



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Day 1

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	4555
OPENING ADDRESS	4555
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	4556
1-16(5) – NWT at the Vancouver 2010 Games (Roland)	4556
2-16(5) – Status of Work on Official Languages (Lafferty)	4557
3-16(5) – Diversity in the Government of the Northwest Territories (B. McLeod)	4557
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	4558
Passing of Billy Enzoe (Beaulieu)	4558
Psychiatric Assessment Capacity at North Slave Correctional Centre (Ramsay)	4559
Supports for Family Members that Care for Young Relatives (Groenewegen)	4559
15 th Annual Snow King Festival (Bromley)	4560
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Program (Abernethy)	4560
Impact of High Power Rates on Business Ventures (Menicoche)	4561
Management of Health Care Program Funding (Hawkins)	4561
Reintegration of Injured or Laid-off Workers (Bisaro)	4562
Tribute to Mothers of the Northwest Territories (Yakeleya)	4562
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	4563
ORAL QUESTIONS	4563
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	4574
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	4574
NOTICES OF MOTION	4575
1-16(5) – Elimination of Handling Fees for the Collection of Milk Containers under the NWT Beverage Container Program (Bromley)	4575
2-16(5) – Adult Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (Abernethy)	4575
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	4575
Bill 1 – An Act to Amend the Veterinary Profession Act	4575
Bill 2 – An Act to Amend the Dental Auxiliaries Act	4575
Bill 3 – Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010	4575
Bill 4 – An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act	4575
Bill 5 – Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Act	4575

ORDERS OF THE DAY4576

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 1, 2010****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, 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 1:38 p.m.

Prayer

REVEREND PETER CHYNOWETH: Great Spirit God, we pray that as the Members begin the work of this day and the work of this session, that your Spirit will guide them in the way they speak with each other, in the way they go about the tasks and responsibilities that have been placed before them and that you will continually remind them of why they are here and who they serve in the responsibilities with which they have been entrusted.

May all of us keep in mind respect for the people of this land, and respect for the land itself, that peace, justice, dignity, hope and freedom may guide the conversations and decisions that occur.

Keep us in your loving care and keep before us the challenge to serve with integrity and humility. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Anthony W.J. Whitford, is prepared to enter the Chamber to open the Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

Opening Address

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Tony Whitford): Monsieur le president, messieurs et mesdames les deputes, mesdames et messieurs, et amis.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, as you all know, I enjoy visiting the people in our 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.

Recently I was invited to Inuvik to help present Long Service Awards to staff and teachers at the Beaufort-Delta Education Council. It was an honour to help recognize and show appreciation for the dedicated service of 29 staff members who work so hard on behalf of their students and communities across the Beaufort-Delta.

While I was in the Delta, I drove the ice road to Tuk and paid a visit to Mangilaluk School where I was welcomed into two classrooms to read a story to the children, a story that I had written, by the way.

The Grade 9 students in another class were eager for me to watch their impromptu display of drum dancing, which was led by their teacher. This was an unexpected pleasure.

I also had time to drive to Aklavik where I took part in a very special luncheon with the elders and staff at the Joe Greenland Centre.

I felt very privileged to help two residents celebrate their birthdays: Isaac Kunnizzi turned 87 on February 21st and Mary Kendi will turn 95 on March 4th.

The warmth and hospitality shown to me by Principal Reardon, his staff and the students at Mangilaluk School, by the staff and residents at the Joe Greenland Centre and by the Beaufort-Delta Education Council reminds me again of how much I enjoy visiting our communities and meeting the people.

Later this week I will travel to Grande Prairie to attend the start of the Arctic Winter Games. I will be very proud to join others in representing the Northwest Territories and cheering on our athletes.

Then I will be in Vancouver to participate in the annual conference of Lieutenant Governors and Commissioners with the Her Excellency, the Governor General.

Members, as you know, my current term as Commissioner is scheduled to end before this House meets again in the spring. This could very well be the last time I will appear in this Chamber as your Commissioner. I want to tell you and all of the people of the Northwest Territories, what a great honour and a great pleasure it has been to serve in this capacity. I will leave it to others to assess my performance as this great Territory's 15th Commissioner. I take the greatest satisfaction in reporting to you, however, and that I have met my goals in visiting each of our 33 wonderful communities as Commissioner. Some I have visited many times. While there are still many things I would like to accomplish as Commissioner, I am singularly proud of having fulfilled that goal. Our communities are the heartbeat of this land that we

call home. It is where the real impact of the real decisions that you make here are felt there. We must never lose sight of them as we do our work.

I want to wish each of you, every one of you the wisdom, the foresight and the modesty you need to fulfill your important duties during this upcoming session and the remainder of your term in office. You are the custodians of this made-in-the-North system of consensus government. I know you will do everything in your power to leave it as strong as you found it.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I declare open the Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Merci beaucoup, mahsi cho.

---Applause

Before I leave, as I like to say, mahsi cho.

---Laughter

Speaker's Opening Remarks

MR. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, colleagues. I would like to extend my thanks, on behalf of all Members, to the Honourable Anthony W.J. Whitford, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, for opening this Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly, and to Mr. Shad Turner and Reverend Peter Chynoweth, of the Yellowknife United Church, for assisting us today. The appreciation of the House is also extended to our guests and visitors who have joined us in the gallery.

We are continuing the year with much work to do and very busy schedules. I wish to commend all Members for their long hours and hard work in everything we have accomplished to date. I know that there is much work yet to be done and I am confident that all Members are up to the challenges that lie ahead.

On behalf of all Members, I want to congratulate all of the Canadian athletes for everything they have accomplished at the recently concluded Olympic Games in Vancouver, B.C.

---Applause

They have made us all proud to be Canadian.

As we begin this Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly, I wish to remind all Members of your rules governing question period and encourage you to keep your questions short and to the point, and the same goes for the answers. Thank you, colleagues.

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 1-16(5): NWT AT THE VANCOUVER 2010 GAMES

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canadians and NWT residents will catch our breath this week before renewing our nationwide Olympic celebration with the opening of the Paralympic Games on March 12th.

These games are not just Vancouver's games, but Canada's games. They are, and have been, a celebration of the Olympic ideals and a showcase of Canada's diversity and cultural richness in front of a global audience.

As a proud contributing partner to these games, I would like to take the opportunity today to reflect on the NWT's presence and participation at these games and, in doing so, to recognize in our success the many individuals who have come together to tell our story to the world.

Mr. Speaker, our government had a vision to use the unique Olympic opportunity to teach visitors to the games about Canada's North and our great Territory. We wanted all Canadians and the world to know that the Northwest Territories is a vast and dynamic region with immense economic potential, diverse cultures, world-class art and fine crafts, unique tourism opportunities, and that the NWT is also a great place to live.

We wanted to encourage healthy choices among our people and provide the opportunity for our youth to learn and grow from being a part of this once-in-a-lifetime event.

It has been said that the Vancouver 2010 Games are Canada's time to shine. The Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, has shone brighter than most.

We sent dozens of representative NWT residents to the games as traditional games athletes, as performing artists, as visual artists, and as youth ambassadors. These NWT delegates not only represented our Territory to the world, they also broadened their own horizons.

Our Youth Ambassadors were provided an invaluable opportunity for leadership development. Our visual and performing artists and our traditional games athletes performed in front of larger audiences than most have ever seen before. All were truly great ambassadors for the NWT.

NWT Day was a culmination of our participation and investment in the 2010 Winter Games. That night the Victory Celebration at B.C. Place featured a showcase of the best of NWT culture, artistry, talent, and performance, all woven together in a performance that blended both the traditional and contemporary talents of our Territory.

The Right to Dream program, with its focus on healthy choices and lifestyles here within the NWT, was also an important part of our celebration and participation in the 2010 Winter Games. Events across the NWT have been taking place, from a hockey tournament in Fort Smith to the mini-Olympics held at the Deh Gah School in Fort Providence.

And it isn't over yet. The NWT will also be present at the Paralympic Games that are set to start later this month. Our Youth Ambassadors and our traditional games athletes will be there to continue to promote the Northwest Territories. Canada's Northern House will remain open into April.

I encourage all of us who have witnessed Canada's and the NWT's success at these Olympic and Paralympic Games, to use that energy and spirit to continue to grow personally and to make a difference in their communities and Territory.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games gave us an unparalleled chance to demonstrate to the world why the NWT is a great place to live, invest in, and work. I believe we have capitalized on this opportunity and want to thank all those who have made this such a success.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 2-16(5):
STATUS OF WORK ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, as the government lead on the work to revitalize, enhance, and support the Northwest Territories official languages, continues to actively engage with language communities in the preparation of the Official Languages Strategy to be tabled this fall.

We are in the midst of planning a major Aboriginal Languages Symposium March 30th to April 1st in Yellowknife to bring together government, aboriginal language communities and other stakeholders to discuss the overarching principles of an Aboriginal Languages Strategy, how aboriginal language should be promoted, and how aboriginal language communities can be supported to increase the day-to-day use of our official languages.

To assist us in planning the symposium we have assembled a volunteer working group made up of the members from the language communities. This group is directing our work by offering advice and guidance on program content and logistical details. I would like to thank the working group for their invaluable assistance in planning the symposium, including: William Firth, Andy Norwegian, Berna Landry, Lucy Lafferty, Mary Rose Sundberg, Jane

Modeste, Cathy Cockney, Emily Kudlak, Annie Boucher, Vance Sanderson and Sabet Biscaye.

We would also like to thank the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, Mr. Kevin Menicoche, for agreeing to co-chair the Aboriginal Languages Symposium. It is clear that the work on official languages is as vital to standing committee members as it is to this government. We would like the Official Languages Strategy to be the work reflective of the commitment and passion of this entire Assembly, so Mr. Menicoche's participation is both important and welcomed.

The information we learn from the Aboriginal Languages Symposium will form the foundation of work with each individual language community over the coming months. It is our plan to offer as much assistance as the committee requires on the formation of their draft plans and actions. This work will take some time. Languages do not improve overnight but require consistent and committed effort on everyone's part: the language community, the GNWT and the federal government.

The theme of the Aboriginal Languages Symposium decided by the working group is: Languages - A Shared Responsibility. This is entirely consistent with our government's language regime approach and we are very encouraged by the way our chosen approach has been enthusiastically embraced by our partners.

In terms of our work on the French language, Mr. Speaker, we are currently in the process of gaining clarification of our funding responsibilities prior to moving forward towards a strategy and an implementation plan. We are seeking this through the courts as clarification of the past decisions. We are hopeful to have this clarification in the near future and to continue our work with the French language community in a cooperative and committed way.

Mr. Speaker, many Members sitting here today speak their language well and others are still learning. I challenge those Members who are not fluent in their language to learn a few words and phrases every day and use them as much as possible. If everyone, not just Members of this House, commits to doing this, we look forward to hearing more and more of our people and their language on a day-to-day basis. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 3-16(5):
DIVERSITY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to provide Members with an update on initiatives

that have been launched under 20/20: A Brilliant North that focus on diversity in the public service of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The government is committed to increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the public service and creating an inclusive workplace open to all Northerners. Human Resources staff met with the director of the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities in January to share our work plan on employability and to seek advice on our proposed direction and planned activities.

The Government of the Northwest Territories Advisory Committee on Employability is currently being established and will be up and running later this month. The committee will include the participation of non-government organizations that focus on disabilities. The committee will advise on methods to promote, support and increase representation of persons with disabilities, while fostering a spirit of inclusion and awareness among Government of the Northwest Territories' employees.

As we move this important work forward, the Department of Human Resources will continue to work collaboratively with the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities and other non-government organizations.

In October 2009, focus group sessions with employees and participants from non-government organizations were held in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik. These sessions helped identify potential barriers to increasing representation of persons with disabilities to assist in the development of a plan that will be used to attract and retain disabled employees.

Information encouraging resident disabled candidates to identify any accommodations they may require during the hiring process will be added to the government's employment opportunities web page in the next couple of days. Reducing or eliminating barriers in the hiring process is one of many ways to create diversity.

Mr. Speaker, sensitivity training sessions for Government of the Northwest Territories' staff is being piloted next month. If the program is a success, we will aim to provide future sessions for Government of the Northwest Territories' employees across the Northwest Territories.

Sensitivity training gives participants a greater understanding of the workforce that is represented by persons with disabilities and an understanding of bias, beliefs and assumptions about persons with disabilities and their employability.

Finally, another exciting initiative is the development of an overall Government of the Northwest Territories Recruitment Strategy that, in keeping with our commitment to diversity, will include the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

As with other diversity initiatives, working with non-government organizations is key in the development of this strategy.

Mr. Speaker, 2010 is an exciting year as we reinvest in the public service and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners in achieving diversity in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PASSING OF BILLY ENZOE

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

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about a respected elder who passed away on February 26, 2010. Billy Enzoe is a good friend to all the residents of Lutselk'e. Billy was born on January 10, 1930, and lived off the land. He hunted and trapped throughout his years, but his greatest passion was fishing. Billy was well known for his fishing skills and it was not uncommon for Billy to put all his children in his boat and go to his fish camp.

Billy lost both his parents at a very young age. This contributed greatly to the Billy Enzoe many people in Lutselk'e knew, loved and respected. He loved his family very much and did what he could to instill strong values, education, family and spirituality within them. However, the most important value he believed in was respecting the land, living off the land and using the land.

As a young man, Billy travelled all over working in many fishing camps throughout the East Arm. Billy was predeceased by his wife Elizabeth Liza Enzoe, his parents, Leon Enzoe and Coraline Wedzin, his brothers and sisters, Liza Casaway, Helen Marlowe, Marie Casaway, Elizabeth and Joseph. He is survived by his children Terri, Pete, Rosie, Dora, Jerry, Annette, Patrick, Gabe, Gloria, Delphine and Jessica, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I spoke with Billy was at Maurice Lockhart's 99th birthday party. I sat down with him and Billy told me he wasn't well. He said he had no fear of dying. He said he raised his children to the best of his abilities and prepared them for life ahead. He said he had comfort in knowing that all his children were ready to make their lives without him. He said he always spoke to his children about the importance of family.

Mr. Speaker, Billy will be sorely missed by his family and by all the residents of Lutselk'e, but his

family should take comfort in knowing that he looked forward to joining his wife, Eliza. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT CAPACITY AT
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to discuss an issue I have raised previously in this House, and that's how the Department of Justice, specifically corrections, is short-changing the rehabilitation and services provided to inmates at North Slave Correctional Centre.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago there were two clinical psychologists employed at North Slave Correctional Centre. Today, to my knowledge, there is none. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, we are failing to get assessments done and work with inmates to ensure proper rehabilitation is done so inmates can transition back into society.

I'm deeply concerned that recently a convicted sex offender waited 11 months for a psychiatric assessment. How is this even possible, Mr. Speaker? Corrections, the Department of Justice and the Minister should be embarrassed for themselves. When the individual's lawyer is quoted in an article in last week's newspaper saying it will take some time, especially because it seems there is no system in place, and not only are lawyers picking up on the lack of proper and timely psychiatric assessments, the Crown is also very concerned about the situation causing an individual to be, as they call it, "institutionalized" because they can't get access to the required assessments.

Mr. Speaker, this is completely unacceptable. I am very aware of what happened in the removal of one of the former psychologists at North Slave Correctional Centre and I want to know why we have not made any progress in bringing in a clinical psychologist to that centre. How many more inmates sit in remand and are awaiting psychiatric assessments? Mr. Speaker, to me, this appears to be a gaping hole in the services that our largest corrections facility, North Slave Correctional Centre, has to offer inmates.

After the way we treated the former psychologist at the centre, maybe it's little wonder why the Department of Justice hasn't got a full-time psychologist at the North Slave Correctional Centre and no -- I repeat, no, Mr. Speaker -- day-to-day services of a clinical psychologist at the facility, which, Mr. Speaker, I think is completely absurd. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORTS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS THAT
CARE FOR YOUNG RELATIVES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, this weekend, I was reminded by a constituent of a situation which exists in the Northwest Territories and I am going to attempt to describe that today, Mr. Speaker.

When a family member observes a child that is in some form of risk or potentially in harm's way, it is a natural affection of a family member that would cause that person, that parent, that adult to reach out to that child to remove them from that situation or at least provide some kind of respite from that home to care for that child. This happens with aunties, grandparents, cousins. All kinds of people in the North see a child, they know there's a situation in the home that is unhealthy or puts the child at risk. The parent may only need temporary relief from a situation. It may only need some family help.

Here is the problem with the policies of our government the way they are set up: if a family member moves in to intervene to help a situation, there is no support for them. I have heard this story told to me over and over again. Because they are a relative, because it did not go through the courts, because it was not a formal home study and a foster placement for that child, then there is no support for that child. It's not fair to the caregiver and it's not fair to the child, because even if this family were to give this child a very stable, nurturing, safe home environment, the fact is that it still costs money to care for another child that is not a member of your family. This takes financial resources, particularly sometimes as the child grows older and wants to begin to participate in sporting activities and a myriad of other things.

My question today for the Minister of Health and Social Services will be: why does it have to be all or nothing? Why can we not recognize the good intentions of family members who want to help a child?

The Standing Committee on Social Programs will be going on the road very shortly with a review of the Child and Family Services Act. I am not a part of that committee but I wish them well and I encourage people who know of these kinds of situations to come out and speak to these committee members. They most definitely want to hear your stories and hear from you so that our legislation reflects the needs of the people it's meant to care for.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
15TH ANNUAL SNOW KING FESTIVAL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I joined other MLAs on Yellowknife Bay last night to take in the dazzling display of fireworks kicking off the 15th Annual Snow King Festival. What an experience and what an event! Literally thousands of people turned out under the northern lights and full moon to celebrate life in our great northern home.

Families and volunteers crowded the ice. Constituents from all over Weledeh, tourists, and more, whooped it up and shared in the community spirit that has built the festival into the biggest single winter celebration in the NWT and the longest running snow castle event in the world.

The fireworks display unleashes a month of musical performance, film, sports, children's theatre, art exhibits and poetry readings. There will probably even be a few more weddings in the King's castle. All healthy outdoor events for residents and visitors alike.

I visited with Jack Panayi, an excited 10-year-old doing a Grade 4 class project on the Snow King Festival. I talked to a visiting physician from Victoria, who couldn't stop laughing in amazement at the spectacular display. As I walked home through the dark I glimpsed Japanese tourists checking their digital photos on their cell phones as they slowly made their way through the snow.

Like all the best things in the North, the Snow King Festival is built on one person's dream, the commitment of volunteers, a huge sense of fun, and a little help from governments, including this government which provided some support funding under the SEED program. Added to this volunteer and funding energy is the huge contribution of the business community. Donations in cash, services, equipment and supplies are given with incredible generosity by businesses from the largest mines to the smallest family enterprises. Their generosity is enormous and has grown year over year.

I want to give special recognition to our local royalty for making it all happen. His Highness Tony Foliot took an idea and made it a crowning success. The royal family and retinue include: Snowbelle, Elsbeth Fielding; Sir Shiverin' Sam, Scott Mitchell; Joe Snow, Ryan McCord; Mr. Freeze, Stephan Folkers; Dug Sum Snow, Douglas Mitchell; The Avalanche Kid, Joe Maillet; Snow Bank Frank, Regan Fielding; and Virtual Snowman, Shane Keller. They are joined by more than 60 volunteers plus entertainers each doing their part for all of our enjoyment.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. BROMLEY: My questions will be very short. I invite you to look at www.snowking.ca for a complete list of all the events over the coming months and I extend an invitation from the king and his intrepid crew to all MLAs, and particularly to the staff of ITI, to drop by for a visit and some fun. It brings a whole new level of appreciation for this event.

Congratulations to the Snow King, the royal family, volunteers, businesses, governments and all participants who make this an event to look forward to every year.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY
HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to follow up on my colleague Wendy Bisaro's Member's statement from last Friday on the changes to the Supplemental Health Benefits Program. For the record, I completely agree with Ms. Bisaro. I, too, find the document released by the Department of Health and Social Services leading. It's clear that the Minister has a preferred course of action on the changes to the program and has released information that will ensure that the department gets what the department wants.

I encourage the Minister to remember the motion that was passed in this House. The motion specifically moved that "The department conduct comprehensive consultations with Northerners about ways to improve the Supplementary Health Benefits Program and services offered by the department, including whether or not means testing should determine eligibility; and further, ensure that thorough research into the programs complete cost and full implications is undertaken and presented to Northerners including: the cost to the NWT of families moving south, and increased costs on the health care system resulting from more people accessing services within hospitals." This seems pretty clear to me and yet it's crystal clear that this was completely ignored by the Minister.

During the discussions concerning the motion, Members were very clear that the consultation with stakeholders was critical and that they must be engaged from the beginning of the process so that they could help identify alternative delivery methods, identify alternative areas requiring research and analysis, and identify potential areas of concern and opportunity. Yes, the department did meet with some stakeholders, but based on my discussions with some of them, they weren't asked to engage to this degree. Rather, they were invited to an information session where the department

outlined what they were going to research and what the process would be after that. This is completely inconsistent with the process the Minister committed to time and time again.

For example, on February 9, 2009, the Minister said, according to the unedited Hansard, that "We are taking it back and putting it under full review." On the same day the Minister went further and stated that "we are going to review it from the top to bottom and we pledge that we have a good financial analysis to bring them back. I'm committed to working with the stakeholders and the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the process and the substance of this review."

This seems inconsistent with what's happening here today. As such, I'll be asking the Minister some questions on this topic later today in hopes of gaining some understanding on how her department has strayed so far from the intent of the motion passed last year.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACT OF HIGH POWER RATES ON BUSINESS VENTURES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: [English translation not provided.]

Last week I received an e-mail indicating that a gas station and convenience grocery store in Fort Simpson is closing. This business has been in operation for a long time and is a local landmark. It provides a service to Fort Simpson residents that will be missed.

The business employed eight to 10 people and that is a lot of jobs to lose in a relatively small community. The business is closing because the owners cannot pay off their debts to the NWT Power Corporation. Since September 1st they have paid back \$50,000 but still owe more. With the large payments they are making to the NWT Power Corporation, they are not able to purchase inventory to sell in their store or to keep their operation running.

I am concerned about two issues here. First, I wonder how a business operation could get into such a debt with the NWT Power Corporation. The owners appear to have paid back a large chunk of the money. It seems they have made every effort as otherwise their electricity would have been cut off. However, in making the payments, they are not able to keep the business afloat. Why didn't the NWT Power Corporation work out a strategy and a repayment structure that's affordable to the owner?

That leads to the second issue I'm concerned about. Perhaps it doesn't take very long to rack up huge debts for electricity. I have heard of owners in buildings and businesses who spend 30 to 40

percent of their operating costs on electricity. It's obvious that expensive power is the real reason behind this Fort Simpson business collapse. It is all the more reason to change our rate structure and seek a level playing field for all purchasers of electricity.

It is sad that we had such a business loss in Fort Simpson. I am in support of a review of this situation so that we can learn from this to help other businesses stay in business.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue I'm going to raise today is the management of health care dollars in our system. Recently I raised an issue with the way the Department of Health and Social Services is not billing the appropriate customers and that's the insurance companies. I raise the issue particularly about the fact that insurance companies are getting away with what I would define as a scandal. They are allowing the public health care dollars to pay for services that their clients are already paying for. In other words, we're subsidizing the insurance companies. This applies to federal employees in many cases. Again, the issue is that people, when they show up at the hospitals or health care system, aren't asked if they are covered by somebody else, which they're paying for.

I've recently been told by some doctors that they have been told they have to go through their individual files for their patients and put sticky notes on the individual case files to make sure they are carried forward in electronic form when they move to the new health care clinic. They look at me and go, what's wrong with the management of health care dollars? Once again it seems confusing. Why not just hire a summer student to scan the whole file? In other words, their point to me was why are you getting a doctor to look at a file and putting it into the electronic system when you can hire a summer student at a fraction of the price. Poor management of health dollars.

I've had a number of constituents come to me about our health care agreement with Nunavut. Many times our system will offer priority to the Nunavut system over our NWT citizens. We have to discuss the issue of the fact that we don't bill properly for them. More dollars being left on the table.

How much more does this government have to go in the red ink before we start to realize that

management of health dollars needs to be taken very seriously?

Recently the Minister released her issue and direction on health care benefits, but I'm not convinced that the management of health care is taking their stewardship as seriously as possible. Before we start chipping away at supplementary health benefits, we have to take a serious look at how we're managing our own books. These few examples that I've provided should be telling people we need to go back to the books and start thinking about how we're managing our health care dollars. I'll have questions for the Minister later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REINTEGRATION OF INJURED OR LAID-OFF WORKERS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members will know that the NWT recently observed Mental Health Week. There should be no debate because it is well documented and well known that a person out of work is subject to many negative forces. Injured or laid-off workers are without income and often without purpose. They have to deal with financial stress, loss of self-esteem and feelings of aloneness, any and all of which cause a downturn in an individual's mental health. Such circumstances lead to mental distress for the worker and, at its worst, depression or other mental illness. That's why it's imperative that employers have in place systems or policies to provide the help that is so necessary to get injured or ill workers back to their job as soon as possible to ensure that their lost work time is as short as the employer can make it.

For the GNWT and, indeed, all employers, the accommodation and reintegration of workers should be, and must be, foremost in our human resources culture and in our actions as an employer. It is of primary importance. But it's not enough to have policies and procedures in place. We have to live those policies and the systems must actually work in practice. Both the employer, GNWT HR in our case, and the employees have to understand and implement these policies. Does the GNWT as an employer spend enough time and energy educating our staff in this area? I think not.

Mr. Speaker, our staff need the tools for the job. Training is required for all HR staffing officers to ensure they know the meaning of the phrase "duty to accommodate;" that they know how to action that duty and get people back to work; that they're aware of appropriate and available resources to properly assess workers who want to return to work; that they adequately accommodate them to return to work in a speedy manner. We need a

corporate HR culture that helps employees, not hinders them.

Training is required for workers as well. They have to be educated about the GNWT policies and procedures in regard to lost work time. They need to know what to do when they've been off the job; what to ask for and from whom so they can coordinate with the department and expedite their return to work. The quicker we get people back to work, the less stress they will undergo. Reduce stress and we reduce the chances our workers' health will deteriorate; and better health in our work force means a better, more productive society.

Mr. Speaker, as an employer, we are duty bound to get our injured people back to work in a timely manner. We can only consider ourselves a successful employer if we achieve that objective. I will have questions for the Minister of Human Resources at a later time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRIBUTE TO MOTHERS OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is a beautiful day. Throughout the North many people are busy doing their things, either with family, with their work or in their community. Mr. Speaker, our elders tell us to pray each morning for what we want to accomplish in life or for other people. Mr. Speaker, our elders say without the Creator in our life and not putting God first, things become very hard for us.

Mr. Speaker, these are very important words to us; more importantly, hard to live up to at times every day. However, it is told to us for a reason, Mr. Speaker. I think sometimes it means to slow down for a bit, reflect on some important things in our life, some important people in our life; people like our grandparents, like our uncles, our aunts, our children, our brothers and sisters, our nieces, our teachers, who, Mr. Speaker, at times, are either our father or our mother.

Today I'd like to reflect on our teachers as our mother. Today we think and pray for our mothers for all the hard work they put in our lives, for all the love they give us over the years, and for all the dedication and the support they've given to us as children as we are growing up. Truly, Mr. Speaker, in God's mind and God's wisdom, God gave us somebody to replace him in our lives to help us. They were considered pillars in our family, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say this because back in my community, my regions, there are mothers there that are being called to go back to heaven and that this government here sometimes needs to look at how

we do our programs and services to support mothers in our communities, in our region, and that today we are glad for these special people in our lives.

I want to honour all the mothers in the Northwest Territories, people's mothers in the Sahtu region, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the multitalented Shad Turner, who sang O Canada. He is also a senior advisor with the Department of ITI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Shad Turner, resident of Weledeh, and express how much I appreciated that beautiful rendition of O Canada, an original version, at least to me. I would also like to recognize Pages Jordan Shortt and Johanna Stewart for the great work they've been doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Al Shortt, one of the YK No. 1 School trustees. He's in the gallery today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1-16(5): MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I was raising issue with what I define as a poor usage of health care dollars, and I certainly hope it's not a fact that people don't care about the usage of health care dollars. But, Mr. Speaker, the management and the organization of these health care dollars seems to be a bit of a challenging question here.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what has she done from the point of view of the context of waste busters to ensure that we're getting the best value for our health care dollars before we start implementing

changes to supplementary health benefits. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I answer his question I need to correct some of the things that he stated. First, that somehow through private insurers the government can charge any companies for providing core service. In Canada, the Canadian government and the provincial and territorial governments are responsible for core services and we couldn't recoup that from a private insurance company. Any private insurance company that offers benefits will be supplementary to the core service.

Secondly, that Nunavut residents have a prior service. That is misleading, Mr. Speaker. All the governments across the country -- and I'm not saying intently, I just want to correct the facts -- all provinces and territories have an agreement with each other that we treat other provinces. That's part of the Canada Health Act; it speaks to portability and that if somebody from Nunavut walks in, we will take care of them. We get great service from Alberta, but I don't think we would state that NWT residents would get better service than Alberta. It is part of co-management of health care service and to state that we're using our money to give prior service to Nunavut would not be correct.

Thirdly, supplementary health benefit changes are now there as a cost-cutting issue. It's not there to make up money that we are losing from providing services to Nunavut or insurance. That is completely incorrect. Supplementary health benefits are being reviewed not to reduce the package. We are keeping all the benefits that are there, which is more generous than any other parts of Canada, but that we are looking at streamlining the access, which is very important, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, streamlining access sounds like a reduction of services to me. I'm not sure where the Minister...how she understands it that way.

Mr. Speaker, when I referred to Nunavut services as a priority, we send our team professionals here, whether they're physio or speech, to places in Nunavut and that makes their clients more of a priority when we have people here not getting full services. On top of that, it's a billing issue.

But, Mr. Speaker, my question, as stated before, and I'll ask it this way: Mr. Speaker, again, we'll have a difference of opinion on reduced services or money, but the fact is, supplementary health benefits has been articulated over and over and over. Again, we can't afford to keep paying that. So what work has been done by the Minister of Health and Social Services and her staff to find all the

wasted money that we're spending on the issues I've raised today, Mr. Speaker?

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what he means by wasted money. Our government makes the investment of \$326 million on our health care services, the services that our people need. People on the ground are working 24/7 to deliver the care that people need. Special services that we provide to Nunavut, those specialists work on contract with the GNWT and sometimes they have contracts with Nunavut. So I don't think, you know, it doesn't help the debate to mix up apples and oranges and throw out statements saying that we are wasting money.

With respect to supplementary health benefits, I believe that the government has put out the public discussion paper, we are engaging the public widely, and I am interested in hearing from the public as to how we could go forward. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, we charge WCB for cost and injuries, so why don't we consider that? Mr. Speaker, we send people out to Nunavut and don't get paid for the contracts. We know that for a fact. Mr. Speaker, we spend at least \$200 a minute in health care in our Northwest Territories, and the reality is...

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

MR. HAWKINS: The reality is we're making doctors manage. Why aren't we looking at those issues to save money in our system rather than cutting away at supplementary health benefits?

HON. SANDY LEE: We bill for the services that we provide to Nunavut. Once again, supplementary health benefit discussions are not about cutting services in supplementary. We continue to and will have one of the best, if not the best, Supplementary Health Benefits Program anywhere in the country. We will continue to do that. The way the rules are written are quite outdated and the user profile shows that we need to look at other considerations such as affordability to pay, as one of the factors in determining who accesses this very generous and important program that we offer.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Minister is completely incorrect in us being able to bill insurance companies for services that they are rightly responsible for. I'd like to hear the Minister on how she defines reduction of services for supplementary health benefits is not considered cutting services.

HON. SANDY LEE: It is, once again, incorrect for the Member to say that we do not bill private insurance. I just said that there are some things that the government has to provide that nobody else

would pay. So you wouldn't bill somebody for something that they wouldn't be paying in the first place.

Supplementary health and entire health and social services sustainability is very important. As I've stated before, the Government of Ontario projects that they are going to be spending half of their entire budget on the health and social services system. We as Canadian people and NWT residents need to look at what we are doing with our program. I want to say that we are doing really well in the Northwest Territories. We're not talking about reducing services; we're talking about examining what we do and what we can do better. Foundation for Change is an action plan and supplementary health discussion is part of the discussion that we're going to have with the people.

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

QUESTION 2-16(5):

PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT CAPACITY AT NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice and it goes back to my Member's statement where I was talking about the need for a clinical psychologist at our largest correctional facility in the Territory, the North Slave Correctional Centre, which happens to be located in my riding.

It doesn't take long to understand that if you do not have the required services of a clinical psychologist on staff at that centre, eventually what that is going to do is compromise public safety. I'd like to ask the Minister today why we do not have a day-to-day clinical psychologist on staff at North Slave Correctional Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We do have contacts with the Alberta Hospital when it comes to assessments. Not only that, we do have a staff on hand that is a counsellor training to be a psychologist in that respect within a year. Once that individual obtains credentials, that individual will fulfill that position. It's a current position that we have. We are making progress in this line of work. It has been taking some time, but we wanted to find the right individual with the right credentials to fulfill the position. We are moving forward on this.

MR. RAMSAY: In order to be a clinical psychologist you've got to spend seven to eight years in university. I don't know how the Minister can suggest that a staff person out there could get the requisite training in a year to perform those types of duties. That makes absolutely no sense. I'd

like to ask the Minister, if they're making progress, why did it take 11 months for this recent sex offender to get a psychiatric assessment done in Alberta? It took 11 months. I'd like to know why.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I cannot comment on specifics to this inmate because it's before court proceedings. However, I can speak to the process itself. Since this process came to our attention, it is the responsibility of counsel to notify the RCMP, which in this particular case did not happen for various reasons. At the same time, we deal with Alberta Hospital. At Alberta Hospital there is a long wait list which Alberta Hospital provided to our attention as well. We have to keep in mind that there is a new process in place since the issue came to our attention. Copies of the psychiatric assessment are to be sent to RCMP, Alberta Hospital and both counsels so that we can have an efficient and effective way of dealing with these matters to remedy the situation. We are also developing a new protocol to work with Health and Social Services, my colleague Ms. Sandy Lee, on identifying the beds that are available. We are making progress in this respect.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Minister for that. We haven't had a clinical psychologist on staff at North Slave Correctional Centre for at least the past 18 months. I'd like to ask the Minister, the decision to not have a clinical psychologist on staff, was that a budget decision or an operational decision that was made?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we had to make a decision at that time, it was strictly an operational one that we made last year.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering if the Minister is able to let us know how many more inmates currently on remand are awaiting psychiatric assessments and how long they've been waiting.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I need to go back to my department and the court ruling. We can probably provide a number. So we can certainly provide those numbers. Whatever we can share with the Members we will.

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

QUESTION 3-16(5):
PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL OF
GRANDMOTHERS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement had to do with mothers and grandmothers. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, I know the previous government had a council of grandmothers and I thought that was a wonderful idea. I want to ask the

Minister of Health and Social Services if that's something she would be interested in initiating or looking at, having a discussion on starting up the council of grandmothers again with this government.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was here when the former Minister of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen, came up with the idea, which I thought was a great idea until it got outside of the building. Then we ran into problems because there are lots of people out there who feel that they're grandmothers should belong to this group. Of course, we can't have all the grandmothers meeting in a group all the time of that size.

My approach has been to work with the NWT Seniors' Society, which is a group made up of elders from across the Territories, big and small. There are about six, seven or eight members who meet at the same time. They have invited me quite regularly to talk to me about seniors' issues that they are working on that they would like me to work on.

MR. YAKELEYA: With the council of grandmothers and the NWT Seniors' Society, that is apples and oranges. I want to talk more about the oranges as the council of grandmothers and their value. Would the Minister consider, besides identifying the problems, what opportunities or positive things you can see that could come from a council of grandmothers to guide us in the Assembly.

HON. SANDY LEE: I'm not sure if those are apples and oranges or peaches and cream.

---Laughter

The NWT Seniors' Society is made up of Mr. Tom Wilson as president, from Fort Simpson, and Florence Barnaby, Bea Campbell, and we had a new member from Tuktoyaktuk that was appointed, and Eileen Collins from Hay River, and Leon Peterson from Fort Smith. They are really well-regarded and well-respected grandmothers and grandfathers from all over the Territories. It is a really good group.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly agree with the Minister about the NWT Seniors' Society representatives. These are grandparents from across the Northwest Territories. I do want to focus on a council of grandmothers. Grandmothers have a special role in the community and lives in childrearing and bringing up the children and laying out the foundation. Does the Minister have a willingness to look at even one from each region in the role of a council of grandmothers during this Legislature or even with the department? Would the

Minister be interested in seeing if this is an initiative she would undertake?

HON. SANDY LEE: On the substance of it I do feel that's what the NWT Seniors' Society and other elders that we work with I believe fulfill that function. If the Member has a more specific proposal or idea that he wants to discuss further, I'd be happy to sit down with him and listen to him and perhaps other Members. But there is no question that in our day-to-day work that we do rely on elders, not only grandmothers but grandfathers and leaders of our communities, to help us do our work.

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

QUESTION 4-16(5):
SUPPORTS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS
THAT CARE FOR YOUNG RELATIVES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement today I was talking about the fact that in the Northwest Territories it is natural, it is common, and it is a good thing that family members, extended family members will intervene in a situation where a child may be at risk, a family may be in crisis. It is not always the government that has the opportunity to observe or respond to those kinds of needs. The problem is that when someone does this on their own initiative, it then absolves the government of having to take any responsibility for the situation. The reality is it costs money and takes resources to care for a child.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what recognition do the policies of the Department of Health and Social Services place on the intervention and care that are provided to extended family members by grandmothers, aunts, cousins, when a child is in need outside of their own home. What recognition does this department give to those care providers?

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our policy and practice we give a lot of recognition to family members, extended families. As much as possible we would like the extended families involved. In fact, there are many children in care who are being fostered by extended families and relatives. We do pay them, as we would any other parents or families who take care of the children on a short-term basis or long-term basis. Without knowing the specifics of what the Member is talking about, I can't get into the details and we wouldn't do that here anyway. In general, we do recognize family members to a significant degree.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: For the benefit of the people who are listening to this, and I would like to understand a bit more what the process is, if a family member becomes involved in the care of a child and that is not through a formal apprehension of that child, how would the caregiver go about finding the support of this government to act in that role?

HON. SANDY LEE: When a family who is going through distress or, for some reason, are not able to provide safety and protection to a child, the social workers will work to see where else they can find support within the community. They would look to the extended families like grandparents or aunts or any other family members that could give that support. Obviously, we have more stats for those children who have to be taken out of the family setting and we would first look to extended families to take care of those children. We would look for families within the community and when they are assigned with those families, we would provide financial support for the families who would take care of their extended families. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, because I have been approached over my years as MLA many times by grandparents, particularly, and in the case of a person I met with on the weekend, it was an auntie who felt that they had to take it upon themselves to intervene in a situation for the safety of a child that was related to them. How subjective is the need for intervention on the part of child protection workers? How subjective is that grounds for intervention? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: The standard is the best interests of the child. We know that a lot could be put into that, but whenever a child protection worker intervenes, they have to justify and answer for it and there are a group of people that are working on that. I think, in this case, what would be helpful is if I could have a private discussion with the Member. Perhaps this family is not aware of all the support that they can get, and I'd be happy to work with the Member to help this family if we can. But, really, I am aware and I could give the Member stats on the fact that our system really works to work with extended families in providing support to the children in need. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 5-16(5):
PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY
HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As outlined in my Member's statement, it appears to me as though the Minister of Health and Social Services has strayed from the path agreed to by Members to conduct a review of the potential

redesign of the Supplementary Health Program. I'm wondering if the Minister could please outline for us what type of consultation was held with stakeholders prior to the department gathering and distributing the research information they provided to the public on February 22, 2010. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that the staff have done a lot of work to prepare for this public discussion with the public. We have looked internally to partners in the Department of Finance and Stats Bureau to get information. They met with the public advisory group a few times and we have put out the public discussion paper at our earliest possible opportunity so that the public will have an opportunity to put their full input into this process. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: The motion to do this review happened well over a year ago. I noticed that the Minister points out that they spoke to the advisory group, which I understand is a GNWT. I didn't hear any reference at all to actually meeting or talking with the stakeholders, the seniors, the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities. So I'd like to thank the Minister for confirming that they didn't, in fact, do that.

I see zero evidence in any of the information provided by the Minister that the Department of Health and Social Services conducted any research into the possible effects of proposed changes resulting in people leaving the North with respect to the changes that may come forward. This research was clearly requested in the motion. I was wondering if the Minister could please tell me why this information was not collected or considered and why the potential ramifications of residents leaving the NWT are not included within the document released on February 22, 2010. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Just to correct the Member's statement, the public advisory group that I was referring to is a group of NGOs, and that includes the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities, YWCA, the Centre for Northern Families, Yellowknife seniors and NWT seniors. So, meetings were held with those groups. There was internal working groups of DMs and appropriate resources within the government so that we could pull information together that could help with the public discussion.

The Member is asking, did we look at the analysis of changes. That's something that we could do and if the Member knows that the final product or as we work through the product, whatever that may be, will be reviewed by the standing committee and the Members here. The Member is saying that we have

everything worked out; we have not. We have, I think, the research points us into a certain direction. We want to put that out to the public. The public has a chance to explain to us. And without knowing the final product, I'm sure we'll be criticized if we went out with some other information. So I think the important thing is that we need to have this discussion. The Members will have a chance and we should let the process unfold. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Just for the record, the individuals I've talked to who are in that working group have indicated that they were basically told what the department is going to research and what's going to happen after that. They weren't actually encouraged to do what the motion suggested, which was to give alternate areas of research, give alternate opinions, alternate thoughts, so that when this information comes out, as it's coming out now, it should come out complete; meaning that we should have all sorts of options and things to consider.

The Minister says that the research does point in a certain direction, and clearly it does. We want to make an informed decision here. We want supplemental health to be the best it can be for everybody in the Northwest Territories, which means we need information on both sides. I was wondering if the Minister could please tell me how can we make an informed decision in the absence of information or, worse, with only information suggesting one side or leading in a particular direction. We need both sides to make the right decision on supplementary health. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I don't believe there was a question. I just want to clarify that the public working group did have a... The department officials met with the public working group, the NGO groups. They wanted to have good information to base their discussion on. They've had a look at the information that we've provided and they are working with us. We will continue to work with them, work with the Members, work with the public, because I agree with the Member that this is the best program there is in supplementary health anywhere in Canada. We will continue to maintain that and we want to make sure that those who are in need the most will have access to it and that it will continue to be fair and equitable. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister keeps telling us that this is the best program in Canada. I can't argue that. On paper, it's the best in Canada and certainly the most lucrative. But when she says that it doesn't actually include the cost of living in the Northwest Territories, and slight changes will send us to a tipping point that may well result in people leaving the Northwest Territories, yet there's no evidence of

research done -- and I've said this several times -- to suggest that they've even done any analysis on that. Will the Minister commit to actually doing the research on the ramifications of people leaving? If 39 seniors leave, that's \$800,000 out of our pockets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SANDY LEE: I do believe that it is, bar none, the best Supplementary Health Program that is available in Canada. What we know is that there is a group of people who are excluded as it is currently administered. So we want to look at the access and see if those who are most in need are accessing those. I believe we have lots of good information out there that could start the debate. It will be facilitated at public hall meetings and I am sure that all of the questions that the Member is asking could come forward and we will have a good dialogue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 6-16(5):
REINTEGRATION OF INJURED OR
LAID-OFF WORKERS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are addressed to the Minister for Human Resources. In my Member's statement I talked about the duty of employers, and particularly the GNWT, to accommodate and reintegrate employees, who have been off the job, as quickly as possible. Some of my anecdotal evidence indicates that that doesn't necessarily happen within the confines of our GNWT employees. So I'd like to ask the Minister what policies and procedures exist. What timelines do we identify in policy and procedures to integrate, reintegrate or accommodate employees who have been off the job due to injury or illness? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As an employer, our government has a legal obligation to accommodate employees who have a mental or physical disability, to enable them to return to the workforce to their full capacity. The accommodation that we determine it through is information provided by their physicians that sets out their limitations, and we work according to those timelines that generally are determined by the disability that the employee has. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: I guess I'd like to know if we are working with statements from physicians, if I have been injured on the job and my physician says that I need an assessment to determine whether I can go back to work, when an assessment is required is it standard policy or practice for the GNWT to go to

local resources first before we go outside to get these sorts of assessments done? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Each situation has to be assessed on a case-by-case basis in order to determine what accommodation is required. Some of the areas depends on what type of special equipment needs to be provided, what kind of amendment to duties are involved, whether there is retraining involved or whether we have to amend hours of work. If there are assessors here, and I understand we do use local assessors or, depending on the situation, we may be required to go south for an assessment. But, like everything else, if there is the capability here, we'll use it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: I certainly would hope that we would go local and that sending somebody outside would be a recourse of last resort. In terms of training that our HR staff get, I know they are certainly trained in many areas, but in the area of accommodation of workers returning to work after injury or illness, I would like to know what kind of training our HR staff get. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Our main objective is to enable employees to return to work as active and productive members of the public service. We do have sensitivity training. We do have a training calendar that outlines the needs. I am pleased to advise that with the passage of our budget, we will be hiring a duty-to-accommodate consultant that will ensure that the employees that deal with this have the proper training or we identify the proper training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I am glad to hear that we are expanding our view on both persons with disabilities and accommodating people who need to be reintegrated into the workforce after a time away. I would like to ask the Minister, I mentioned in my statement I think it's important for staff to be trained. I also think it's important that workers know what things are out there for them, that they need to know our policies and procedures. So what kind of training do GNWT workers get in the area of accommodation and reintegration? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We are taking steps to advise everybody that the GNWT workplace is open to all Northerners, and anybody that is planning for jobs with the Government of the Northwest Territories, if you currently have a disability and you require accommodation, we encourage you to identify your needs if you apply and we will accommodate those needs during the hiring process.

As far as training, it's something that our whole focus is on delivery, service delivery to our clients,

and we will provide all the training that is required to our workers that deal with persons with disabilities and ensure that they understand what is meant by duty to accommodate and that they fulfil those responsibilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 7-16(5):
IMPACT OF HIGH POWER RATES
ON BUSINESS VENTURES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement, with regard to the NWT Power Corporation, with the Minister in the specific case of the grocery store in Fort Simpson that failed. Can the Minister do a post-mortem on that whole situation and provide some recommendations that this cannot happen to another business? Just to work backwards, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be a good thing to look backwards to ensure those types of businesses don't get into those same types of arrears situations with the NWT Power Corporation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member stated, on the closure of this grocery store, this is something we would preferably not have happen in the Territory. Unfortunately, the cost of electricity in our smaller communities is high, hence the review that was done by the government on the electricity rates regulation distribution subsidy process. We are hoping to come back, as Minister McLeod is the lead on that, with solutions for the next fall planning cycle.

Specifically to this piece, there is a lot of work that has been done in trying to work with the customer here. But it comes back to the cost of energy in that area. I will commit to the Member to provide him the information I have. On the bigger picture, we must do what we can to ensure we try to minimize these types of occurrences from happening in the future. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Like I said, any time we lose a business it's a sad thing for any community, big or small. If the NWT Power Corporation does a post-mortem on the situation, because it was ongoing for awhile, if they look back and assess the situation, they can learn from it and it's something that can be a positive thing to share with the community or any other businesses that might be experiencing the same type of pressure and extra costs with power, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Under the existing structure that we have to operate in as a Power Corporation with the rate bases as they are, the

collections that must be brought in to ensure we keep the corporation in a healthy state means the more arrears or accounts that are in arrears, it affects the rest of the customer base in that area. That is why we have to look at a different way of operating and how we structure ourselves as the Power Corporation. That includes setting direction as a government overall. We will look at the process and information there. I know there were many steps taken to try to help out, but ultimately it comes down to trying to stop the arrears from starting to begin with. One of the bigger ways of doing that is to make a fundamental shift in the way we deliver energy across the Northwest Territories and that work is being done and hopefully we'll have Members supporting the recommendations that are made. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I am really pleased to see the work that the government is doing with the review of the electricity rates and, if the Minister can confirm it, we're also looking at the commercial power rates as well. We know about the cost of living pressures and we want to prevent this type of situation that's happening. Will the Minister tell us if the commercial rates will also be reviewed fully under this review? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The commercial rates, as the Member has discussed, is one of the high cost areas of doing business in the Northwest Territories in our more remote communities, especially in the thermal communities that don't have access to hydro possibilities. Besides expanding that and trying to create that, the existing framework needs to be changed. We are looking at potential ways of doing that that would lower the commercial rates in our communities. We are hoping, again, that as we bring that work forward, Members will support it and we can make the necessary changes going forward and that will, again, benefit the commercial side of power in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 8-16(5):
MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE
PROGRAM FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening to the Minister of Health's answers really closely and I think what she represents is the exact reason why people hate politicians. Because when you move something around, it's called a change; and when you reduce something, it's called a reduction. So, Mr. Speaker, that frustration is articulated out there by playing with semantics. So I'd like to ask the Minister again -- perhaps another way we'll get the answer -- what work and analysis is done by the Department of Health and Social Services to make sure that they're collecting all the

fees and services that we are providing to clients out there so it does not have an impact on our revenue so we have to reduce services to our health and benefits program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member knows that we don't have fee systems in our health care system. I don't believe there is a co-payment for medical travel for those whose income is higher than a certain level. I could only think of that. In long-term care facilities, people pay minimal for staying there. But by and large, we have the most generous and open health care coverage compared to anywhere else in the country and probably around the world. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I keep telling the Minister we're leaving thousands of dollars on the table, whether it's through WCB... We charge through WCB but we don't charge through federal programs where they provide individual insurance. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister what do we do to make sure we're collecting all the fees and services, and I've pointed out whether it's insurance through, for example, auto insurance, like I said last week, whether it's getting full payment from Nunavut on services we provide to them. Thank you.

MS. LEE: I don't know why he's getting the impression that I don't think that we should do that or we are not doing that. We are doing that. I said that in our Committee of the Whole discussion. Our health system as a whole, we bill for services that we need to bill, we collect money, we have people that do that, whether it's a visitor or out-of-towner or it's a physician-to-physician arrangement. That's part of the health care system and delivery system. I just want to make sure that there's not a linkage that we are somehow trying to reduce services in everything to make up for something that we're not collecting. That is wrong and if the Member doesn't understand that, I don't understand why he thinks that's somehow making politicians look bad. I'm just giving him the answer; he should hear that, Mr. Speaker.

I have said in the Foundation for Change and our collective challenge is that we have a fiduciary obligation to protect the health and social services system we have, and that we look at the long-term outlook at where we are heading and that we make sustainability a priority, and that is not a cost reduction, that's just about protecting, and protecting what we value. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how the Health Minister can keep saying that there aren't changes coming to the Supplementary Health Benefits Program when there are changes. What are we evaluating then? It doesn't make sense. How can the Minister keep saying that there aren't

changes coming without it being reflected on the costs of the system? I'd like to understand that from the Minister's point of view. Thank you.

MS. LEE: If the Member read the public discussion -- perhaps he has, maybe wants to read it again -- there's no mention there. I think anybody who's had that presentation -- and we've had that presentation with the seniors, with Joint Leadership Council members -- it's a good package of information to start a dialogue on.

I want to say it again, that we're not proposing changes that take away benefits. What we are saying is we need to look at accessibility, who accesses that. And anybody who could afford to pay a co-payment or something, perhaps we should consider that. That is part of our discussion.

So I think the Members are jumping the gun in saying we're ahead of this. This is a very important discussion and we need to have that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Co-payment is a reduction in services. Mr. Speaker, when you grandfather people, that's a reduction of services to the people who follow after them. Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to understand from the one-sided point of view of this full evaluation, as I've been trying to highlight, we can save money so we can make sure we don't have to make these changes. I'm trying to understand how come the Minister keeps defending that there are no changes when we keep highlighting that there are. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I want to say clearly that we are not looking at reducing costs. In health care services it's about making sure that our system works well so that we plan for the future. The health care budget in this government continues to grow and we expect that it will continue to grow and that we will continue to spend the money that we need for the health and social services system.

The review of supplementary health benefits is different. It's been around for a long time and we have very good information about who is using it and what the people's backgrounds are, and that there is not as much fairness and equitability in that program as it is delivered now. So we are going out to the public with the information we know about the program and asking people for feedback. To say that we shouldn't even do anything like this is I don't think very future-oriented or responsible. I think we have a collective responsibility to see how we can make this better. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 9-16(5):
SAFE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
(SCAN) LEGISLATION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the subject of SCAN legislation was raised in the House without any final context provided. This is a big concern to my constituents so I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice where is SCAN legislation at in the priorities of this department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the SCAN legislation, we have visited the Yukon, our neighbouring Territory, to see how their legislation was going. We met with several of the leadership of that community, Whitehorse, and also visited the First Nations group and also the community council. So we just wanted to have a firsthand look at how that legislation was operating.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we are currently conducting our own research in other jurisdictions as well. The SCAN legislation is at the preliminary stages at this point. We want to make some changes so it reflects on the northern perspective, it's northern driven, it captures the North, as opposed to legislation that came and we changed the title. So, Mr. Speaker, there is still a lot of work in this area. So we continue to work on the legislation itself on a going forward basis. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: I very much appreciate the comments of the Minister. I'm wondering, there have been concerns because of the cost of it. I know in other jurisdictions, some areas where the cost is low it might work, other areas the cost is prohibitive. I wonder if the Minister will be doing a cost analysis as well, so when he does comes forward with the results of the preliminary investigations we could also see that cost analysis. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, indeed, the cost analysis, the consultation, the fee, how much it would cost us and also a centralized model and other options, that we are dealing with. So, Mr. Speaker, we will finalize our overall cost, whether it be the equipment, the assets, the offices, the staff. Mr. Speaker, it varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. So we will continue to provide that information to the Assembly Members when we gather all the information from other jurisdictions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 10-16(5):
PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY
HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on the questions I was asking earlier today. First off, I'd like to recognize that I agree with the Minister in her response to Mr. Hawkins that, yes, we have a collective responsibility to make this program work better for the residents of the Northwest Territories. I couldn't agree more. The problem is I think we need information to do that.

The Minister also said, in responding to some of my questions, that we need some good dialogue between us and the stakeholders and the department. Once again, I couldn't agree more, but we need to make sure that we have the information to do that. I didn't hear the Minister commit to actually gathering some of the information that they have failed to commit. I'd like the Minister to commit to gather that information and do some of those cost-benefit analysis that address what will happen when people decide to leave the Northwest Territories, or may choose to leave the Northwest Territories, if changes do occur to the Supplemental Health Benefits Program. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a problem with doing that. I think what I wanted to make sure that the Member knows is that we have not decided on how this is going to look. We haven't decided that, Mr. Speaker. We have done the research and analysis that we were asked to do. I think the Member might think... The Member has suggested that the Minister knew what she wanted and engineered the research to look like that. I disagree with that. I believe any fair-minded people that look at the facts will see that the facts take us to a certain direction, and that's what we want to take out to the public. The public working group had input, but we've also been getting lots of inquiries from the general public saying where is your consultation. So we made this decision and I made a decision that we have to get out to the public as soon as possible, show them what we have, ask them for some guidance. The Member knows that we go back to the committee and the discussion will be held here again.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Members and the public to give this a chance, look at the information and give us our input in the best way possible, by writing, by e-mailing, by calling us or by answering the questionnaires. I think this is a very open and transparent process and I ask for Members to continue to give us their input. But I don't believe that we needed to have everything done before we went out, because we need to talk to the people.

The public has been asking about what we are doing with this. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I don't believe for a second that the Minister has done everything that we asked. Our motion was very, very clear. We said we wanted the financial analysis done and what would happen if the changes that they're proposing, or maybe aren't proposing. Who knows what they're doing at this point. It's hard to tell because it's not particularly clear. But what are the ramifications of putting in a program that may result in people leaving? We were very clear. The Minister didn't do that.

The process is going forward. She's outlined the timeline for the process. We've got, you know, over the summer and they want to implement something in September. It took them two years to get to the point where they are; two years to gather the information that they've gathered. So as we go through this process, they're going to hear more things and they're going to be asked to go out and do more research. Do they really think they're going to be able to implement this in September? I think it's important that the Minister recognize that.

I'd like the Minister to acknowledge that the timeline is too tight and commit to extending the timeline so that we can actually do the research that's required in order to design a program that's appropriate for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I realize that for some out there this could be studied for 10 years. I've been here for 10 years. This Supplementary Health Benefits Policy was studied for seven years, that I was here in 2007, before changes were brought about. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right; the last motion was in April, but I believe we set after the motion was passed. We worked on it through the summer and the fall. Perhaps, for some, we could spend 10 years studying this before any changes are made.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a judgment call. I believe it was more important that we go out with the profile of the program: what is it, who's accessing it and who's not accessing it. We are going out to the public so that they could have a discussion, because we get daily questions from people wanting to know where this is at.

I think we need to give people a chance to speak. The Members can continue to give us their input. The Member is asking why do you not have the answer to what would happen if X happened. My point is we're not saying X will happen without going to the public. Let the public decide whether the X should happen or not and, if that's the case, how. Just to make sure that we let the people know that this is not a cost-cutting exercise, it's about educating the public about what the supplementary health benefits are. It is the most generous of any. We want to keep it still generous, but we want to

look at who is accessing that. Right now it's only those who are over 60 and those who have a specific condition. There are a whole lot of people who are not able to access it. It's only fair that those who don't have access to it have a chance to say I think we should relook at who accesses this program.

MR. ABERNETHY: The motion is clear. I was wondering if the Minister could tell us why the Minister ignored what the motion said.

HON. SANDY LEE: The motion was a recommendation to the government. We have adhered to the motion. They told us to take it back, look at the facts, do that analysis and do the consultation. We are doing that right now.

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

QUESTION 11-16(5): CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier of the House. I want to ask the Premier about a motion that was passed several weeks ago about the caribou issue. We had a motion that gave direction to the government on dealing with the caribou issue. I want to ask the Premier where that motion is at.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion was passed about the caribou situation. There are a number of things that are happening. As the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources responded in the previous session, there is work going on with the co-management boards and with the Wek'eezhii board, as well as setting up a process that includes the Yellowknives and NWT Metis in that process coming up as an overall management plan similar to what we've done in areas where there are land claims and co-management bodies in place. We're moving down that process.

In the interim, I know the Minister and his department have tried to sit down and have had a number of meetings with Yellowknives Dene to try to come up with a workable solution on the very specific issue that they've had to deal with.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can the Premier give us an update on where things are with the Yellowknives Dene on how they're trying to work out a deal on the harvesting?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: For that detail, I'll defer that question to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have put an offer to the Yellowknives. We have also, as I've indicated to the Member previously in the last session, had discussions with the Dene Nation about a possible process. Both those cases we are waiting for feedback on to see if we can move ahead as we move into the ninth week of the protection of the Bathurst herd.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'll ask the question of putting the offer to the Yellowknives, is there a time frame for this offer being discussed and negotiated to come up with a deal?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We are looking to -- and I'm sure both parties would like to resolve this particular issue -- the deputy minister was going to in fact get back in touch with the Yellowknives, now that the Olympics are over and everybody is back in business, to see what possible next steps might be there in the minds of the Yellowknives.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: I want to ask the Minister or Premier on building relationships with the aboriginal governments on this very important issue. This issue is very critical for us to go forward. I want to ask the Premier about this deal, having it satisfactory to the Yellowknives, to the Tlicho, to the people of the Northwest Territories to go forward on bigger issues with the government. Is the Premier committed to ensuring this deal can get done soon? This week?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In that area of building relationships with aboriginal leaders and groups and governments across the Territory, we continue to do that. We continue to build on that. We've had the discussion about caribou at that table and we will continue to have discussion about a process forward in a number of key areas as well. This is one of those areas and we recognize that we need to continue to build and strengthen on that relationship.

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

QUESTION 12-16(5):
MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE
PROGRAM FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The particular issue I keep trying to raise here is linking the reduction of services to poor management. I'd ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what work is done from a waste buster point of view. With a department that has a budget of \$326

million, do they have any staff or personnel dedicated to finding wasted resources within their organization?

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The entire health and social services system is geared towards making sure that we use our health and social services dollars to the people in need. On any given day I have every Member of this House come and talk to me about the things we need to do for our people: medical travel, different services, different care, different institutions they should go to, different treatment. The fact is that health and social services is a high-demand field. We put a great deal of priority on spending our dollars in the health and social services field, but we're also aware that we're under constant pressure with the dollars we have. Everybody, every manager, every department head, every CEO, every chair, every board is preoccupied to making sure that we use our resources that we get as well as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The time for question period has expired. I will allow the Member a very short supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker. On one hand the Minister will say in this House that the supplementary health benefit changes are not about reducing costs. The question still stands: what services are provided within the Department of Health and Social Services that examine the cost of our health dollars to ensure that they are being used wisely?

HON. SANDY LEE: One example that I can think of is we've been reviewing the specialist services to see what services we provide, how they are being provided. The Stanton CEO and the department and refocusing government have been working on that. We have also done a review on medical travel, because that is a part that is completely dependent on demand and the requests that are made from the doctors and other service providers. That's under review, and supplementary health benefits. We just went through a very detailed analysis on exactly how many people accessed that, how much it costs and who's accessing that. That's not a cost-cutting measure. It is about learning what the program that we provide looks like, who is using it, how much does it cost.

MR. HAWKINS: If we were talking about Rio Tinto or BHP, they have staff dedicated specifically to look at resources and how the system is being done to make sure they can do them in an efficient way. What proof does the Minister have that she can lay before this House that the Department of Health and Social Services examines the way it does business on a regular basis to ensure that we're getting the best value for our dollars?

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of difference between Rio Tinto or BHP and the public health system. Our system is demand driven. People put the highest priority on their health and social services. On a daily basis, whether it's Friday night, Saturday morning, midnight, I get calls from Members and the general public asking us to do something more for health and social services or extra services they would like. You cannot compare a health care system to a private corporation who needs to check the bottom line all the time. We have finance people in our authorities and our department. Cabinet keeps a close eye on our health care expenditures, because every government in Canada is concerned with making sure we find and spend our health dollars wisely.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I highlighted the fact that we've got doctors acting like either summer students or clerks. In my statement I also pointed out that we're not billing properly. So are we like a diamond mine? No, we're not. But the strategy and process and thinking is exactly the same: wise resources and good use of them. Would the Minister re-examine the issue of establishing a position that looks at how we use our resources to make sure we're using them in the most efficient way? It's not about the question of providing resources, it's how we spend the money. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, the entire Foundation for Change is based on making sure that people in our health care system do what they're most suited to do. So I can't answer to the Member's question about doctors looking at files. I can't imagine that we would ask them to look at their files for any other purpose than for which they are being paid to do, which is to provide doctor services.

Mr. Speaker, he's asking a very general question. I've answered already. The primary care clinic consolidation might be requiring the staff to look at their files, but, Mr. Speaker, I can say once again that my preoccupation every day is to see how we can spend our \$326 million as well as possible so that we benefit the people on the ground. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Written Questions

QUESTION 1-16(5):

DIRECT APPOINTMENTS TO STAFF POSITIONS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for Human Resources.

In regards to the number of positions that were staffed through the use of direct appointment:

1. What was the number of direct appointments made in each department during this fiscal year to date and fiscal year 2008-2009?
2. What reasons were given for the appointments being made directly?
3. What was the number of positions that were vacant up to and/or at the time of the direct appointment in each of these years?
4. What was the number of direct appointments that were made after the staging of competitive staffing actions in each of these years?

Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 2-16(5):

PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENTS AT NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice.

How many inmates on remand at North Slave Correctional Centre are awaiting professional psychiatric assessments?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 9, petitions. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Item 11, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 1-16(5):

TODAY'S RESOURCES, TOMORROW'S LEGACY: NWT HERITAGE FUND PUBLIC CONSULTATION, FEBRUARY 2010

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document titled Today's Resources, Tomorrow's Legacy: NWT Heritage Fund Public Consultation, February 2010.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 12, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 1-16(5):

ELIMINATION OF HANDLING FEES FOR THE COLLECTION OF MILK CONTAINERS UNDER THE NWT BEVERAGE CONTAINER PROGRAM

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Government of the Northwest Territories take immediate action to alter the Beverage Container Program by eliminating the collection of the non-refundable handling fee for milk containers and provide a corresponding and suitable level of financial assistance to the Environment Fund, if required, to assist in covering program expenses and improvements to waste reduction and recovery programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 2-16(5):

ADULT DIAGNOSIS OF FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish assessment services for adults who have FASD; and further, that a multidisciplinary team based on the examples of the Territorial Assessment Team or the Child Development Team at Stanton Territorial Hospital be developed to provide these assessment and diagnostic services in the NWT; and furthermore, that programs and supports for individuals and families living with FASD be enhanced to be available to NWT residents who need these services; and furthermore, that the government provide a response to this motion within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 13, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE VETERINARY PROFESSION ACT

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the

Veterinary Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 2:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE DENTAL AUXILIARIES ACT

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move that Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Dental Auxiliaries Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

BILL 3:

MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move that Bill 3, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 4:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 5:

APPRENTICESHIP, TRADE AND OCCUPATIONS CERTIFICATION ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, I will move that Bill 5, Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, motions. Item 15, first reading of bills. Item 16, second reading of bills. Item 17, Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett): Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 2, 2010, 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
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 Tuesday, March 2, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:37 p.m.