



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 14, 2010****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:42 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

Speaker's Opening Comments

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. I want to take this opportunity to welcome you all back to the Chamber after our summer recess. I hope that you return committed and eager to continue our work for the people of the Northwest Territories.

In many ways, this fall appears to be a season of change for our Assembly. First of all I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome on behalf of all Members to the new Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable George L. Tuccaro.

---Applause

Commissioner Tuccaro was sworn into office on May 28, 2010, and one of his first official duties was to accompany me on a Speaker's Mace Tour. Everywhere we went, it was evident that the Commissioner was well known, well liked, and well respected. Again, on behalf of all Members, I wish the Commissioner much success in his new position and we look forward to welcoming him into the Chamber.

Another timely fall change is the installation and start-up of our biomass heating system for the Legislative Assembly building. The Assembly continues to be a leader in green initiatives and I look forward to the formal ribbon cutting for the wood pellet boiler which will take place on Friday, October 29th, at 2:00 p.m. I invite all Members to join me for this event.

Another innovative project supported by this House is the implementation of an On-line Petition Pilot Program. As directed by a motion of the House, and in an effort to increase the opportunities for participation for all citizens in the NWT, the Assembly is launching an e-Petition Pilot Program to run from October 2010 to June 2011. This program will allow residents to set up and to sign petitions on-line, in addition to the current practice of signing personally. In June 2011 the Assembly will evaluate the pilot program. The on-line petition

site can be accessed from the Assembly's website and will go live on Friday, October 22, 2010.

I would also like to welcome the Pages who have joined us this session. We will have young people from Yellowknife, Tu Nedhe, Inuvik Twin Lakes, Hay River North, Nunakput, Monfwi and the Sahtu. It is always a great pleasure to have our young people join us.

On a more sombre note, colleagues, I would like to extend the sympathies of the House to the families and communities who have lost loved ones since last we met. The North has lost several respected elders, and while we mourn their passing, we celebrate the wisdom and knowledge they have left behind.

Colleagues, it is now my duty to advise the House that I've received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of:

- Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2011-2012;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2009-2010;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011

during the Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly. Yours truly, George Tuccaro, Commissioner.

With that, colleagues, orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 45-16(5): SESSIONAL STATEMENT

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spent a great deal of time this summer talking with NWT residents and organizations about their vision and priorities in the future of our Territory. I was pleased and challenged by the many conversations that I had in various Creating Our Future Together roundtables, but even more so by the passion and commitment that NWT residents have demonstrated by their participation.

I have been particularly inspired and rejuvenated by the discussions I enjoyed with our Territory's youth.

Today's youth are ready and eager to meet the challenges of the future. They do not back down from tough issues, they state their positions clearly, they listen respectfully to each other, and they always work hard to find common ground. I can assure Members that our future is in good hands.

Since our election three years ago this government has remained focused on the future; a future articulated by the goals set by this Assembly:

- healthy, educated people;
- a diversified economy;
- sustainable, vibrant and safe communities;
- effective and efficient government;
- strength and independence, built on partnerships; and
- an environment that will sustain present and future generations.

For three years the work that we have done and the initiatives that we have put in place have been firmly focused on serving and benefitting our Territory and its residents long past the term of the 16th Assembly.

We have ensured our capacity to face the future, taking a hard line on managing what's in our means and maintaining a tight control on costs.

We have made unprecedented investments on key infrastructure projects for the future, making capital spending a priority, expected to exceed \$1 billion in the life of this Assembly, building not only bridges, roads, and facilities, but capacity in our communities, businesses and people.

We have invested heavily in alternative energy options that will help mitigate the impacts of climate change going forward and help reduce the cost of living.

We have invested in education and training programs to support an expanded labour market, providing skill development, literacy programs, and increased support for apprentices to ensure that our

residents will be able to take advantage of the opportunities and choices that will come their way in the years to come.

We have moved forward with pivotal initiatives such as the Water Strategy, the Land Use Framework, and the Species at Risk Act to guide future decision-making and sustain our environment into the future.

We have increased the profile of our Territory on the national and international stage, promoting the NWT as a great place to live, work and invest, through the highly successful NWT presence at the 2010 Olympics and Paralympic Games, and building on that effort through our national marketing campaign.

All along we are invested in the long-term well-being of our people, expanding programming for children and youth, encouraging healthy choices with health and physical activity programs, improving our continuum of care for seniors with the development of the Territorial Assisted Living Facility in Hay River and the Territorial Dementia Centre in Yellowknife, and addressing the unfortunate realities of issues like addictions and family violence that threaten the well-being and health of our families and communities.

We have made considerable investments to support policing in smaller communities, implementing the new backup policy, and instituting programs aimed at reducing alcohol and drug related crimes.

Along the way, Mr. Speaker, we have encountered challenges and issues that threatened our government's capacity and ability to look to the future.

In these cases, we have also acted decisively and effectively to protect the future we think is possible for our Territory.

In the early days of our term our immediate challenge was the reality of our fiscal situation and the need to find more efficient and effective ways to do business.

Later it was the reality of worldwide economic recession and the need to support our businesses and economy through a period of decline.

The proactive and immediate actions that we took, as a government, to secure and distribute H1N1 vaccinations last year proved to be an example for all of Canada. We achieved the extension of critical health care funding at a time of broad government fiscal restraint across the country.

We took timely but essential steps to protect our caribou for the generations that will follow ours.

Earlier this year circumstances surrounding the Deh Cho Bridge required us to take extraordinary measures to carry this debt in the interest of protecting this project for the future.

Earlier this year we announced that responsibility for public housing rent assessments would be returned to local housing organizations. Investments in affordable housing are among the most significant actions taken by this government during the 16th Assembly, expected to exceed \$155 million by the end of this Assembly.

Meanwhile, our proposed electricity rate changes represent the biggest single effort to reduce cost of living in rural and remote NWT communities that has been undertaken in recent history.

Mr. Speaker, the vision, mission and goals of the 16th Assembly, the strategic initiatives of this government, the work that we have done, the decisions we have made and the over 142 initiatives and investments that we have put in place with the support of this House, together they offer a strong track record focused on building a stronger Northwest Territories, a foundation that will serve us all well long past the term of this government.

As important as the work itself has been the manner in which it has been undertaken, our collaborative approach with Members of this Assembly, our work with Canada and the relationships that we continue to build with our Territory's aboriginal and regional leaders and governments, demonstrates our continued and firm commitment to proactively working with these partners to build the new Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territories of the future.

That said, some very serious and immediate challenges are still before us, as is the case across the country, and indeed across the globe.

- Escalating health care costs threaten our capacity to invest in other priority areas.
- The supply of adequate housing continues to be a concern.
- High energy costs remain a challenge to the affordability and viability of living and doing business in our Territory.
- Our complex regulatory environment creates very real challenges for industry and investors, which must be balanced with the need to ensure adequate environmental protection for our lands and waters.

We all know that this work of creating a strong foundation for the future is not easy. But we have all worked to put in place the resources, tools and processes that will allow us to realize the unprecedented opportunities that are still before us.

Mr. Speaker, in this last year of our government we must build on what we have done and finish what we started:

- Secure the fiscal foundation that we have protected and put in place.

- Advance the benefits of our resource sector and the nation-building potential of infrastructure projects.
- Further advance our relationship with aboriginal governments established under the regional leadership table.
- Secure the authorities and resources from Ottawa with which future governments and leaders will shape and continue to realize our future.

I would like to thank my Cabinet and Members of this House for your hard work, collective vision and commitment to the future of the Northwest Territories. I look forward to making further progress toward our future during the coming months. Thank you.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 46-16(5): MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jackson Lafferty will be absent from the House for the remainder of the week to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Justice meeting in Vancouver.

I would also wish to advise Members that the Honourable Bob McLeod will be absent from the House for the remainder of the week to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Tourism meeting in Vancouver. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Colleagues, before we go on, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery to the presence of Mr. Sam Gargan, former MLA and former Speaker of the House.

Also, the presence of our Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Mr. Gerry Gerrand.

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STATE OF DISREPAIR OF HIGHWAY NO. 7 (LIARD TRAIL)

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just two short summer months ago, Highway No. 7 was described by the media and local drivers as a bog with the consistency of clam chowder. To my dismay, this summer Highway No. 7 was described as a war zone by tourists, local drivers and the media.

I know that the engineers would offer this more technical description of Highway No. 7, the road is

composed primarily of frost susceptible soils, structurally weak and most vulnerable to load-induced damage during spring thaw. The roadway becomes saturated, causing extensive pot holing, slick running surfaces and major running. This makes driving conditions unfavourable for the general public.

However, I think "war zone" is the best description.

After two years of the largest capital budget ever, I hoped that the Department of Transportation would be able to achieve great things for Highway No. 7. The only good news was that the Government of British Columbia has paved their portion of the highway from the BC/NWT border south. The tourists who actually made it to Liard could be told that the worst is over, it is only 38 more kilometres to the border.

The Legislative Assembly approved a large multi-million-dollar budget for repairs on the highway in both 2009 and 2010. I know that we had a rainy season this summer, Mr. Speaker, however, I am discouraged that the Department of Transportation could not get organized fast enough to get ahead of the weather and make the repairs.

The highway gets closed for a period throughout the summer because of its unsafe state. The word about the highway spreads to other tourists who might have travelled the Liard trail if the roads had been passable. Robinson's Trucking has given up hauling loads to Fort Liard because of the unpredictable conditions and load restrictions on Highway No. 7.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, this now leaves Liard with one transportation company that provides service to the community. This certainly doesn't reduce costs or improve services.

I am really interested in learning from the Minister later this afternoon about the status of this year's work and his future plans of making sure that the highway can meet the grade needed. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF NUNAKPUT RESIDENTS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to welcome all Members and the staff back from our summer break and our Thanksgiving weekend. I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and safe summer as well.

There are many Inuvialuit traditions that are very important in my daily life, Mr. Speaker, and how I serve my constituents.

One of those traditions is that I pay respect to my elders, which is all you guys. I respect you.

---Laughter

And I pay respect to my ancestors, the people that have shaped us into who we are today and who have passed away.

I always start my Member's statements by paying respect to the people who have passed away, and the families and friends, since our last sitting in the Assembly. There have been a few deaths in the communities that I represent. Mr. Speaker, Joseph Robert Panaktalok, condolences go out to his father, Frank Panaktalok; and mother, Pearl Pokiak; and son Shayne; and to his aunts and uncles and family and friends. He'll be sadly missed, Mr. Speaker.

Alexandria Anikina Payne passed away this summer. Condolences go out to her parents, Diana Anikina and Michael Payne; grandmothers Clara Bates, and my sister Judy Payne. Thoughts and prayers are with them.

Mr. Speaker, in Ulukhaktok we lost George Okheena. Condolences to his wife Mary T. Okheena and children Eddie, Colin, Peter Christine, Lucy, Ruby and Denise.

Mr. Speaker, our communities are very small and everyone knows everyone in Nunakput. We're very close knit and the loss of one person deeply impacts us all.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, I wish to give condolences to all the people in the Northwest Territories who lost loved ones in the past few months. Our prayers and thoughts are with all the families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LACK OF STREETLIGHTS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about the lack of streetlights in the smaller communities. This is another example of something that's taken for granted in the larger centres, but is an issue in many of our smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, when the New Deal was struck between MACA and the communities, all things were not equal. Many of the small communities had, and still have, huge infrastructure deficits. Mr. Speaker, under the current infrastructure funding formula these communities are not able to initiate a proper infrastructure program that will allow them to catch up with the basic amenities enjoyed by the larger communities. As communities made the transition under the New Deal, they were stuck with old buildings, outdated equipment and inadequate

infrastructure. For example, Mr. Speaker, without proper drainage a community cannot effectively build community roadways or develop lots. Without having this in place, the communities cannot determine where streetlights are needed.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of streetlights represents everyday dangers for pedestrians. Many of the roads in both Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution are completely dark. This is a safety issue and because of the unsafe conditions many of the constituents are asking for reflective vests to go out walking around. Mr. Speaker, many of the roads in the smaller communities are not built for vehicles and pedestrians to share. However, it is normal practice in these communities for residents to walk on the roads, even kids going to school walk on the roads. I just returned from Fort Resolution and at 3:30 the roads were busy with kids getting out of school.

Mr. Speaker, in the summer months the communities have to contend with dust, and in the winter months slippery roads, reduced visibility and snowmobile traffic add to the danger. With winter just around the corner, the kids will be going to and coming from school in the dark. Mr. Speaker, there is little or no lighting on some of these roads. It is a wonder that more constituents have not been seriously injured. If you can imagine walking from your house to the neighbour's completely in the dark, it's really serious when you don't even know where you are stepping.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, this is a safety issue for residents and it's time for this government to sit down in the small communities and resolve this long-standing issue. Today I'll have questions for the Minister of MACA following the statements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF THERESA REID

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate the life and commemorate the passing of a great citizen and long-time resident of Weledeh, the late Theresa Reid. Most Yellowknifers knew Theresa Reid as the ever-present, cheery face at the St. Patrick's Parish Flea Market. For 36 years Theresa put her spirit and energy into a Yellowknife institution dedicated to ensuring those in need have affordable access to basic goods: a warm coat or a baby blanket, household and cooking equipment, toys, school supplies, and even furniture and appliances.

What people may not have known is that Theresa also organized the distribution of these necessities to communities outside of Yellowknife, spreading her compassion throughout the Northwest Territories. Countless people and families have been helped through the hard times by Theresa's smile and willing hands.

Theresa Reid served for decades as the vice-president of the St. Patrick's Parish Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada. To her parish council colleagues and St. Pat's parishioners, Theresa was the anchor for many charitable and spiritual events and activities. Her dear friend Barb MacDonald described her as the organizer to depend upon as "the base or foundation of an activity."

Theresa Trepanier came to the NWT as a member of the Roman Catholic sisterhood. She married Bill Reid in 1965 and the couple raised their three children, Danny, Dennis and David, who continue to live in Yellowknife with Theresa's five grandchildren. Bill and Theresa were to have celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary this year.

Theresa Reid lived her life demonstrating how to do unto others as you would want them to do unto you. She leaves a great legacy of public service and is a model to us all of how one person can make an enormous difference one act of kindness at a time.

I invite all to join with me in honouring the passing of Theresa Reid, expressing our thanks, and offering our heartfelt condolences to her family and community. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PREMIER'S EFFORTS TO CREATE A VISION FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been following with interest the Premier's search for a vision over this summer, a summer which now unfortunately is long gone. It's been hard not to notice the search. I see the ads every week and sometimes twice a week. The action that our Premier has taken trying to find out what NWT residents want, that action is admirable. Indeed, this Assembly, the residents of this Territory, need to know what we see for ourselves 20 to 30 years in the future.

The Premier wants the NWT to come together, to find a common goal, a vision for the future of the NWT. I struggle to understand how this Creating Our Future Together exercise will achieve such a goal. I don't think the right questions are being asked, nor are they being asked in the right forum. What percentage of our residents is involved in these forums? I suspect it's a small number.

The timing seems off. It is more than a little late in the game to be doing a visioning exercise, in my view. Shouldn't we have started on this process three years ago, not three or four months ago? Don't get me wrong, colleagues, I am a firm believer and supporter of strategic planning. For me the success for the NWT and its residents will be achieved only if we can focus on seeing, remembering, and acting on what I call the big picture. That success is the Premier's goal, but I'm sceptical that it can be achieved within the current process.

I've been through almost all of the forum summaries and in those reports I saw expression of some common ideas from participants, but in general participants' responses, although extremely valid, were diverse, quite specific, and all over the map.

How can five or more forum summaries, each anywhere from 10 to 25 pages in length, be combined and synthesized into an NWT vision? Will it be done by the Premier? Will it be done by his staff? By department staff? Given the time frame identified for this exercise, it's unlikely that participants -- NWT residents -- will have a hand in the collating of these ideas into a vision. That's a shame. For residents' voices to be heard and to be perceived as having been heard, the final report cannot be left to GNWT personnel, it must be developed in conjunction with the participants.

Finally, I will have some of these questions for the Premier at the appropriate time and I look forward to hearing what he has to say.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RELOCATION OF MEDICAL TRAVEL OFFICE

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last couple of months I've had a number of constituents mention concerns they have about the relocation of the medical travel office, which was formerly located at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. To see firsthand the status of the medical travel office and how the authority was addressing the move, I decided I'd go for a visit.

On Monday, September 27th, I went to Stanton where I found the offices formerly occupied by Medical Travel. On the door was an 8.5 inch by 11 inch sheet of paper with the following message:

Our offices have been relocated. If you need to contact Medical Travel call 867-669-4115. For your convenience, a telephone is available at the registration desk with speed dial to connect us. Thank you for your cooperation.

It was nice that the authority created the convenience of offering a speed dial, but,

unfortunately, there was absolutely no reference to their new location and how you can reach them in person to discuss your travel requirements and arrangements. Fortunately I know where the new office is.

I went to the Centre Ice Plaza at around 3:45 p.m. and found the medical travel office. The main door to the Stanton office, made obvious by a sign which states "Stanton Finance Department" was locked. No hours of operation were posted. No reference to the medical travel office was posted either. Although I walked out, I still was determined to get to the medical travel office. I noticed that there was an internal door and I went through the mall to try and find my way to it. Just for the record, there is absolutely no reference in the mall to the internal door. I did find it and, to my surprise, it was open. So I went up the stairs and I went up to where the finance office and medical travel office is located. This was about five minutes to 4:00. I arrived at the main entrance and there is a sign saying that it is open until 4:00 p.m. Unfortunately, the door was locked and there was no way to get in to talk to anybody in finance or medical travel. I tried to find any reference to medical travel in that area and there is absolutely nothing.

Fortunately, at this time I happened to bump into a Stanton employee coming out of a storage locker and I inquired about the medical travel office. She indicated to me at that time that they are not open to the public. They only provide telephone services. It appears as though face-to-face client service is no longer important when it comes to medical travel. Further, it appears as though Stanton is unconcerned with implementing a reasonable transition plan when it comes to these types of changes; transition plans which help individuals both from within and outside Yellowknife...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Abernethy, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. ABERNETHY: Transition plans will help individuals from both within and outside of Yellowknife who have become accustomed to face-to-face contact seamlessly switch to phone and electronic services. While at Stanton I did notice an empty office right where Medical Travel used to be. Medical Travel could have been left with at least one office there to help with this transition plan.

Customer service is important and as a result I'll be asking the Minister some questions on the move to medical travel and their change in philosophy with respect to working with their clients during question period today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT FOR
NWT POWER CORPORATION PRESIDENT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take the opportunity today to speak about an issue that has arisen in Hay River which has caused a great deal of concern. It may seem like a small thing to this government, but the timing of this particular ad, the NWT Power Corporation is recruiting for a new president.

Recently Hay River has seen the departure of some senior management folks at NTCL and then to read an ad in the paper recruiting a president for NTPC saying that this individual can live in Hay River or Yellowknife reverberated through the community with some very negative reaction.

The good folks who work in headquarters at the NWT Power Corporation have been through quite a bit of uncertainty, troublesome times maybe. The ATCO proposal which came to light considering the possibility of changes, it's all about change and it creates unsettledness, it creates uncertainty. The transition to a new president, the transition to a new board chair, then the review of the NTPC itself, all things which can be justified. But at the same time then to read an ad in the paper to say that the new president can live in Hay River or Yellowknife, I'm sorry, but in a small community like Hay River, that sends a very large message.

Now we know that a lot of work of the president and CEO is conducted with the other subsidiaries of the Power Corporation and some of that work occurs here in Yellowknife. We all know that the former president, Mr. Courneya, did have to spend time in Yellowknife to oversee those subsidiaries and those activities. But the fact is he was there many, many years. He was part of the first team that came up when NTPC was repatriated from NCPC in Edmonton, when that first group came to Hay River. Mr. Courneya was part of that. He has been around there for a very long time and he has clearly been a resident of Hay River.

Although this may seem like a small thing to the government, I hope it's an oversight of some kind. It would really make a lot of people in Hay River happy today if I could get a commitment from this government that the new president for the Power Corporation that will be recruited will be a resident of Hay River. I will have more questions for the Minister responsible for that at question period today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INEQUALITIES BETWEEN SMALL
AND LARGE COMMUNITIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to in the next 15 days advocate for the people in the Sahtu in terms of the equality of programs and services that this government here provides to residents in the Northwest Territories under our public governance system.

When I was in Norman Wells on a constituency visit I realized that 10 pounds of flour at the Northern Store ran about \$37. People asked me to pick up some flour here in Yellowknife, which is about \$10 or so for 10 pounds.

The inequality of this that we face in the Sahtu every day in terms of education because of the small communities that we have to go through the school system is not the same type of education we have in larger centres. We have to put up with it. We have to fight for the equality in terms of our students want to aspire to be surgeons or doctors or chemists and they just don't have that level of support there of the other centres where some of the parents can support the children to go and get this type of education.

The same with access to health care. I'm very surprised that Colville Lake has, I think there's a doctor goes in there every six months in terms of access to health care into the Sahtu and that we still have elders who live in our communities to be housed in Yellowknife or Fort Simpson or Inuvik. These elders, when they want to go to these long-term care facilities, have to pay their way to these facilities, which is not fair. So we're looking for some of these types of services in the Sahtu.

When we talk about equality in the Sahtu or in the Northwest Territories, in the reality of it we're not getting the same type of services in some of the larger centres. This makes me wonder when this government will start owning up to the equality of all residents in the Northwest Territories, because when we see other regions or other communities get more services than us, we have to wonder where the equality is, where are the fairness and justice of this government is.

I'll be asking further questions to the Premier in terms of the goals that we aspire to undertake in the 16th Assembly.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS DISTRACTED
DRIVING AND HAND-HELD
ELECTRONIC DEVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to continue to raise the issue of lack of

legislative guidance to regulate the usage of cell phones while people are operating vehicles. What continues to be clear is, first, this problem is not a fad. Secondly, other responsible governments across this country continue to mount active campaigns through legislation to address this problem.

I've been asked by many, how long does personal lifestyle continue to trump the real concerns of public safety? We must patiently await the Minister of Transportation to answer that question, the question and call for action.

Sadly, over this past summer more people have joined the list of those who have lost their lives to distracted driving. Countless others, including myself, have witnessed near misses and amazing feats, as I have personally watched people pay more attention to their handhelds than to the road. Whether driving around a corner and almost hitting someone or running through a red light, what is clear is that one day their luck will either run out on themselves, the driver, or certainly the innocent victim or victims.

No law will ever completely solve the lack of or, rather, instil common sense. But what a law would do is mandate a legal responsibility where personal responsibility continues to be a matter only for a few.

I have never been an advocate for needless or even extra laws to impinge on the everyday liberties of good democratic citizens in a normal republic, but there comes a time that if common sense won't prevail, government does have a role. To date, as I understand it, our government has been musing with this concept of finally dealing with this issue of distracted driving through a law. However, I'd rather describe it as saying our government has been flirting with their responsibility and still yet refuses to commit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROPOSED CHANGES TO
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to be back amongst my colleagues here in the House and I'm looking forward to working with all of you towards a productive fall session.

Mr. Speaker, last evening I hosted a Kam Lake constituency meeting at N.J. Macpherson School, and I'd like to thank all those that attended and shared their thoughts and concerns with me. Mr. Speaker, it is my job and responsibility as an MLA to listen to my constituents and to the public and then raise those concerns here in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I can't possibly do justice to all the issues that were brought up last night in the two

and a half minutes that I have here in my Member's statement. I did make commitments last night to raise these issues that were brought to me and I plan on following up with all of those issues over the next three weeks.

The one area that I will pick up on today, and which dominated much of the discussion last evening, is health care, the proposed changes to supplementary health benefits and the performance of our Health and Social Services Minister. The proposed changes to supplementary health benefits are obviously of great interest and concern for many people. People want to know what recommendations the joint working group have come up with and when the public will be given an opportunity for comment. For something as important and which affects so many people, it's understandable that the public wants to know. I want to again state that the decisions and directions the government will pursue on changes to supplementary health benefits will, unfortunately, not require a formal vote or endorsement by the majority of Members of this House. This is not what people want, nor conducive to good public government.

I made the recommendation when we last met earlier this spring that if the Health and Social Services Minister wholeheartedly believes in the proposed changes to supplementary health benefits, then why wouldn't she and the government put the issue on the shelf for 11 more months. Mr. Speaker, the dissolution of this Assembly will take place September 2, 2011, 322 days from now. We need to make certain that we get these changes right. This should and rightfully belongs in an election campaign. It is an election issue, Mr. Speaker, and it should take place next fall.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. RAMSAY: I shouldn't have to preach politics to other politicians, but, understandably, the Minister should go door to door in her riding, attending election forums and answer to the public and her constituents on why she continues to support changes to supplementary health benefits. Mr. Speaker, this will also give other candidates in ridings across the Territory an opportunity to state their position on proposed changes to supplementary health benefits. Then let the electorate decide who the candidates they're willing to support will be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be pursuing this issue with great vigour over the next three weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of

visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had a chance to take a peek at the visitors in our gallery today and I would informally call it seniors day from our mass attendance of our fine seniors. But notably, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make special recognition of several constituents of Yellowknife Centre. That would be Vivian Squires, Ed Jeske, Blake Lyons, Ruth Spence, and David Wind. Thank you for coming today and thank you to everyone else.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You've recognized Mr. Sam Gargan as previous MLA, and I would like to recognize him as well, our grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations. Welcome to the Assembly, Sam.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize, with great pride, my mother, Barb Bromley, a resident of Weledeh; as well, Mr. David Gilday, also a resident of Weledeh; and many of the long-term residents and friends from Yellowknife in the gallery. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A visitor here today has been recognized as the Speaker, former MLA and grand chief. I also want to recognize Sam Gargan as a constituent from my riding. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure, also, to recognize the many seniors that we have on hand today and particularly a pair of seniors who happen to be constituents, the Eggenbergers, who are sitting up here. They are seated with some long-time ex-Yellowknifers. I don't know if they were here a long time or they've been gone a long time. Anyway, I'm very happy to recognize the Bendiksons, who have returned for a visit. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I'd also like to recognize our former colleague and former Speaker and now grand chief for the Dehcho. It's good to see that there is life after serving in the

territorial Assembly, and Mr. Antoine from Nahendeh and Mr. Gargan adhere to the principle of recycle, reuse.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to welcome everybody. In particular, I'd like to recognize Mr. Ed Jeske, who taught me how to drive when I was 16, and Vivian Squires, who used to be my constituency assistant. In case nobody else recognizes them, I would also like to recognize Mr. Dave Wind and Mr. Blake Lyons. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. It's always nice to have an audience in here.

Item 7, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 70-16(5):
PASSING OF CHARLIE TOBAC

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a well-respected elder, Charlie Tobac from Fort Good Hope, passed away on July 10, 2010. Charlie was known as a strong believer in the Dene culture and healing traditions, as well as a strong voice for the Dene people on issues such as the proposed Mackenzie Valley Natural Gas Pipeline and, more importantly, learning the traditional values of Dene. On behalf of the Sahtu region constituents, we send our thoughts and our prayers to the Tobac family. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 8, oral questions.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 189-16(5):
RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT FOR
NWT POWER CORPORATION

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about this one small line in this recruitment ad that has caused such a stir in Hay River. I really can't overstate that, Mr. Speaker. I know it may not seem like a big thing, because one extra executive or CEO in Yellowknife may not be a big thing, but in Hay River, in a small community, this is a large thing. As our government, we say that we're committed to vibrant, sustainable communities, and there's good air service between Hay River and Yellowknife, there are certainly good communication systems in place and, like I said,

this one small line here. It said that as a result, the selected individual may reside in either Yellowknife or Hay River.

I would like to ask the Premier today if he could tell us why, and tell the people of Hay River, I guess, why it was necessary to offer the alternative of living in Hay River or Yellowknife to this person. I'm wondering perhaps if they thought they couldn't recruit somebody if it was to live in Hay River, because I think we could certainly prove that not to be the case, but I'd like to know what the rationale was for that option. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ad that was put out by the board on the recruitment process for the CEO was out. I was informed about it as the ad had gone out. I met with the acting chair of the board as well as their recruitment committee for that position. They have informed me that there has been no designation as to whether it be Hay River or Yellowknife, but they included that, and partly due to the fact of the review that was done that talked about some restructuring of the executive part of the headquarters. There is no commitment from that piece that we are not planning to do any moves out of Hay River to Yellowknife. That one position, though, was advertised as the potential incumbent could choose either location. That is what I was informed of. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The day-to-day operations of an organization, whether or not the leader is there every day or not is largely -- and the Premier knows this as a leader of this organization -- the leadership is a huge piece of the good working and productivity and contentment of the folks who work in the headquarters in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT hydro piece, which is a subsidiary of the NWT Power Corporation, having to come here to do that work when the Taltson is located in the South Slave. Hay River is in the South Slave. We as a government have got to look for ways of sustaining the smaller communities, which can't be putting everything into Yellowknife. Nothing against Yellowknife, but we can't be doing that. Is it too late to remove the option of the president and CEO of NTPC residing in Hay River? Is it too late at this juncture to remove that option from this recruitment exercise? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The board has hired a recruitment firm over the last number of months, and has now in fact, I believe, made a recommendation as to who they would select. So during that process that ad was a part of it, and I just recently had a meeting again with the acting chair as well as the selection committee for that position. They reiterated to me that there was no preference given to either location, but I will commit

to speaking with the board on this issue. Once again, thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: If I can get the Premier to agree, concur that the morale of the headquarters staff in Hay River would be enhanced by having the president and CEO also be a resident of that community to interact with those folks in the very many things you do in a small community, that that would be a valuable asset and would enhance the morale of the folks who work in the headquarters in NTPC. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I know that the Power Corporation headquarter staff as well as the staff within that community of Hay River and across the North has in fact faced many challenges over the last number of years from motions of this Assembly to motions of the Association of Communities. They have dedicated to continue providing the best level of service they can. We have had our challenges. I know that the issue of morale is one of those that get discussed by the board, as well, when they talk about the future operations going forward with the Power Corporation. Yes, I believe that morale is important. With the hiring process that having someone new come on board and it would make sense then that they become very familiar with the staff that are called headquarters in Hay River. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would still like to have the Premier commit to formally communicating with the acting chair of the board of directors, expressing strongly that the preference of this government would be that the president and CEO of NTPC reside where the headquarters is located in Hay River. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I would say I've been apprised the Member of this Legislative Assembly question Ministers of the past about where they put their key staff. I have heard many Members of the Assembly talk about, for example, if we were to put in new positions, that we diversify and go throughout our Territory. I will express the concern to the board as we go through these stages of hiring a new CEO. I will share that with the board. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 190-16(5):
INEQUALITIES BETWEEN SMALL
AND LARGE COMMUNITIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I talked about the equality and inequality of residents of the Northwest Territories under the public government system. Sometimes we come to a point in our discussions where we have the have and have-

notes, especially in larger centres and smaller communities, in terms of access to health care or education or just the cost of living.

I want to ask the Premier how we can in this government, in our last year, bring some of this equality up so that all people in the Northwest Territories will be treated fairly under our system in terms of programs, services and the equality of living in our communities.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the very early days of this Legislative Assembly through our Strategic Initiatives committees, we also established the Rural and Remote committee to look at the level of programs and services offered in our communities and how we can look towards enhancing those, considering our existing environment is one of the key factors.

As I stated in my comments earlier on today that, for example, the RCMP and the backup policy and reaching out to smaller communities is one of those ways. The work of our electricity rate review project and team will probably be one of the biggest areas where we will see those of the highest cost areas be affected by that change that we are making. The other piece would be during our business plans, the many programs and services we have tried to enhance through that Rural and Remote committee and normal planning of departments.

When we do look at our facilities and we do look at the changing landscape of the Northwest Territories, we try to address those shortfalls that we do have in our communities. The unfortunate reality is in some cases it will take a number of years to create that levelling off. As well, it could be decades, as Members have seen, to make the change. For example, the Sahtu used to be within the... There were three regions, Inuvik, Yellowknife and South Slave, I believe. Now we have seven regions and the Sahtu has been starting to grow on that basis of being a regional centre. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, certainly the Premier is correct in terms of some of the history of the Sahtu becoming its own region in terms of wanting independence in terms of coming into the realm of the system of government here. I want to ask the Premier in terms of the programs and services in the NWT.

We know that the Northwest Territories has 10 communities without RCMP services, just the access to that type of safety in our communities. Is his Cabinet and government going to allocate or look at simple, basic safety enforcement in our communities such as Colville Lake and other communities that do not have RCMP in their communities? That is the type of equality I am looking for in terms of services for all residents and

the people in the North. Is he looking at issues such as that?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, as I know, the Minister of Justice has worked with the community and with, for example, the RCMP and the Department of Justice to support their plan for the backup policy that they have initiated and we have had to implement, which costs us more money through our contract, as well as expand services into those communities that don't have coverage and work with the RCMP on that initiative as well, because they are in charge of, for example, the capital side. Our contract covers the O and M side. That is something that continues to be something we work with them on to try to expand the coverage of RCMP within our Territory. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Premier in his sessional statement talked about security resources from Ottawa, which future government leaders will shape and continue to realize our future in terms of the equality in our region. Is the Premier looking at resources where the Sahtu will come to a level of the same type of services that we see in Yellowknife or Hay River, or that type of services? Right now in our regions we are not seeing this and we want to know when this will come to reality in terms of these types of programs.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you. As Members that have been around this Assembly for a number of terms, as well as know the history of our Territory as it has developed, we used to have a level of services set out in the government standards, depending on your size of population and community. We have worked with that and in fact expanded that beyond those initial guidelines to look at the level of programs and services. One of the things that happens now is it's broken down into our tax-based communities and the general taxation area. When we talk about the services in larger communities, there's a higher tax burden on the individuals living within the large communities to pay for those enhanced services.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we can show that in fact when it comes to trying to balance that field at least on a per capita basis fund to a higher level to try to bring those communities if they're still lacking, and we know that, and we continue to try to work with changing the way we deliver our programs so we'll see that enhancement. With our discretions, we've heard throughout the life of this Assembly and many Assemblies, devolution and resource revenue sharing. With the new revenues that would come our way, that would help us deliver a higher level of programs and services with the communities, as well as sharing some of those resources with the aboriginal governments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'll get onto the other issue later on, the devolution and resource revenue sharing, but I want to talk about protection from this government in terms of the equality of services in our smaller communities. For example, Mr. Speaker, some of the communities do not have banking services. They only have the Northern Store or the Co-op store and when communities want to cash cheques, they're charged an enormous fee to cash a cheque, which I don't think they have those fees in Yellowknife or any other larger centres where there are banking services.

I wanted to ask the Premier what type of protection do you have for residents in the communities that do not have banking services, such as CIBC or TD in their communities, when they cash cheques or deal with financial services.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you. The issue of banking in our communities, we have quite a number of communities across the North that have no formal banking services. So those services are provided by, for example, a community store, a grocery store, an institution within the community. The program we would have is if there are complaints lodged, we would have to look through our consumer affairs part of our government. So that's the only thing I can offer at this time without further detail and getting the appropriate Minister to respond. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 191-16(5):
STATE OF REPAIRS TO
HIGHWAY NO. 7 (LIARD TRAIL)

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke about the condition of Highway No. 7. That's the highway that runs from B.C. over to Fort Simpson, and of course the proximity community is Fort Liard. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation, can you please provide me an update about the status of the repairs to Highway No. 7 for this construction year? Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recently visited the communities in the Member's riding and the concerns he's raising today were brought forward by a number of residents of Nahendeh. Of course, the condition of Highway No. 7 has been a concern for this government and all the people that travel it. It's a piece of infrastructure that we inherited some time ago from the federal government. It was

constructed during the Hire North days and the construction code for roads were a little different than they are today.

We recognize that it needs some attention. It is a concern. It's an aging piece of infrastructure at this point and we've made some serious commitment in terms of investment for that road. We've committed money on a three-year basis. We've, this year, done some work on gravel resurfacing and that work is completed. We've also done a considerable amount of gravel crushing, quarry development for Highway No. 7, and that work is also done. There is other work that is ongoing that needs to be done. We also have undertaken to do a further function review and engineering assessment for that road so we can develop a long-term strategy. We're also doing strength testing on different portions of the road to help us guide what we need to do. There's a contract that's been awarded to one of the local companies in the Member's riding. That work is ongoing.

So there are about six different areas that we can report on. I certainly would be glad to provide a more detailed report, if the Member would require. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. The Minister did raise something and I would like to thank him, yes, for being responsive and coming to Fort Liard immediately after I had a constituency meeting, to hear those concerns from residents. Can the Minister explain how will he ensure that the repairs to the highway are undertaken and completed so that next summer the highway is not labelled as "War Zone Road," Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I have no control on what the Member is going to label his road...

---Laughter

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, this road is going to require probably a complete reconstruction. We've been really focused on trying to develop a plan that will do that. However, the challenge is that there has been excessive rainfall in that area. It has contributed to eroding, it has contributed to culvert failures, flooding, things of that nature and it has forced us to redirect our efforts from reconstruction on a portion of the road that has been targeted, to trying to deal with some of the crisis situations that are developing and it's taken away from our investment that had hoped we would see in terms of reconstruction. But that's something that's going to happen in the long-term and it's going to need a number of governments to continue to dedicate resources to change that situation. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I think that's a strategy, I think there's got to be federal involvement. Can I ask the Minister when is his next opportunity that he would be meeting with his

federal counterpart or federal-provincial meeting of Transportation Ministers, because I think that's the point that it's important to raise the condition of Highway No. 7, especially in light that we want Canadians and tourists to visit our new Nahanni National Park Reserve and get them there and make it easier for them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. I just returned from a federal/provincial/territorial conference in Halifax and we did discuss a number of issues related to Transportation, including a strategic plan for all of Canada, including the Northwest Territories. We have a number of our officials that are leading the research and development of planning in this area and we certainly have all agreed that the future is going to be a lot different from the environment that we've dealt with in the past and our infrastructure is going to have to adapt to that. We had agreement from the new federal infrastructure Minister to have a meeting during this session. However, I've had to ask for a deferral on that to when this session is not sitting and he's agreed. We've also got commitment from Leona Aglukkaq to sit in on a meeting with us, and we're looking forward to doing that sometime in November as soon as session is done here. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents of Fort Liard often travel to Fort Nelson, like how Fort Simpson travels to Hay River for their shopping. Is there any way that the Minister can dedicate some resources to fixing the kilometre zero to kilometre 38, which is to Fort Liard, to a reasonable standard for next year? Up to and including chipseal.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The strategy that we have used to determine which roads need attention has been developed by our engineers. We certainly can ask them if they want to relocate some investment. However, that would be asking us to move away from areas that we think have issues with safety and vision and they may have some difficulty doing that without increased funding in this area. We would have to be relocating dollars that are targeted for specific areas. We can certainly discuss that and see what possibilities there are, but I would say it's unlikely.

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

QUESTION 192-16(5):
PROPOSED CHANGES TO
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I guess I've got some great

concern over some comments that the Minister made at her constituency meeting where she talked about the proposed changes to supplementary health. In fact, one of the quotes that the Minister made at that meeting was that portions of that plan would be implemented in November. That's two weeks from now.

The report from the working group has just come forward recently. I'd like to ask the Minister what exactly she is referring to. What exactly is going to be implemented in November as she mentioned at her constituency meeting?

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is aware, the joint working group on the Supp Health Benefits Program completed its work. We have jointly submitted the report to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning and Cabinet. The supp working group's work is done and we are looking forward to getting feedback from the committee on the work that the joint working group has completed.

MR. RAMSAY: I was wondering if the Minister could outline for the Regular Members here and the public -- obviously there are going to be questions and concerns stemming from the release of this working group's report -- what process is going to be followed that is going to allow questions and concerns for Members and the general public to be addressed by the government before anything is implemented.

HON. SANDY LEE: The joint working group recommendations and suggestions are in the report. It is in the hands of the committee. The committee is made up of all the Members on the other side, and I look forward to the feedback from the committee as to what their response is to that and if the details of the report will show exactly the questions that he's asking.

MR. RAMSAY: I'm not sure how officially the report got to us today. We did receive it and I'm not at liberty to discuss that report right now. Obviously it's not before the House. However, what I want to ask the Minister is: Is that report the gospel according to this Cabinet? Is this Cabinet going to entertain parking the proposed changes to supplemental health until next fall when rightfully it can become an election issue here in the Northwest Territories?

HON. SANDY LEE: As the Member knows, the joint working group was made up of three Ministers and three Regular MLAs. We were tasked to look into certain things about supp health benefits. We looked into those and some other issues that came up. We made recommendations on those. The report was officially transmitted by myself and Mrs.

Groenewegen, who is the co-chair. I don't think we need to preclude the work of the committee. I am sure that the committee will take a look at the report and give us considered feedback on the recommendations, and I and the Cabinet Ministers, my colleagues, are looking forward to hearing from the committee on their response.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the recommendation of the committee is to look at shelving the proposed changes to the supplementary health benefits in the Northwest Territories until next fall when it can become an election issue, is that something that the Minister could support?

HON. SANDY LEE: We have a consensus government. I don't know what the committee's feedback will be. I would like to ask the committee to consider all the recommendations made there. There are some very good recommendations that I think would benefit and that I think the committee would want to adopt. We haven't had enough time for the Members to give us their feedback. I am open to receiving whatever feedback the Members have on that report.

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

QUESTION 193-16(5):
LACK OF STREETLIGHTS
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I talked about the streetlights in smaller communities or the lack thereof on the roadways. Especially now with winter coming, we all know that there is limited sunlight, it's very dark, and it's quite terrible, actually, especially when I go there in the wintertime. I can't walk around much later than 6:00 in some of the areas of Lutselk'e and Fort Res because of darkness. I'd like to ask the Minister, I understand that at one time the NWT Power Corporation used to install lights on the poles and then charge the municipality for the kilowatt usage. I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs if he could advise me how the departments fund streetlights and who is responsible for streetlights in the municipalities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way it worked before was that the Power Corporation would install the poles and streetlights and then bill MACA, when MACA had the responsibility and all the infrastructure money. Since the implementation of the New Deal, it is now the community's responsibility to work with the

Power Corporation in having streetlights installed in the community.

MR. BEAULIEU: Could the Minister advise me if at the time when Municipal and Community Affairs had the responsibility to deal with the Power Corporation on street lighting, if the department has some sort of regulations, policies or formula for how many streetlights are needed to light up a street, how far between and so on? Any sort of regulation?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: My understanding is there weren't any regulations that were in place. It was something that the community would identify to the Power Corporation and try and have the proper lighting installed. The communities worked with the Power Corporation to come up with the needed lights in the community.

MR. BEAULIEU: Since as an Assembly we really don't have access to or any way of dealing with the NWT Power Corporation on this issue, I would like to know if the Minister could commit to having his department work with the municipalities and the NWT Power Corporation to have some of the lights installed in key places in the communities where the streets are not lit up at all.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Each fall and winter we work with the community governments to support their revised capital investment plans and if they identify streetlights as one of their priorities, then we would work with them to include the streetlights in their capital plans. The communities have done quite good at doing their capital plans, and I can inform the Member that one of his communities has actually identified street lighting as part of their capital plan and they're hoping to do the implementation during this fiscal year.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you talk about lights, there are a lot of analogies that can be made. I'm listening to some of those. When the New Deal was formed and the New Deal was signed, because there was a relationship between the Power Corporation and this government through MACA, I suspect that was included in the formula when the New Deal was signed by the communities. Can the Minister tell me if he's prepared to commit to going back to the formula in the New Deal and to see -- apparently this is a fairly expensive proposition -- if lights were actually included in the infrastructure transfer in the capital planning.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will commit to working with the different groups and seeing what was included and what was not included. The Member mentioned earlier on in his statement about the infrastructure that transferred over to the communities and how some of it was aging, which is true. Had we gone about doing business in the

old system, a lot of that infrastructure would never be replaced for a long time because they'd be at the end of the line in priorities. So by doing this, giving the money to the communities, having them have the responsibility, I think we've seen some good work towards some of the infrastructure being replaced a lot sooner than it would have been had it continued to be administered through MACA. I will commit to speaking with the interested parties and the parties that were affected to see how the formula was arrived at.

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

QUESTION 194-16(5):

RELOCATION OF MEDICAL TRAVEL OFFICE

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our face-to-face services for medical travel have been critical and expected, especially where language and communication barriers exist. Up until now the medical travel office has been located in Stanton on the main floor directly across from the intake booths, which has been a great location especially for individuals coming in from out of town, from the small communities, the grannies from Nahanni who wish to have actual communication with the medical travel office. Now it's gone. Now we've moved it behind locked doors, security windows, and there is no face-to-face contact whatsoever. Now it's all phone and e-mail. I'm confused. There doesn't appear to be a transition plan. If there is a transition plan, I'd like to know what that is.

My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Was a transition plan designed and implemented to help those individuals who are using medical travel transition from an open and friendly face-to-face service to a rigid and closed-off digital and telephone services? Right now I find that people are surprised, not notified, and they're confused, not informed. To the Minister.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's comments. I listened carefully to what he said in the Member's statement. I would be happy to convey his concerns and the questions he has to the administration of Stanton Hospital and get back to the Member.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'm quite happy to hear that. I'm glad that the information is going to be sent to them. I'm more interested in getting a commitment from the Minister that she will have Stanton implement a comprehensive transition plan. Given that there is an empty office out there and I saw with my own eyes that there was nobody in there, it was completely vacant, no sign of anybody using

that, I think it would be good if the Minister would commit to bringing back one of the medical travel officers and putting them in that office for a transition period to give the people an opportunity to transition from a face-to-face, open system to one that obviously the department is not interested in having face-to-face contact. Will the Minister commit to doing that?

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely, yes, commit to the Member to get all of the details that he is asking for, transitional measures and the plans, and discuss with the Member and get input from the Member. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'll go back and read Hansard, but I'm pretty sure I'm talking about some action, not just a request for some information. I'm asking the Minister to commit to actually taking one of the medical travel officers back, putting him in that vacant office as part of the transition plan. If eventually we want that person to move out because we want to move to a phone and digital service, that's fine, but help us understand and build a transition plan so it's not a turn off of the switch, it's not a no service from service. So will the Minister commit to putting somebody back in that office?

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, yes, I would not preclude that option, but right now I think it's important for us to get the information from the authority as to what they have being planned for the front office. I think everybody here knows that space in a hospital and that sort of a facility is more a premium and so we need to hear from the administration as to what their plans are. I would be happy to share that with the Member and come up with an action plan together and seek input from the Member as well as the Standing Committee on Social Programs, if necessary. So, yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to working with the Minister on that. I understand this base issue and I'm glad the Minister brought it up, because it's my understanding that they're taking the medical travel out of there, which is a face-to-face and has traditionally been a face-to-face sort of service, and instead they've put the director of medical services in there, which isn't a face-to-face service type position. In fact, the services that that director is responsible for is ophthalmology, clinical services and medical travel, all of which are out of Stanton. So why did we take a director, which has no face-to-face service with clients, and stick him in prime, prime client service face-to-face contact location and move medical travel, which is historically a face-to-face service, and stick him behind closed

doors? It kind of seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that they got it exactly backwards. I'm hoping the Minister can help me understand the logic behind that, because, quite frankly, I don't see any.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I take the Member's point and he's asking questions and making suggestions. He brought this issue to me yesterday. I'm committing to the Member to get the information from the authority as to exactly what their plans are. They may have a very good explanation as to the move and what other plans that are part of this move. So I think it's important for us to get a full picture of if there are any other related issues surrounding that, and then when we get the full picture, of course, I'll welcome the Member's input on what we can do better or do differently or anything else. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 195-16(5):
PREMIER'S EFFORTS TO CREATE A VISION
FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned in my Member's statement that I have a few concerns about the search that the Premier is on to find a vision for the NWT. In my experience and in my view, a vision, when it's written down, is usually about three or four lines of text, and the questions that are part of the Premier's process are very broad, very vague, and that's, as I mentioned, the answers that we have gathered, or the Premier has gathered, are a very broad range. It leads to my concern about how we are going to end up with a vision from the results of these forums.

Any time we enter into consultation, I think it's acknowledged by Members, it's acknowledged by the public that there's a cost involved. We've gone through five forums, I think, to date, and I think there may be a couple more yet to come. So there's obviously a cost involved. I know that the Assembly approved a budget for this particular exercise, the Northern Leaders Forum exercise, but I don't know whether or not the Creating Our Future was part of this exercise. So to the Premier I'd like to know: What is the cost of this Creating Our Future exercise that he has embarked on, what will it cost by the time it's done, and how much of the, I think, \$860,000 that the Assembly approved is being used for this exercise? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; the budget was approved by this Assembly and we're operating within that budget. A portion of that has been allocated to the aboriginal governments for their work in that area and we're gathering all the information between not

just the forums but the mail-outs, the website, and seeking all that from individuals as well, and by sitting down with the aboriginal leadership. We're targeting the end of November to pull that work together and discuss at that point how we would proceed to, for example, how we bring that work back to this Assembly and this House for discussion and how aboriginal leadership may take that work as well and use it in their efforts. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thank you to the Premier for that information. It kind of leads into my next question. I was going to ask what are the next steps that the Premier is going to take to take all of this information to get to a vision. He referenced the Northern Leaders Forum, and I guess I still need to know how the Premier expects that these forums that we've engaged in will lead us to a vision. Will we have a vision that gets to the Northern Leaders Forum and then they will bring their visions and then they start all over again? So, you know, who's taking these next steps and what are they going to be? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, we brought forward this idea of reaching out to the people of the North, building a common vision between aboriginal governments, public government, the future of the Territories, and it was through that work we brought the request for funds. Through that work we came up with a process of using some of that for the aboriginal governments to do their work and, of course, for our work. But as we talk about that future of how we build and how we go forward, that work, as I had stated, we are going to get together and pool all of the work that has gone on, the information we receive from the forums, from individuals who are responding to the website, individuals who are responding to the mail-out, and pull that together with the aboriginal governments' work, discuss at that level what possibilities can flow out of that, how do we pull it together, and I will be bringing that work back to the Members of this Assembly. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, the Premier mentioned beyond just the forums. There have been mail-outs to people who have wanted to send their comments in by mail. There's been an on-line survey that's been ongoing. So there's any number of responses other than what's summarized from the five or so forums that are the Premier's website. I'm really concerned that... I guess I need to know again from the Premier, I didn't hear an answer to how are all those broad answers, ideas, suggestions, specific ideas, specific actions relative to programs, how in heaven's name is the Premier going to take those and condense them down into something that can be laid at the feet of all the members of the Northern Leaders Forum for, I guess, a constructive discussion? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Much like what Members of the Legislative Assembly do every time there's an election and they gather together to form a vision for this Assembly itself, we will do similar. As we pull their work, there will be similar areas, whether it is around economic development, whether it is around our environment, whether it is around our government structures. As I stated in my sessional statement today, some of those key areas that we're working on revolve around those very issues and how we can work together to promote a common vision that we could use as northern governments in our approach to, for example, the federal government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Premier for that explanation. I guess I still have my concerns that any time you take a huge amount of information and condense it down into something smaller, which is what that sounds like this is going to be, that an awful lot of it gets lost. You know, there's the wheat and the chaff and I think a lot of this information is going to become chaff.

The Premier mentioned that the Northern Leaders Forum will meet at the end of November. I'd like to know, once this vision is developed from whatever comes to the table at the Northern Leaders Forum, will that vision that comes out of there be made public and when will it be made public? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the area of the work that's being done at the Northern Leaders Forum, which we do have involvement from Regular Members, we will pull that work together, we will come up with options of how we proceed. How much of that, for example, will be run through this forum, being the public government, the process for it and what type of recommendations... Do they get debated, for example, in this Assembly? Do we put it out there for more comments? Our goal is to come back in June of the upcoming year for discussion by this Assembly as how we would progress on those key areas and adopting the work that has been done. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 196-16(5):
LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS DISTRACTED
DRIVING AND HAND-HELD
ELECTRONIC DEVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I raised the issue yet again regarding the concern of distracted driving and the fact that we don't have an appropriate level of legislation that reflects banning cell phones while people are driving. I continue to raise this issue with

the Minister of Transportation. I am well aware that there is some discussion out there regarding maybe we will have a law, maybe we won't have a law. Quite honestly, I am starting to wonder that perhaps maybe the Minister is waiting until either cell phones become obsolete or certainly perhaps he is waiting for cars and vehicles to become obsolete before the Department of Transportation will take this issue seriously.

In all honesty, Mr. Speaker, the real question today is: What is the plan of the Department of Transportation in respect to distracted driving? Are they planning on bringing forward any type of legislative amendment to make sure that our roads are safe on this particular issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think anybody is going to argue that a driver's performance is severely undermined while talking on the cell phone or texting. I don't think anybody is going to argue that driving around in your Lexus, drinking coffee, chewing gum and trying to stop your two kids from fighting in the back is considered a hazard.

Mr. Speaker, the Member pointed out in his Member's statement that I, as a Minister, was amusing or flirting with legislation. I would suggest the Member make a date in the standing committee that we are working with, to find out where this piece of legislation is at. We have done a lot of work in this area. We have done research. We presented our findings to the standing committee. They have responded to us in writing. We are considering some of their recommendations and looking at the next steps going forward. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that veiled response by the Minister of Transportation. Fortunately, I don't chew gum so I know he wasn't referring to me.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the Minister did say, as a response, that they have written the committee. They have gotten a response back from committee. I have to put the question right on the appropriate person, which is the Minister of Transportation. So now they have a response back from the committee. What specifically is the Department of Transportation planning to do on this issue and what type of timing is any decision going to be reflected in? Are we going to expect any type of decision in this government's lifetime, which has less than a year to continue to perform before the next election, or is he just going to sit on it and wait until the next government makes a decision? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, if the Member had attended committee meetings he

would have known that we had informed the committee that we plan to move forward on this piece of legislation. We are right now looking at as to how comprehensive a distracted driving legislation policy document should be. We are also looking at recommendations made to allow for municipalities to opt out. This is difficult, of course, so we have to look at it from a number of different assessments. However, we would like to see something in place for consideration by committee and this House sometime in the new year. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, it shows you how much attention the Minister of Transportation pays to the particular issue as well as the issue of me, because I don't even sit on that committee, so yet another distraction to the issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister is quite vague on details as to what exactly and when this will be coming forward. It sounds like it is a hodgepodge. Quite clearly, this could be decided quite quickly. An amendment could come forward quite quickly. This opt in and out is not a decisive way of dealing with this issue. It is clearly a sitting on the fence way of dealing with this problem.

Mr. Speaker, what clear direction is the Department of Transportation going to lead with to show the Northwest Territories citizens that it is taking this responsibility very seriously? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Member is still not paying attention.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we committed to committee and provided information to committee on our findings. We provided a number of options that we would like considered as we move forward. We have response from committee. We are also watching, with great interest, as Alberta unveils their legislation sometime this fall. We have also had discussions with the CCMTA, the federal body that deals with best practices. They are coming out with recommendations that we would like to compile the findings of all that information with what we have already gathered and start developing legislation along with committee members, and, of course, the Member doesn't sit on it so we may have to make a side trip to his office to present it to him directly, but we will ensure that he is in the loop. We will provide all that information for discussion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have often said, the government has the D problem, the deferred, delay, deny. I can go on forever. The Minister says he is watching Alberta about what they do, but, Mr. Speaker, where is the leadership from the Department of Transportation;

more specifically, the Minister? Six other provinces have initiated a process and gone forward and taken action on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure what the Minister is waiting for.

Mr. Speaker, when can we see a legislative proposal that actually shows that the Department of Transportation is taking this issue seriously, they are taking action on this problem and putting the primary safety of our constituents up front as opposed to a privilege which they seem to be distracted with? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, if the Member hasn't recognized yet, the leaders provide direction to our Department of Transportation. We, of course, take any issues that affect the safety of our travelling public very seriously. It is a priority. As the Member is aware, we need to engage all the Members of this House as we move forward. We have already had a motion in this House defeated. We have to make sure that it takes into consideration all the different issues that may be addressed under distracted driving. It is going to take something that we want to move forward carefully. We want to make sure we get it right. We want to make sure we have the support of the Members of this House. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 197-16(5):
JOINT REVIEW PANEL LETTER

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources to feel passed over today. I know we can pick on the others here. My question will be for the Minister, as lead Minister of the Joint Review Panel on the report on the Mackenzie Gas Project.

Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling today the Joint Review Panel's letter of comment on the interim response of the federal and territorial governments to the Joint Review Panel's report putting the matter for consideration in Committee of the Whole. I don't think it is possible to overstate the rejection in the Joint Review Panel's clear indictment of the government's joint interim response. The JRP summarizes its condemnation in 50 short words. "The panel has concluded that, in the absence of implementation of its recommendations and in particular those recommendations directed to the governments, the adverse impacts of this project could be significant and its contribution towards sustainability could be negative. In that event, the opportunity for the project to provide accommodation for a sustainable northern future would be lost."

Mr. Speaker, given this clear, frank and unequivocal statement, does the government intend

to radically modify its response? And I stress the word "radically."

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member forgot unambiguous as well.

---Laughter

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there is a process underway. The Joint Review Panel has played a key role and did the initial report. The initial response was done. We did our duty to consult, we consulted with all the aboriginal governments. We are involved. We shared that information with the Joint Review Panel. They came back with a letter. The Member is referring to it. He said he would table it later today. That letter is now being thoroughly and fully reviewed and looked at. We are still in the finalizing stage of the report and it is going to be looked at very carefully, along with the other feedback we have picked up through this process. That report will be finalized in the coming weeks.

I just want to assure the Member and the people of the Northwest Territories that the Government of the Northwest Territories takes its responsibility to speak for and protect the interests of people in the Northwest Territories very, very seriously and we are looking at this issue very closely. As I indicated in my number of press conferences since yesterday, that that report, when it comes out, will be signed off by both governments and we will be standing by that report. It has not been concluded. There's been a key role played by the JRP and that is being factored in as we speak. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. The Minister has once again said wait and see. I don't accept that response. I'm trying to bring some accountability to this process, and this side of the House has consistently tried to have input into this process as a consensus government. So I'm asking again, Mr. Speaker, since the JRP has clearly rejected the response of the governments, does this government intend to radically alter its response? I need to know this from this Minister -- he's our Minister -- does this Minister intend to radically adjust its response and commit to the full set of actions the JRP says are indispensable to preventing environmental and social disaster from this project? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. We are looking at the report, or the response from the JRP. Ourselves, as representatives of the Government of the Northwest Territories, representing the people of the Northwest Territories, as well as the federal government, and I can indicate to the Member once again that we are hard at work looking at all that information, the

response, the recommendations, issues of concern by the JRP as well as other folks. We received feedback under the agree to consult, for example, and that we will be concluding in the next few weeks the report and we will be putting that out to the public. We'll give it to the National Energy Board, it will be posted and then we will be in a position to defend that, and that's the process. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. The Mackenzie Gas Project would be the biggest capital project ever mounted in Canada, huge in world scale and an environmental and economic earthquake for many of the people in the Northwest Territories. The people have spent four years and \$20 million contributing to a report they presumed would address their concerns with the project, and these are people selected from the people of the NWT by the government. The Joint Review Panel produced that report with exhaustive, expert and constructive recommendations, and now our governments intend to throw that wisdom in the wastebasket. Can the Minister suggest to us why we should ever have faith, why the people of the Northwest Territories should ever have faith in governments when this is clearly against all reason?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. The Member is overdramatizing, I believe, the circumstance. We're not throwing anything away. We have been part of this process from the start. It was agreed to many years ago, the role of the JRP, the role of the responsible Ministers, and its recommendations we are looking at and are going to respond to. I'm saying to the people of the Northwest Territories they should continue to have full trust in the Government of the Northwest Territories in this area and all the other areas that we deliver programs and work to protect and advance their interests, and this will be no different. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a final supplementary question. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to ask apology for leaping to conclusions on the basis of overwhelming evidence, but I will certainly hope to be proven wrong in this case and that the public can in fact have that confidence. For now though, Mr. Speaker, I want to note that the Minister, I believe, said this morning on the CBC Radio interview that it's now up to the elected representatives of the people of the Northwest Territories, and I believe that includes 11 Members on this side of the House. So I assume that we will have some input into what we're going to do with this situation, the panel's rejection of the government's response, and that we'll get things on track.

So I'm asking the Minister, will he now act basically with the honour that the people of the Northwest Territories are expecting to support their decisions here? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. It's a good thing that after 15 years I've got a thick political hide when he says "will I now act with the honour people expect" implies that up until now I have not been, and I would, of course, take grave exception to that.

I stand here very, very committed, as I've indicated, to looking to the interests as a Minister of this government to people of the Northwest Territories and it's something that consumes me just about every waking moment that I do have. Yes, we will do, and we are doing, and will continue to do all the things necessary to protect the interests of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 7-16(5): SUGGESTIONS FOR FUNDING OF PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Ms. Bisaro on May 13, 2010, regarding suggestions for funding of the proposed Supplementary Health Benefits Program.

As announced in the House on May 18, 2010, a joint working group was created to address the concerns raised and finalize the SHB Program implementation. The joint working group was composed of three Regular Members and three Cabinet Ministers, including myself as Minister of Health and Social Services. Once the report is finalized it will be shared with Cabinet and the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning.

The joint working group used the principles of consensus government to ensure that the final program is available to all residents of the Northwest Territories. The focus of the group was to define personal and employer responsibilities around uninsured health care and third-party insurance, ensure that a safety net is created for residents who accrue high health care costs, and defining catastrophic coverage.

The joint working group also gave consideration to the suggestions for efficiencies and alternate funding sources provided to the Department of Health and Social Services in the written question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 8-16(5): MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on May 13, 2010, regarding the Medical Travel Policy.

The Medical Travel Policy provides for two different types of escorts: a medical escort, normally a doctor or a nurse required to provide professional care to the patient while travelling; or a non-medical escort, an adult authorized to accompany a patient who is unable to travel without some assistance or who is authorized to stay for part of all of the medical treatment.

A non-medical escort will be authorized under the following circumstances:

- the patient is under the age of nineteen and requires an escort;
- the patient is an infant who is being breast fed by the mother who is the non-medical escort;
- the patient has a mental or physical handicap of a nature that he or she is unable to travel unassisted;
- the patient requires an escort for interpretation during the travel; or
- the attending physician at the treatment facility provides a written request for a non-medical escort to participate in a treatment program in order to learn how to care for the patient following discharge. This written request must be approved by the deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

The practice has been to approve non-medical escorts for any senior requiring assistance, when requested by a physician.

A second non-medical escort is only provided in rare situations when prior approval has been obtained from the deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

In order to ensure that aboriginal cultures are respected, interpreter services are available for the patient through both Larga House and the Northern Health Nursing Services, and traditional foods are offered in regular meal planning at Larga House.

The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of the Executive are currently undertaking a review of the Medical Travel Program. The review is intended to redesign the program's clinical and administrative processes to bring them in line with the realities of the current health care delivery system in the Northwest Territories.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a copy of the current Medical Travel Policy and a diagram outlining the authorization process for all medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 9-16(5):
HEALTH CARE FUNDING IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on May 17, 2010, regarding health care funding in the NWT.

As of June 2010 there are 40,966 residents with valid health care coverage.

Under the federal Canada Health Act, residents may depart the NWT and maintain their NWT health care coverage for three months before applying for coverage under their new province/territory of residence. The three-month waiting period is shared between different provinces and territories in order to separate temporary from more permanent residents, and also applies to persons who are moving to the NWT from another province/territory. The Department of Health and Social Services regularly audits claims and follows up with residents that receive services outside of the NWT for periods of three months or longer.

In order to receive out-of-territory coverage, residents must request approval for extended out-of-territory stays. Residents that are eligible for out-of-territory coverage are: students enrolled in full-time studies, patients on referred medical travel, government supported athletes, temporary workers, and individuals on southern placements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 11-16(5):
HEALTH CARE PLAN REGISTRATION
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on May 18, 2010, regarding health care plan registration in the NWT.

As of June 2010 there are 40,966 residents with valid health care coverage.

Under the federal Canada Health Act, residents may depart the NWT and maintain their NWT health care coverage for three months before applying for coverage under their new province/territory of residence. The three-month waiting period is shared between different provinces and territories in order to separate temporary from more permanent residents, and also applies to persons who are moving to the NWT from another province/territory. The Department of Health and Social Services regularly audits claims and follows up with residents that receive services outside of the NWT for periods of three months or longer.

In order to receive out-of-territory coverage, residents must request approval for extended out-of-territory stays. Residents that are eligible for out-of-territory coverage are: students enrolled in full-time studies, patients on referred medical travel,

government supported athletes, temporary workers, and individuals on southern placements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 12-16(5):
HEALTH CANADA FUNDING TO NWT
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on May 18, 2010, regarding Health Canada's funding to NWT residential school survivors.

Federal government funding for counselling survivors of residential schools through the Aboriginal Health Foundation (AHF) expired on March 21, 2010. The amount of federal funding that expired was substantial and totalled over \$5.1 million. However, none of the federal funding through the AHF was provided directly to the Department of Health and Social Services, but was flowed directly from the AHF to the organizations that provided community-based healing projects.

It is important that residential school survivors receive the counselling services they need to continue the healing process. The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has formed partnerships with other Government of the Northwest Territories departments, aboriginal governments, communities, and organizations to support Northerners in making healthy choices and getting the services they need, including support through the GNWT Community Counselling Program.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is the GNWT lead for residential schools. As such, ECE leads the NWT Residential Schools Interagency Committee, which the DHSS participates in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 13-16(5):
GROWING FORWARD PROGRAM
FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on May 19, 2010, regarding assistance for the Growing Forward Program funding allocations.

Would the Minister provide the following information for the previous two fiscal years as well as the current fiscal year 2010-2011?

1. How much funding has been made available and how much was accessed from this program?

For the 2008-2009 fiscal year \$435,000 was made available under the Canada-Northwest Territories Agriculture Policy Framework Program, predecessor to the Canada-Northwest Territories Growing Forward Program. The total expenditure for that year was \$429,436.

For the 2009-2010 fiscal year \$726,317 was made available under the Canada-Northwest Territories Growing Forward Program, which was a new agreement with a broadened scope and increased budget. The total expenditure for that year was \$614,761.

For the 2010-2011 fiscal year \$726,317 was made available under the Canada-Northwest Territories Growing Forward Program. As of August 31, 2010, a total of \$272,755 has been expended, and we project a full expenditure of program dollars for this fiscal year.

2. What amounts of funding have been distributed under the Growing Forward Program and who were the recipients whether it was a business, individual or non-government organization? Could the information be broken down by community?

At the appropriate time during this session I will table the Grants and Contributions Annual Report, which will provide you with the information you are seeking.

3. How is this funding allocated to each recipient?
 - More specifically, how is the funding calculated and designated?
 - What formula is utilized?
 - A base funding approach or other means?
 - Also, provide specific allocation rationale for each individual case so that the justification for each allocation can be accounted for.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document describing the Growing Forward Program, which also explains program criteria. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-16(5): COST OF MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Bromley on May 19, 2010, regarding the cost of the Mackenzie Gas Project.

From 2008-2009 to 2010-2011, the government will have approved funding totalling \$8.8 million for activities related to the Mackenzie Gas Project. This includes \$1 million to participate in National Energy Board regulatory process. The amount, however, does not include the time of other GNWT staff and resources for other activities associated with the project, such as participation and attendance at the Joint Review Panel hearings.

Although there has been limited travel specifically related to the Mackenzie Gas Project, Ministers and the Premier have taken the opportunity to discuss the project as a priority of the government at a number of trips. A summary of ministerial travel that would have had a Mackenzie Gas Project

component has been compiled from the travel report.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table two documents, one that outlines the investment by department over the 2008-2009 to 2010-2011 fiscal years, and a second that lists the ministerial travel undertaken to support the Mackenzie Gas Project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 8: SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION ACT

BILL 4: AN ACT TO AMEND THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 8, Social Work Profession Act. The committee wishes to report that Bill 8, Social Work Profession Act, is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, the committee further wishes to report that it has reviewed Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act. The Standing Committee on Social Programs wishes to report Bill 4 to Committee of the Whole and recommends that it not proceed further as committee has concerns about the use of administrative reviews in providing a fair, independent and community-based appeal process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 9: AN ACT TO AMEND THE TOURISM ACT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Tourism Act, and wishes to report that Bill 9 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 66-16(5):
NWT CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2011-2012

TABLED DOCUMENT 67-16(5):
GNWT RESPONSE TO STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS REPORT ON
THE REVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
2008-2009 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 68-16(5):
GROWING FORWARD:
CANADA/NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 69-16(5):
COST OF THE MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT –
INVESTMENT

TABLED DOCUMENT 70-16(5):
COST OF MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT –
MINISTERIAL TRAVEL

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territorial Capital Estimates 2011-2012.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to table the following document entitled GNWT Response to the Standing Committee on Government Operations Report 5-16(4) on the Review of the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Speaker, further to Return to Written Question 13-16(5), I wish to table the following document entitled Growing Forward: Canada/Northwest Territories.

I also wish to table, Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 14-16(5), the following two documents entitled Cost of the Mackenzie Gas Project – Investment, and Cost of Mackenzie Gas Project – Ministerial Travel. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 71-16(5):
RESPONSE TO MOTION 2-16(5),
ADULT DIAGNOSIS OF
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

TABLED DOCUMENT 72-16(5):
GNWT MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents, the first entitled GNWT response to Motion 2-16(5), Adult Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

And the second document entitled GNWT Medical Travel Policy in response to my Return to Written Question 8-16(5). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 73-16(5):
LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 29, 2010,
FROM DENNIS BEVINGTON
RE: LIARD HIGHWAY

TABLED DOCUMENT 74-16(5):
TRANSCRIPT, CBC RADIO JUNE 29, 2010 –
JOANNE DENERON ON THE CONDITIONS
OF THE INFAMOUS LIARD TRAIL

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my Member's statement and questions earlier today, I wish to table two documents that relate to the disrepair and poor driving conditions on Highway No. 7, also known as the Liard Highway. The first document is a letter dated September 29, 2010, from the Western Arctic Member of Parliament, Mr. Dennis Bevington, to the Honourable Jim Prentice, federal Minister of Environment, seeking much needed assistance for making repairs to the highway.

The second document is a CBC Radio transcript dated June 29, 2010, in which Ms. Joanne Deneron of Fort Liard comments on the poor condition of the highway and the detrimental impacts experienced by small communities due to the highway's state of disrepair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 75-16(5):
LETTER DATED OCTOBER 4, 2010,
TO MS. FRANCE PEGEOT
RE: COMMENTS ON
INTERIM GOVERNMENT REPONSES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter of comment dated October 4, 2010, from the chair of the Joint Review Panel, Mr. Robert Hornell, to Ms. France Pegeot of the Mackenzie Gas Project office, detailing the panel's rejection of the interim government response on their report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Clerk.

TABLED DOCUMENT 76-16(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 3-16(5)

TABLED DOCUMENT 77-16(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 4-16(5)

TABLED DOCUMENT 78-16(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 5-16(5)

TABLED DOCUMENT 79-16(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 6-16(5)

TABLED DOCUMENT 80-16(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 7-16(5)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Kevin Menicoche on May 12, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, in response to a petition tabled by Mrs. Jane Groenewegen on May 13, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Glen Abernethy on May 13, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Glen Abernethy on May 13, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Kevin Menicoche on May 13, 2010. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 81-16(5):
2009 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
CONFLICT OF INTEREST COMMISSIONER

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Pursuant to Section 99 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the 2009 Annual Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Item 15, notices of motion. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 14-16(5):
APPOINTMENT OF
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, October 18, 2010, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly, by virtue of Section 5 of the Elections and Plebiscite Act, recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of Mr. David Brock of Yellowknife as Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories for a term of four years commencing October 18, 2010.

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

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

---Unanimous consent granted

Motions

MOTION 14-16(5):
APPOINTMENT OF
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, CARRIED

MR. RAMSAY: WHEREAS the Elections and Plebiscite Act provides for the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer who has the responsibility to exercise general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of an election and enforce, on the part of all election officers, fairness, impartiality and compliance with the Elections and Plebiscite Act;

AND WHEREAS Mr. David Brock was appointed by the Commissioner on September 7, 2010, as Acting Chief Electoral Officer until October 21, 2010;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly, by virtue of Section 5 of the Elections and Plebiscites Act, recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of Mr. David Brock of Yellowknife as Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories for a term of four years commencing October 18, 2010. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project; Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits; Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard; Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy; and Tabled Document 66-16(5), NWT Capital Estimates 2011-2012, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call committee to order. We have before us for consideration Tabled Document 4-16(5), Tabled Document 30-16(5), Tabled Document 38-16(5), Tabled Document 62-16(5) and Tabled Document 66-16(5). What is the wish of committee?

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Bromley.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. A motion is on the floor. Do you have a seconder? The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, October 15, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements

7. Oral Questions
 8. Written Questions
 9. Returns to Written Questions
 10. Replies to Opening Address
 11. Petitions
 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 14. Tabling of Documents
 15. Notices of Motion
 16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 17. Motions
 18. First Reading of Bills
 19. Second Reading of Bills
 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project
 - Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits
 - Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard
 - Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
 - Tabled Document 66-16(5), NWT Capital Estimates 2011-2012
 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
 22. Third Reading of Bills
 23. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, October 15, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

