcho negotiations process?
4. Will the Premier report how many of the discussions were in relation to the Nahanni National Park boundaries?
5. Will the Premier advise how many of these discussions were around the EdeZhie Protected Areas Strategy?
6. Please advise how many times he has met with the Dehcho grand chief and with the Dehcho leadership.

Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We will review that written question. That may be information that the Minister would be able to answer right here in the House rather than written question. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 33-16(3): NWT HYDRO CORPORATION 2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation 2007-2008 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

TABLED DOCUMENT 34-16(3):
TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS
GOODS ACT REPORT FOR 2008

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Minister of Transportation's Report to the Legislative Assembly for 2008 on Transportation of Dangerous Goods, 1990. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motions

MOTION 17-16(3):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO MAY 27, 2009
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 March 12, 2009, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, May 27, 2009.

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to May 27, 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.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MOTION 18-16(3):
REMOVAL OF GST FOR CERTAIN GOODS
AND SERVICES NORTH OF 60
CARRIED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the cost of most goods and services in the Northwest Territories is increased by the addition of the federal Goods and Services Tax;

AND WHEREAS the Northern Residents Deduction only provides financial relief to Northerners at tax time and does not have an impact on the day-to-day cost to operate a home or business;

AND WHEREAS the costs of essential goods and services in the Northwest Territories are among the most expensive in the country;

AND WHEREAS the high costs of heating oil and electricity are of serious concern to all Northwest Territories residents;

AND WHEREAS the costs to transport goods both to the North and within the Territory are significant and ultimately add costs to goods and services bought by northern residents and businesses;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of the Yukon passed a motion on May 8, 2008, calling for the three northern territories to jointly lobby the federal government for the removal of the GST on home heating fuel, power costs and the cost of transportation;

AND WHEREAS the removal of the GST on certain essential goods and services would acknowledge the high cost of living experienced by Northwest Territories residents;

AND WHEREAS it is in Canada's interest in the name of national sovereignty that Canadians are living and working throughout our northern lands of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the estimated GST revenue collected from the NWT is \$44 million, and the estimated combined GST revenue from the three territories transferred to Canada is less than \$120 million;

AND WHEREAS one of the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly is to reduce the cost of living for Northwest Territories residents;

AND WHEREAS this Assembly supports pan-territorial efforts to address common issues affecting residents of all three northern territories;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that this Assembly signify its commitment to work with the governments of Nunavut and the Yukon Territory in

lobbying the federal government to remove the GST from the cost of home heating fuel, electricity and the cost of transporting goods to and within the Northwest Territories;

AND FURTHER, that a copy of this motion be provided to the federal Minister of Finance, Members of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon, and the governments of Nunavut and the Yukon Territory.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MOTION 19-16(3):

PRESENTATION OF FINAL REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 35 of the Official Languages Act requires the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly designated or established by it to review the provisions and operation of the Official Languages Act;

AND WHEREAS this Assembly has adopted Motion 1-16(2), which formally referred the review of the provisions and operation of the Official Languages Act required by Section 35 of that act to the Standing Committee on Government Operations;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Government Operations presented its Interim Report on the Review of the Official Languages Act, 2008-2009 to this House on October 16, 2008;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Government Operations has recently concluded its review of the Official Languages Act and wishes to present its findings and recommendations in the form of a final report to this House at the earliest opportunity;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that notwithstanding Motion 1-16(2), the Standing Committee on Government Operations shall table a final report on its review of the Official Languages Act during the May/June 2009 sitting of the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER, that the Standing Committee on Government Operations be authorized to share its findings and recommendations with language groups and affected stakeholders in advance of their presentation in this House in the interests of public accountability and transparency.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MOTION 20-16(3):
APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER
OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Subsection 15(1) of the Official Languages Act permits the appointment of a Languages Commissioner by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, after the approval of the appointment by resolution of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly considers the appointment of a Languages Commissioner essential for ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the Official Languages Act;

AND WHEREAS the term of the Languages Commissioner has expired;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that the appointment of a Languages Commissioner should now be made;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that pursuant to Section 15 of the Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories, Sarah Jerome of Inuvik be appointed as Languages Commissioner.

AND FURTHER, that the appointment be effective May 11, 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 16:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2009-2010

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 16:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2009-2010

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2009-2010, has had second reading.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy; and Committee Report 4-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have before us for consideration Tabled Document 7-16(3) and Committee 4-16(3). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, the wish of the committee is to deal with the Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Let's take a short break first.

---SHORT RECESS

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. I'd like to Call Committee of the Whole back to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. A motion is on the floor to report progress. It's non-negotiable...

---Laughter

...non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 4-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. There is a motion on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 16:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2009-2010

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010.

---Carried

Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Anthony W.J. Whitford is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills.

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Tony Whitford): Please be seated. [English translation not provided.]

Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker and Members of our Legislative Assembly, as most of you know, I enjoy visiting the people of our many communities. I will use every opportunity to visit your constituencies and to accept as many invitations as possible that may be extended by the honourable Members of this House. For example, I have been invited to attend the Wood Buffalo Frolics in Fort Smith this weekend and I leave tomorrow for that.

Later this month, I plan to visit most of the schools in the Sahtu when I make a tour of the region by ice road; wind and weather permitting, of course.

I wish each Member of this House safe travels and a busy, productive time as you continue to work for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act
- Bill 3, International Interests in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act

- Bill 4, Public Library Act
- Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act
- Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
- Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2008-2009
- Bill 9, Northern Employees Benefits Services Pension Plan Protection Act
- Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010

Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Mahsi cho. Koana.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: You may be seated. Colleagues, before we adjourn today I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words.

This has been a lengthy session, beginning in early February during the dark of winter and continuing as the season changed and we head towards spring. Spring may arrive a bit later than it does in the rest of the country, but it is a beautiful time and appreciated even more after such a long wait. We are an optimistic lot, believing that in spite of the temperatures this week, that spring is just around the corner.

As we leave today, I know that Members will be travelling back to their families and communities, and that Cabinet will continue the work started during this budget session and that committees will continue to meet and travel throughout the Territory.

May I suggest, colleagues, that you take some time to enjoy this season of renewal as we rush into our commitments.

I would also like to remind you of the 2009 Youth Parliament taking place on April 20th to the 24th. I encourage any Members who are able, to come out and participate. I never fail to be impressed by the enthusiastic and bright, young people I see taking part in this worthwhile program.

I would also like to encourage any young people in Grade 9 or 10 to participate. It is a wonderful and unique opportunity to learn about consensus government, to learn more about government processes and to meet youth from all parts of the Northwest Territories. I am looking forward to meeting the 2009 Youth Parliamentarians.

I would like to thank all the Pages who have helped us in the House during this sitting, and to extend

the appreciation of the Assembly for the important role that they play.

With that, Members, I wish you safe travels as you continue your work, and look forward to returning to this Chamber in May.

Mr. Clerk, item 23, orders of the day. Madam Clerk.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for day 29, Wednesday, May 27, 2009, at 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 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
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy

- Committee Report 4-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election

21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until May 27, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

