



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**Tuesday, November 2, 2010****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:42 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 81-16(5):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories tourism industry has great potential to help us realize the 16th Legislative Assembly's goals of creating a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices.

With the right idea, proper support and an ample amount of elbow grease, tourism businesses can be successful in every one of our 33 communities.

To support the growth of this important industry, Tourism 2010 was approved five years ago. The plan has served us well and we must now look at how we will build on tourism opportunities in the next five years and beyond.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is consulting with tourism stakeholders and the public on what a new strategy would look like. We have held open houses across the Territory, from the Beaufort-Delta to the South Slave, to hear what people have to say about where the Government of the Northwest Territories should be investing its tourism dollars in the future.

Mr. Speaker, based on the lessons we have learned in the last five years and the needs of the stakeholders, this new plan must reflect the current realities of the tourism industry.

The first reality is that there is a growing demand for authentic cultural experiences. This suggests we should provide support to develop our aboriginal tourism sector. Later today I will be tabling Industry, Tourism and Investment's response to the consultation work done last year that examined

expanding aboriginal tourism in the Northwest Territories.

Secondly, our strategy must take into account that tourism is highly sensitive to global events. The recent recession is just one example of an event that has affected tourism in the Northwest Territories. In order to quickly adapt to these external forces, our tourism industry must be diversified. Any new tourism strategy we develop must be geared towards assisting our tourism industry to offer a variety of products and visitor experiences.

Finally, a new strategy must recognize that in order for our tourism industry to grow, it must maintain its reputation for excellence in the marketplace. We are committed to working with the Northwest Territories Tourism to identify options to enhance consumer confidence and provide our operations with increased opportunities to deliver an excellent tourism product.

This reputation depends on offering quality products that match the demands of travelers, and a skilled labour force that offers excellence in service. The new strategy will have an increased emphasis on providing training to our operators so they can enhance their business performance and skills.

Mr. Speaker, we have a wonderful Territory, full of unique, authentic experiences for visitors to discover. We have dedicated operators that provide world-class products and services for the people who come north to discover them.

Through the Government of the Northwest Territories' efforts to promote the tourism industry, including the development of a strategy that will succeed Tourism 2010, we continue to work towards diversifying our economy and supporting the development of sustainable local economies through community-based industries like tourism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 82-16(5):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide Members and the public an update on the current status of the future Mackenzie Valley Highway to Tuktoyaktuk. Since I last updated this Assembly on the future highway, we have made great progress.

With the funding agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government announced this past January, we have been hard at work securing agreement with aboriginal groups along the proposed alignment. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note that we have now successfully signed MOUs with the Town of Inuvik, the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Tulita Land Corporations and the Tulita Dene Band, the Kahsho Gotine District of the Sahtu and the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation for the Dehcho First Nations. These MOUs enable us to work with local aboriginal and community groups to complete project description reports (PDR) for the section of the highway from Wrigley to the coast. We hope to have the PDR work for the portion from Wrigley to the Dempster completed within the next two years.

While we make progress on these project description reports, Mr. Speaker, we are still making improvements to the winter road that will be used as part of the all-weather highway. One considerable accomplishment this year was the completion of the 300-metre Blackwater Bridge. This bridge will extend the winter road season and is one of the larger bridges that would be required for an all-weather highway.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, this summer, in partnership with the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, we completed the construction of a gravel access road from Tuk to source 177. This road has been built on the eventual alignment for an all-weather highway and will in the end become the northern-most section of the future highway. While this access road was under construction, a PDR for the section of the highway from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk was also completed. This PDR has been submitted to the Environmental Impact Review Board for their consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway has been a dream of our residents for many years. The important progress we have made in the last years has brought us closer to realizing this dream than ever before. The partnerships that are being built today with Canada and aboriginal groups to undertake the engineering and environmental work are the partnerships that will get this highway built. Mr. Speaker, to keep building on these important partnerships, at the end of this session I will be travelling to Ottawa to meet with Ministers Strahl and Aglukkaq to discuss

infrastructure needs, including the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

Mr. Speaker, as this project moves forward I will continue to update this Assembly on new developments. Like many of you here, I hope to one day soon drive from Wrigley through the Mackenzie Valley and north along the Arctic Coast to Tuktoyaktuk. Mahsi cho.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 83-16(5):
NWT HEALTHNET

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, investment in HealthNet tools such as the interoperable Electronic Health Record (or iEHR), the Diagnostic Imaging/Picture Archiving Communication System (or DI/PACS), and Telehealth are critical to delivery of health care services for residents of the Northwest Territories.

These tools are resulting in better access and outcomes across the Northwest Territories. In the words of a local clinician, "This is transforming how we deliver care." In the words of one patient, "For 10 seconds, everything went terribly wrong. Then for the next four days, everything went very right. The hospital in Inuvik...X-rayed my leg and using the new DI/PACS system, sent images to the orthopaedic surgeon in Yellowknife. I got to see the technology and how health professionals use it in real-time. They decided the break was bad enough to airlift me by medevac to Yellowknife. At Stanton Territorial Hospital I received first-class care. Excellent people, excellent facilities and excellent technologies."

Mr. Speaker, patients are receiving access to services in communities we could not reach before and this is resulting in safer, earlier, better patient care and resulting in more positive health outcomes. For example, we recently brought computed radiography to 13 communities, including Deline, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Wha Ti, Tulita, Lutselk'e, Norman Wells, Paulatuk, Behchoko and Gameti. We will continue to roll out to Aklavik, Ulukhaktok, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Fort McPherson over the next two months. This allows community health centres to send digital diagnostic images to specialists in minutes for faster and, in some cases, lifesaving consultation. Prior to this it took up to two weeks to physically mail X-ray film and get paper results back from a radiologist at another site. Alternatively, the patient had to travel away from home and family at a high cost.

Patients benefit from improved service delivery through these investments. Recently, this was seen

in Deline with the speed of results during the TB outbreak. TB results were available in two days, where in the past we would have waited two weeks and the outbreak would have continued to grow.

Investments in eHealth are essential to delivery of health care now and for the future. We know that our current system is growing at a faster pace than we can support. HealthNet tools enable greater efficiencies and innovation to support patient safety and delivery of care.

These investments are making a real difference to our people. A snowmobile accident patient in Inuvik got lifesaving treatment for their injuries as a result of Telehealth intervention. To date, we have successfully brought service delivery through Telehealth to 34 health centres and eight schools.

In another case, the DI/PACS system in Hay River allowed a physician to get a specialist at Stanton to urgently review an ultrasound image within minutes. The patient remained in the community and received immediate treatment from the specialist. Without DI/PACS, the patient would have been medevaced. Worse, upon getting to the specialist, it would have been discovered that the trip was unnecessary and the treatment could have been done in the home community.

Mr. Speaker, eHealth is about access to care. Our iEHR rollout continues to be successful, with approximately 200 clinical users across the NWT. Lab information is available on-line, instead of the past paper records. There are currently over half a million results and diagnostic reports available instantaneously, enabling better care.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Members share my excitement over the possibilities of eHealth. These are not just "nice to have" tools. They are essential for access and service delivery for residents we could not reach before. Patients are getting better care by connecting to a virtual team of providers that would normally be hundreds of thousands of miles away. Mr. Speaker, these tools are saving lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON VALUE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today on the value of civil society and the voluntary sector. One of the definitive characteristics of civil society is social capital, which refers to the values and networks that enable coordination and cooperation. This contrasts with economic capital, such as money and tools, and

human capital, which are trained individuals. Government and market are not enough to make a civilization. There also must be a healthy, robust civil centre; a space in which the bonds of community can flourish.

There are two key elements in civil society. One is the need for inclusive participation to enhance civil society and the primacy of the grassroots as the locus of long-term social change. Civil society is the people, and the people know what needs to be done.

The voluntary sector is essential to the democratic process. It is all about citizen participation and engagement in the community betterment, by advancing human well-being and the health of our land.

I would like to mention just a number of the non-government organizations, volunteer organizations that I'm aware of in thinking about this for just a few minutes:

- Centre for Northern Families
- YWCA
- Native Women's Association
- Hepatitis C/HIV Society
- Alternatives North
- The Salvation Army
- SideDoor Youth Centre
- Ecology North
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- NWT Recreation and Parks Association
- Pembina Institute

We could all go on and on. These are a fundamental part of the backbone of our society. I'd like to express appreciation for the thousands of hours of volunteer and often very poorly compensated efforts through individuals, families and non-government organizations.

This includes the domestic economy, which is a huge economy that dwarfs the market economy but is so difficult to measure that it's almost never reported on or recognized. This is when we care for our own elderly, our own people that are having challenges.

A big tip of the hat to all those people out there working on behalf of us and our society.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF HIGHWAY NO. 4 (INGRAHAM TRAIL)

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about the proposed realignment of

Highway No. 4, more commonly known as the Ingraham Trail. A portion of that road passes through Giant Mine and needs to be moved to accommodate the remediation process.

The Department of Transportation came up with three corridor options and shopped them around to the public. That was back in 2007. A newspaper article notes an official saying the work is scheduled to begin next summer. That would have been the summer of 2008, two years ago.

Public comments on the corridors are noted on the DOT website. I believe the department was keen on doing more public consultation, but we haven't seen or heard anything. It's been exactly three years this month. I'm sure the folks working on the Giant Mine remediation project would like to see some movement on this and so would the people of Yellowknife.

The three realignment options naturally have their pros and cons. One corridor bypasses most of the mine infrastructure and would cost the most; another attempts to use the best ground possible along the current infrastructure, costing less than the previous option; and the third plan makes minimal changes to the road and so costs the least, but requires existing buildings to be removed; notably buildings belonging to the NWT Mining Heritage Society. Whichever option is selected, it will be incumbent upon the department to select a route that will be the safest and best fit for the Giant Mine remediation process, as well as beneficial for the city of Yellowknife.

Much like the city of Yellowknife bypass road, the right route could open up access to new land for development for the city of Yellowknife. This could benefit our residents, our businesses and our tourism industry. I would hope that the Department of Transportation is actively working this file, but since three years have lapsed, I have to wonder what is exactly happening.

While the cost should be a factor, we must also consider that the federal government will be paying the majority of the cost of this road realignment. We have to look at maximizing benefits to our residents. Later I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY OF WRIGLEY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The community of Wrigley, or Pehdzeh Ki, is a strong community and has a long history of being independent and taking care of the community and their land. Currently there are many different barriers that are in their way as they look for

opportunities to improve and increase their sustainability and develop their human resource capacity. It is critical that our government work with them as they strive for more and more independence.

I do want to provide an example of how the community is moving forward for the benefit of the community. This summer and fall, a mining company called Devonian Metals worked with the community as they completed a small drilling program outside their community. Through a mutual agreement, they were able to leverage many benefits for their community. There were employment opportunities, support for the band business, Pehdzeh Ki Contracting, and a contribution to the community for a youth cultural and traditional camp. The youth camp was the pride of the community and they created a vibrant community video as a result of this. They also had time to reflect on their future, Mr. Speaker. To continue building on their foundation, they have identified some needs such as training by Aurora College delivered locally, as well as the need to work with the GNWT for as many contracts as they can support.

I applaud their efforts and ask our government to continue working with Pehdzeh Ki as they build a strong and vibrant community. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TUKTOYAKTUK ACCESS ROAD

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and talk about a project of great importance to the members of my riding, and that is the northern section of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Speaker, we endorsed this highway as a priority of the 16th Legislative Assembly and I'd like to congratulate the department for making significant progress. This summer, in partnership with the Hamlet of Tuk, a 22-kilometre access road to source 177 was completed. Mr. Speaker, the road has already provided considerable benefits to the community and it will become the most northern section of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. The project description report for the proposed highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk was completed this past summer, in partnership between the Hamlet of Tuk and the Town of Inuvik with assistance from the Department of Transportation and the funding from our federal government through CanNor.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the project description report is now being submitted to the Environmental Impact Review Board and is currently under

consideration. This news has been met with great excitement in my riding and I think all across the Territory.

I look forward to continue working with the Assembly to move this project forward and to secure construction funding from the federal government in the near future. It looks like we'll be having a cup of tea and bannock with Cece McCauley.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, health care services in northern communities is an essential service. Mr. Speaker, when you don't have the service, you definitely realize how important it really is for communities such as Tsiigehtchic that don't have a permanent nurse, or ensuring that we have care providers in regard to community wellness positions, or a simple thing such as home care workers.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of times we talk about the programs and services here in the larger centres, not realizing for most of our small communities they can only dream of having those types of services.

Mr. Speaker, I think, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we really have to see exactly where our health care dollars are going, and more importantly, are we meeting the essential service requirements of Northerners, but more importantly, of our small communities.

Mr. Speaker, everybody talks about the high cost of medical travel, but, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that's an important component of health care service being provided to our communities. In most cases that's the only way out of a lot of our communities and also the ability to go to the larger centres, regardless if it's here in Yellowknife or southern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that we realistically put what we mean by essential service and those things that basically are overprescribed for simply a luxury item. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we do ensure that our capital investment in the health care dollar is spent where it really is needed. I think, Mr. Speaker, like I opened up with my statement, essential service is when people have a similar service in all the communities in the Northwest Territories so that we don't have have and have-not communities when it comes to health care.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it is frustrating that I stand up here time and time again talking about a nurse for Tsiigehtchic or ensuring that we have the medical means of transferring people out of our communities, such as medevacs.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister of Health questions in regards to a central service in our communities, but more importantly, for those communities that don't have these services. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE CONSOLIDATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITY

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this summer the consolidated health and social services clinic opened here in Yellowknife. It is a great facility, Mr. Speaker. I have had an opportunity to tour the facility. I have had an opportunity to get into the background where all the clinic rooms are and we got to talk to the professionals who are going to be using those facilities, having a flow of people through and the types of services that are going to be provided on both sides, both the clinical side and the diagnostic side. Personally, I feel that there is a great opportunity here to help streamline the provision of health and social services here in Yellowknife.

I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the Minister, the board, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board and all the staff of Yellowknife Health and Social Services who made this consolidated clinic a reality. However, with all new programs or all new facilities, there is always going to be that period of time where we are going to experience some growing pains. The consolidated clinic is no exception. I have had constituents come to me since the opening, who have identified some concerns they have had. One constituent identified that the doors into the main clinic, as an example, didn't have one of the automatic buttons to allow wheelchair access, which I believe has already been dealt with. Other individuals have identified some frustrations on the diagnostic side, sitting in the waiting room and not have any staff to sort of direct them as to when they are going on. There has also been some frustration with the telephone system.

Later today I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services what kind of program they have put in place to deal with these concerns. The constituents and residents of Yellowknife are the ones utilizing the clinic. They are going to be the ones who are going to be able to best tell us where some of these deficiencies lie and help us solve these problems. I am going to be asking the

Minister what system is in place for getting that information to the authorities so that they can address them and what type of transition plan do we have in place to help us get past some of these growing pains so this consolidated clinic we put in can do what it was truly intended to do. I will be asking some questions on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the supplementary health benefits. I want the Members to imagine some of the basic health care coverage that we take for granted, that we continue to leave others out, unresolved, because we have not moved far during the three years that we have done this work.

Imagine that there are 2,300 Northerners who are not covered by any program to assist them with their costs for prescription drugs, eyeglasses and dental care today. Imagine that some of these people are at least able to afford coverage through a private insurance program. Imagine that other Northerners have good coverage from their employer and they are also able to top up their coverage, so they pay little or nothing for their supplementary health benefit costs.

During the summer, Mr. Speaker, I participated in discussions with my colleagues about the proposed changes to this program. I listened with interest to the announcements that were made last week when I had to be in Tulita. I also want to see a program that was fair and provided to those who need the most.

Like all Members, I am very concerned about covering the working poor, especially those without coverage. I want the Minister of Health to implement the next changes as she mentioned in her statement yesterday, so that this government can start helping those families in need. We agreed that any Supplementary Health Benefits Program managed by the Department of Health and Social Services should be the same benefits plan for the Treaty Indians under the Non-Insured Health Benefits. The Metis Health Benefits Program already follows most of these rules. I think the changes will treat everyone more fairly. Let's get that underway now, Mr. Speaker, we cannot wait until April. I urge the Minister and this government to get on with completing the work needed and implement the changes.

I ask the Minister and the Members to imagine some of the good things that could happen if changes were made. Imagine that families in the

Northwest Territories who are low income and do not have an employer's program or partial coverage for their prescription drugs, eyeglasses, dental work for themselves and their children, could become eligible for health and social services programs. Let's proceed to making these changes so people could have good health coverage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STRATEGY TO SUPPORT SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the importance of developing and implementing a strategy which could actively target and attract small and medium-sized business to locate their businesses to the NWT. What we need is good policy that helps grow the North. I believe a strong strategy that targets growth of business investment needs to have two components. The first is to determine what kinds of businesses are likely to be able to operate and expand in the NWT. Obviously, not every industry and business is best suited to our present northern climate. As well, a focus should be considered as to how we can seek opportunities throughout our North by seeding them. In short, to ensure we have fair balance throughout our economy.

Mr. Speaker, by way of an example, a taskforce could be working to attract call centres or some kind of knowledge-base business such as a research institution. It could be based anywhere in the North. With a plan like this we could be bringing new investment to our North, as well as hiring Northerners for good jobs.

Mr. Speaker, as well, another example, perhaps we could be attracting some kind of business closely related to mining, since mining activity is such a significant part of our NWT economy, as well as history. Therefore, maybe that would be the preferred area to target. To kick this discussion off, we could have a public panel discussion, where various business leaders can contribute their ideas about what kind of businesses might consider the move north. Mr. Speaker, we need to know what kind of businesses can dovetail with our existing climate that can be plugged in and start contributing right away to our economy. As well, we could invite one of the dragons off Dragon's Den to look at our economy and our business climate, to ask ourselves how the government could work hard to develop business in a way that works for business.

Mr. Speaker, to be clear, this is not about new loans or grants. This is about people knocking on doors of businesses, saying the carpet is rolled out, we want you to invest and expand in our North. Mr.

Speaker, we need to start with a taskforce that has people, tools and resources, which will aggressively reach out into business and find ways to connect them to the North and invest in the North. We don't need a simple glossy brochure where we simply rely on a 1-800 telephone number. We need real people out there to answer those calls and pursue these opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I know ITI has a Population Growth Strategy, but this is way more than that. Mr. Speaker, we need to find ways to attract business so they will invest capital in our North. Mr. Speaker, finally, what a change this would be to have Northerners reach out and assist businesses to relocate their industries here, rather than waiting by the phone and receiving nothing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONGRATULATIONS TO SUSAN CHRISTIE,
RECIPIENT OF THE OUTSTANDING LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATOR AWARD

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories, or LGANT, held their 2010 LGANT AGM and Professional Development Conference last week here in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, the mission of LGANT is to strive for and promote excellence and professionalism in the field of local government administration through education and career development programs and to create awareness of a community officer's role in the community.

Through their Words for Excellence Program, Susan Christie, the SAO of the Hamlet of Fort Providence, has been awarded the Outstanding Local Government Administrator of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

This award acknowledges a member of LGANT who provides an exceptional level of professionalism, leadership and innovation in their job by providing community service at a tireless level and exemplifying the ethics and responsibility desired by communities across the Northwest Territories.

Susan was nominated by Evelyn Krutko and Joyce McLeod, council members of the Hamlet of Fort Providence.

Susan was born in Fort Providence and is an executive member of the Fort Providence Metis Council. She's received all her education in the North, and specifically her finance officer certification through the School of Community Government.

Her tenure began with the hamlet over 21 years ago. Through these years, Susan worked in finance, for many years assuming greater responsibilities as she built her knowledge and skills. She participated in several training opportunities, working her way into the position she currently holds as senior administrative officer. She's recognized for her leadership in developing local HR capacity through training and support of community members. Her nominators state, "Susan has successfully guided the council through many changes and challenges in municipal program delivery. She is the ultimate professional, ensuring that matters are taken care of in a timely manner."

Susan is considered a role model as an SAO within her community, by her peers and her employers. I would like to congratulate Susan Christie on being the first recipient of this prestigious award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize an elder from the Deline First Nation in the Sahtu region and also a member that worked with me very closely in the Sahtu region. I'd also like to recognize Chief Eddie Sangris from the Ndilo/Dettah First Nations

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

MR. KRUTKO: It gives me great pleasure to recognize my dad, Mike Krutko, along with his friend Ed Jeske in the gallery today.

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

MR. HAWKINS: It gives me great pleasure to recognize, as well, Mr. Ed Jeske and Mr. Krutko's father.

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

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like to recognize Chief Eddie Sangris from the Yellowknives Dene. Also my constituent Mr. Mike Krutko and Mr. Jeske, as well.

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

MR. BROMLEY: I'd like to recognize Chief Eddie Sangris of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and a constituent of Weledeh. I'd also like to recognize my elders, who are getting fewer, Mr. Ed Jeske and, of course, Mike Krutko.

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to all our guests in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Acknowledgements

MICHAEL GILDAY EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the exceptional achievement of one of Weledeh riding's world-class athletes: speed skater Michael Gilday.

---Applause

Michael Gilday produced a solid performance for Canada during the first World Cup races of the season held October 22nd to 24th in Montreal, Quebec. Michael took home the silver medal in the 1,000 metre event and the gold in the men's 5,000 metre relay. Just this past weekend he received his first individual gold medal win in the 1,500 metre event in Korea. Michael has now medalled four times in World Cup competition.

Mr. Gilday's sights are set on gold at the 2014 Olympics. I invite all Members to join with me in saluting his achievements and wishing him great success in future competitions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 314-16(5): PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF HIGHWAY NO. 4 (INGRAHAM TRAIL)

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got questions today for the Minister of Transportation and getting back to my Member's statement where I was talking about the realignment of Highway No. 4, the Ingraham Trail, due to the remediation work ongoing at Giant Mine. It was three years ago that the department came forward with some possible options on the realignment of that road. We don't have to look too far to see the potential that is out there, when roads are constructed, to allow for opportunities, business opportunities. If you look at the Yellowknives Dene, we could provide opportunities for the Yellowknives Dene and the City of Yellowknife by properly addressing this realignment.

I'd like to ask the Minister what has happened. The road was supposed to be constructed, the realignment was supposed to be conducted in the summer of 2008. I'm just wondering, it's two years

later and we haven't heard anything. Maybe an update on where that project's at.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; the consideration for realignment was introduced, I think, in 2007 and we've been working towards moving that forward. Of course, we can only move as fast as the process will allow us. Our plans now are to move forward over these next couple of months to do further consultation. We still plan to have the construction of realignment commencing the fall of 2011. We'd like to see the traffic starting to flow sometime in 2012. There is still some discussion that needs to take place and the timing and opportunity has to be worked out with the Giant Mine remediation team.

MR. RAMSAY: The realignment was to take place as a result of the freezing in situ of the arsenic trioxide storage vaults underground at Giant Mine. To my knowledge, that is going to happen here sooner rather than later. The switch might actually be turned on on one of those storage vaults being frozen in place. I'm just wondering if the Minister can explain what the roadblocks are in getting the realignment done. Is it DOT? Is it the federal government? Where is the snag in trying to get this addressed?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I don't believe there's a snag in the process. This is part of due course. We are working towards reducing the options to one that will be accepted by all parties. There is, right now, a variance of opinion, of course, on the three routes. The Member has stated his arguments for his preference, however, the responses that we're getting are fairly even. We're getting about 30 percent on every option in front of us. There are more meetings that need to be conducted and we need to start doing the engineering and work on the route that's going to be selected and start construction in due course, which is next fall.

MR. RAMSAY: If there's varying degrees of interest in each of those three options, I'd like the Minister to explain to me how a decision is going to be arrived at, which of those corridors is chosen for the realignment and what process the department has for coming back to Members of the House with that decision. It's been three years since consultation was conducted on that. I'm just wondering if we're talking about a new round of consultation on the realignment or not.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'm sure I don't have to explain the process to consult with the Members in this House. The Member is quite aware of that. We have been consulting and talking to stakeholders and different groups over the last number of years. We plan to continue doing that and do further

discussion. We'd like to narrow down the options to one and start engineering and environmental reviews that need to be determined in some of the outcomes. That's going to be done in short order. I just have to ask the Member to be a little bit patient, I guess. He's anxious to get going, but the work is moving forward and we still plan to continue that.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got lots of patience; I've been waiting three years for this to happen. Maybe the Minister could give us a firm timeline on when a decision is going to be reached on what that realignment is going to be so people can line up the opportunities, if there are any opportunities that come out of it. I'm talking about the City of Yellowknife and the Yellowknives Dene, for example.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We have been talking with the Yellowknives Dene since 2007 and I've indicated to the Member that the schedule is for the construction to start in 2011 and open to traffic in 2012, with the final surface completion in 2013.

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

QUESTION 315-16(5):

BISON MANAGEMENT PLAN IN FORT LIARD

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask my questions to the Minister of ENR with regard to the buffalo issue in Fort Liard. During my constituency visit last month it was raised again and residents are continually raising the issue of damages to their vehicles, their property, et cetera. Part of the buffalo management plan was to have more resources available for the community to manage the bison and buffalo issue there. What is currently being done to assist the community of Fort Liard with their buffalo issue?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Member that this is an ongoing issue. I have raised the matter with the deputy and his officials. We're looking at some options. There's going to be contact with the community to see the depth and degree of the community concerns. One of the options I mentioned possibly to the Member is if there is a bunch or number of incorrigible buffalo, as there are on Highway No. 3, for example, when the hunting season starts, the buffalo are not to be seen after the first couple of shots or the first couple of bison are brought down. We're prepared to consider something of that nature in the Fort Liard area as well.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: It sounds like one possible solution. It would be like culling the herd, I guess. In terms of numbers, how many buffalo are around Fort Liard?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I don't have the exact number before me, but clearly too many.

---Laughter

We're prepared to work with the Member and the community to resolve this issue.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Certainly there is one too many. The Minister is talking about going to the community and providing some options. When would he be doing that? Hopefully sooner rather than later.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Given the length of time left in the life of this government, I will assure the Member that it will be sooner rather than later.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Definitely before Christmas would be a good time to get to the community and provide these options and how it's worked in other jurisdictions such as Highway No. 3.

One other option, as I was watching the news, is that there is a revitalization of buffalo herds in Saskatchewan. I'd just ask the Minister if he and his department could check that out. I believe they were looking for some buffalo. Residents of Fort Liard are really frustrated enough that they're saying to get rid of these buffalo, move them out of here. They're not local to here.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I will confirm with the Member the time. We'll try to work with the before-Christmas date suggested by the Member. The Member has mentioned the possibility of a buffalo drive to Saskatchewan. Once again, we want to check with the community to see the degree of their concern and is that the best option. We're not going to rule anything out at this point.

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

QUESTION 316-16(5):

PROPOSED CHANGES TO

SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask my questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I spoke earlier in my Member's statement that 2,300 people in the Northwest Territories are without health care coverage today. I want to ask the Minister if she's, in her government, working on any type of information implementation plan so that they can get health coverage as soon as possible.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my statement yesterday, we will be working hard on a number of fronts as per recommendations of the Supp Health Joint Working Group. That includes encouraging employers to provide employment insurance or employers insurance, encouraging our residents to get private insurance where it's possible, and to look at some savings through use of generic drugs. The department will be pursuing all those three options, and we will be doing some cost-benefit analysis and looking at ways to see how we can help those who are not without health care coverage or health benefits coverage but are currently without minimal dental or vision care.

MR. YAKELEYA: I want to ask the Minister about some families and children who are in the working poor who are today, as we speak right now today, in the last couple years do not have basic health care coverage. Again, I hear from the Minister that they're working hard in this government to see what kind of coverage they can implement, but as each day that we sit here and talk, these families have to deal with this type of issue that they're not covered like the rest of us are. I want to ask the Minister, can she and her government implement a plan as soon as possible to help those poor families in the Northwest Territories. The number 2,300 rings a bell. Can the Minister tell me when?

HON. SANDY LEE: I do appreciate the Member's strong advocacy for the protection and provision of services to the working poor. He's been a strong advocate throughout this supp health benefits review process and in the last Assembly as well.

Mr. Speaker, we need to work this in a package. We need to address all of these things at the same time, because the Member knows already that our Supp Health Program is already over-expended and we need to find some savings and find ways to help those who are without minimal dental and vision care at the moment. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I know that there are some things within the Health department that we certainly can do without in terms of putting some coverage to these people. There are children, there are families in the Northwest Territories, as we speak today, that do not have the basic health coverage that we in this room enjoy in terms of our own coverages. That's the one I want to ask the Minister. What will it take for her to, by the end of this month or next month, say, yes, we will have coverage for those families who are the working poor, children, who do not have coverage?

Mr. Speaker, I grew up poor. I know what it's like. That's who I'm advocating for. What can the

Minister do to help us get coverage for these low-income families?

HON. SANDY LEE: What we need from the Member and this House is continued strong support for the government to implement the recommendations that were made by the Joint Working Group. We're going to need some really strong fortitude to implement the third-party use and encouraging people to get third-party insurance where they can afford to. We need to find some equity and parity between NIHB programs and Supp Health Programs. We are going to need to be strong to implement some of the changes to the pharmaceutical strategy so that we would encourage the use of generic drugs. All those things will require strong support from this House. We are moving as expeditiously as possible. We want to make some progress by March/April. That's a very aggressive timeline. We need to do a lot of work on that, and I look forward to continued support from the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister in terms of what is preventing her from implementing the use of the non-insured health benefits rules right away for the various supplementary health benefits programs that we have made suggestions to. What's preventing her from making these changes right away?

HON. SANDY LEE: The work is underway, so nothing is stopping us from moving forward on this. I made a commitment as per the advice from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning. I believe we have strong support from the Members on the other side to move forward in finding solutions on the recommendations made on the report. We are committed to working out the plan and implementing it. I will be working closely with standing committee on that. We need to lay out the plan and we are working on that. We are following an aggressive strategy and schedule. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 317-16(5):
YELLOWKNIFE CONSOLIDATED HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES CLINIC

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I talked earlier about the consolidated clinic here in Yellowknife and, once again, I think it's a great facility and there are great programs that are being offered out of there. But as with new programs, there are some growing pains. I know the Minister has probably heard a lot of these concerns that are brought up by the public. I know

that I've taken a couple to the Minister and they have been addressed.

What I'm interested in now is in order to ensure that this facility continues to be the excellent facility that we hope it is, we need to have some sort of mechanism that will allow individuals who are utilizing those services to get their comments and concerns straight to the authority, right to the individuals who are front line, who can start making some of those changes to improve the efficiency. I'm curious whether the Minister has directed the authority to put in some sort of mechanism where information can flow to the right people. Or is it more of an open process where they contact their MLAs and we take it to the Minister? Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to thank the Member for the positive statements he made with regard to this important project. It is an important initiative for our health and social services system, because the Yellowknife primary clinic services not just Yellowknife residents but residents from surrounding communities.

I agree with the Member that the facility is going through, and has gone through, some growing pains, and I agree with him that we need to be able to give that feedback. What I'm going to suggest to the Member is, I'm going to ask the authority and the management there to have a suggestion box, suggestions on the website, and get all of the feedback that people have been giving us and giving the Members about some of the things we can do better there, and I will report back to the Member on what changes they could implement to improve that. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'd like to thank the Minister for that. One of the issues that has come to my attention, and I know it's come to some of the other Members, has been the telephone system at the clinic itself. There appears to be a lot of frustration. Some people phone and they get busy signals or they get put on hold for extended periods of time. Now, I know that we have some staff issues and we're trying to staff that place up, which might be part of the problem, but has anything been done to start addressing the amount of time that people are waiting on the telephones or have we put in more people to ensure that the calls are answered in a more timely manner? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: The steps are being taken and have been taken to address that issue. The phone system they installed at the clinic is quite sophisticated, but we have been running into some trouble. The authority has been working with the provider and the main person from the headquarters. They have been meeting. It's a sophisticated system that's able to evaluate and

take all of the numbers of the calls being made, how long people are waiting for and how they can improve. As the Member knows, because we have met with the authority, they're observing all of that and will be analyzing that and I expect to get some reports on that very quickly. I will get back to the Member and inform the public as to what steps are being taken to improve that. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: The Minister actually hit on something incredibly important there and I'm glad she's going to provide the information back to me and my colleagues; that's important. But more importantly it's about getting the information to the public, because they're the ones who are using this clinic and we need to make sure that whatever we do is clearly communicated and articulated to our residents, the ones who want to use it. So I look forward to that.

Another area of concern, and I've touched on it briefly, is just the number of staff that we have in that facility. I had one constituent come to me -- and I've shared the information with the Minister -- where they went to the diagnostic side and there was nobody there. There is a waiting room there, and they waited for what they felt, and what I feel, is an extended period of time before there was even somebody in there, which kind of is a little worrisome, but I know that there are some staffing issues. I'm wondering what kind of timeline is in place to ensure that we get that facility fully staffed so that there are people at the front counters when people come in to both the diagnostic and the clinical side. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: As we get further into operating this facility, the authority is, and will be, reviewing the staff makeup and the presence of staff at the front office. The way it's designed, because of the physicality of the floor, we couldn't have everybody in one place, so it just necessitated having two different stations. We have been able to train and staff additional personnel on the lab side. I have also talked to the management about using some of the equipment and TV screens and other things to advise and inform the public about how long they have to wait, why they are waiting, what's expected to happen while they are waiting. The authority is constantly evaluating the operation to see how we can improve them and I will keep the Members advised as well as the public as we move forward.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just two quick things in closing. I mentioned earlier that I had a constituent who mentioned some difficulties they had accessing the building, especially the interior doors. The individual was in a wheelchair and there was no electronic opener on the door, so it was very difficult. I believe that's been rectified. If

I can get the Minister to confirm that that has in fact been rectified.

The second part is that the Minister has mentioned that this facility is not just a Yellowknife facility, that it is a territorial facility. My question to the Minister is if they have ever considered renaming the authority. Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority doesn't seem like the appropriate name if we're providing territorial-wide services.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Two questions there. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Member that the automatic door situation was really unfortunate. As soon as that was made apparent to us, DPW and Department of Health and Social Services and YPCC worked immediately to rectify that.

To answer the naming of it, the authority did have public consultation and the board decided that they would like to stay with the Yellowknife name because that's what even the communities outside of Yellowknife recognize the facility to be. Mr. Speaker, I... Oh. System off line. I will talk to the authority about a possible name change to reflect the operation, but that might be too soon, seeing as it just came into operation in June.

System off line. But the lights are on.

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

QUESTION 318-16(5):
STRATEGY TO SUPPORT SMALL AND
MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about a potential taskforce concept or certainly a business team that targets business growth in the Northwest Territories that reaches out and finds good business that could invest in the North and create jobs. In combing through ITI's business plan, I didn't see anything that focused in on attracting new business to the North. I provided a number of examples. Can the Minister tell me who's been tasked with that type of initiative that can attract business in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I missed who you're addressing your question to, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister of ITI.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member is aware of this old saying about great minds think alike. Just last week I had a

meeting of my ministerial advisory panel and I posed exactly that question to them, as to whether the businesspeople in the Northwest Territories thought it was a good idea for the Government of the Northwest Territories to get involved with attracting businesses from the South to relocate to the North and whether the Government of the Northwest Territories should develop new programs or invest any money in doing so. We're still waiting for a response from the ministerial advisory panel.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm really glad that the Minister didn't comb over the issue as I've been combing through the department.

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: And recognizes how important it is.

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: Not that it's a problem for either of us.

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: As the Minister says, he's proposed the concept to the ministerial advisory panel. Actually, we did talk about this some time ago and he did suggest that he'd make sure he brought something similar to the concept to them and it sounds positive. Does the Minister see their good value for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment with coming up with a taskforce that could target these types of initiatives as well as reach out to local businesses to see how we can dovetail our policies to do this attraction of new business to the North?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The initial reaction to the question that we posed to the ministerial advisory panel was that we had to be very strategic in attracting new businesses to the North. That whatever we did should be to meet some specific needs and also would build on northern capacity. Also I know that with the preference policies that we developed for northern businesses, is our northern businesses don't mind competing as long as it's on a level playing field, so they would want to see whatever businesses come up here invest in the North and set up their businesses accordingly.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm glad the Minister talked about trying to find specific targets that would point at present needs of business. Certainly, I guess he was alluding, in one form or another, to what would work in our economy that makes sense. I would say, would the Minister be interested in supporting some type of panel discussion or conference that would work with business to help develop a business growth strategy here in the North that could attract new business and investment and, furthermore, get Northerners to work? This is not just a Yellowknife-centric issue. I think we can find

ways to spread and seed businesses throughout the North that could help everyone.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We'd be quite prepared to work with our partners. We work very closely with the chambers of commerce, with the Northern Aboriginal Business Association and other groups to see if we can set up such a conference or workshop.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister's answer was very exciting. Does the Minister see any policy problems that we have that would stop something like this from getting momentum or getting off the ground immediately? I'm only concerned that policy or process of department may have issue with this. I just want to make sure that if the Minister says we can do this and he likes it, I want to make sure we can do it right away.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I think that we'd have to be very careful, because, as I said, we do have northern preference policies for northern businesses. As well, we've expended a lot of effort to develop an interim northern manufacturing directive and we would really want to support those northern businesses or northern manufacturers that manufacture in the Northwest Territories, because it's a high-cost area to operate out of and there are also issues and challenges with regard to attracting skilled labour and availability of housing. When we support our businesses, what we do is focus on the labour issues, reducing red tape and also providing a level playing field.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Colleagues, before we go on with oral questions, I'd like to draw your attention to the gallery and to the presence of a former Member of this House from the 12th Assembly representing the constituency of Kitikmeot, Mr. Ernie Bernhardt and his daughter Donna, who happens to be the CA to Member Jackie Jacobson. Welcome to the Chamber. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 319-16(5):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement was on the Mackenzie Valley Highway, particularly the Tuk-Inuvik section. I mentioned that it's a great opportunity and we made great progress with the department. I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and his department for working so well with the community in the past year. We still have a lot more to do. Can I ask the Minister of Transportation what actions we are taking to promote the highway to the federal government?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been an issue that has been on the drawing board for some time. We have moved forward fairly quickly in the area of Tuk and Inuvik with a project description report, a report that we had anticipated was going to take several years and ended up taking a little over a year. That's been submitted for review. We are, and have been, raising it with the federal government. We, as early as last week, met with the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of INAC and this was raised as something we wanted to talk further about. Also, while attending the National Council on the Ministers responsible for Transportation I had an opportunity to have a brief chat with Minister Strahl and we agreed that we needed to get together and have further discussions on infrastructure issues in the Northwest Territories. This would be part of the discussion. I'll also be meeting with Minister Aglukkaq while we're down there in a couple weeks.

MR. JACOBSON: Since the Minister has begun lobbying the federal government, when does the Minister anticipate the Environmental Impact Review Board process will be completed?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The EIRB process is something that's outside of our jurisdiction at this point. We don't control the process, however, we hope that the final reports or approvals for the Tuk-Inuvik section of the highway will be ready sometime next summer.

MR. JACOBSON: You know, I'm glad to hear the process is moving so quickly. The sooner this project gets completed for the cost of living for my constituents, the cost of food, the fuel, transportation between the communities and all up and down the valley making it accessible for people to take their families out on holidays a lot cheaper. It's beneficial for the sovereignty of Canada, because I always say I always have all the oil and gas in the northern Beaufort. Will this government receive the necessary permits from the Environmental Impact Review Board? What are the Minister's next steps in continuing the progress on this important road link?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: A big challenge, the biggest challenge, and will continue to be the biggest challenge, will be to secure appropriate funding to continue the work on the road once all the approvals are in place. We would expect that as soon as we hear positive response, we would, of course, move forward and try to secure those dollars to do further work. We would also have to start the process to develop more detailed road design. While I can't commit to any dollars for the life of this government, I would expect that those

issues will be brought forward and will continue to take precedence. The work would take probably more than a year to complete.

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

QUESTION 320-16(5):
VALUE OF CIVIL SOCIETY
AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions follow up on my Member's statement from earlier today and are directed to the Premier as the Minister of Executive. I'd like to ask, recognizing that civil society in the voluntary sector is an important third leg on the stool of government market and the civil society, what actions are we taking as a government to ensure a strong civil society and voluntary sector in a jurisdiction where our government sector is so huge and powerful? Of course, we have a strong market sector.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess we need some clarification on this. We have a couple of areas we work in that we would determine, and through the Executive, the NGO, non-government organizations who deliver programs through department initiatives, and then we have the volunteer sector that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs is involved in.

On the NGO side, the funding stabilization side, multi-year funding process, that work has been ongoing and we have put in a funding package to try to help stabilize on the NGO side. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate those comments and those actions that are being taken. I think what I'm talking about too is, as a third arm I think we have the role of assisting communities in recognizing that they have a responsibility and an opportunity in fulfilling an important role that's sort of independent of government. It's a self-strengthening exercise, if you will. Government has a role in helping them out in that. I'm wondering if we are working with communities to get that sort of independent spirit out there and helping them recognize the role that actually individuals and families and communities can play in strengthening that civil society on their own, perhaps with some assistance from government.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I'm aware in communities and trying to strengthen the role of the volunteer organizations and those organizations serving our communities in a very, I guess it would be a supportive capacity. I know the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is working through the Volunteer Organization Development Contribution Policy. As well, we continue to do,

through MACA, the Outstanding Volunteer Awards Program that they continue to help.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm wondering, the voluntary sector -- speaking specifically about the voluntary sector -- has called a number of times for an independent office within government, such as the Department of Executive, that would serve to simply help them in building capacity. That's something this government has talked about a number of times. I think we may even have talked about it earlier in this session. The Premier I believe is putting some consideration into that. I'm wondering where the Premier is at or when we might be able to give a positive response to these organizations that are requesting that office.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I know that there has been call for establishing of an office within Executive. We have not been able to get there at this point, as we have gone through our business planning to look at what options are there. I'd have to get back to see what the request was from committee in this area and then be able to provide a better response.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that commitment again. Let me just ask whether there is anything we can do on this side of the House or, in fact, that our voluntary sector could do to help support the Premier in making that positive decision.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I've said many times, any new initiatives that we would look at putting in place or expanding the role of within departments, we go through our business planning process and look to Members when they make recommendations on any potential changes or new initiatives we'd like to see put in our business plan. So for us, we look at key areas during the budget development process. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 321-16(5):
HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN SMALL
AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to my Member's statement on the health care provided in northern communities and the importance of this service, which is an essential service to the residents of all these smaller communities. A lot of times we don't have the privilege of walk-in clinics or even seeing the doctor. Basically you have to wait for the doctor's visits. In some cases it's a month or even longer. In some cases we don't even have a

community nurse stationed in a lot of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important this government has some baseline guidelines in regard to services that are being provided to ensure that there is a minimum level of services in our communities so that people can really feel that their well-being is being taken care of. I'd like to ask the Minister, do we have minimum standards for health care services in all of our communities in the Northwest Territories so we at least know there's a minimum level that you can get and work your way up from there. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member's statement and question speaks to the importance of thinking territorially, that whenever we are planning the business plan, programming, we need to look at our work as being territorial. We need to make sure that all of our residents are treated fairly and equitably. This is why in our Foundation for Change we put so much focus on access, because what the Member is talking about is that every resident needs to have access to essential medical and health care and that's one of the three pillars of the Foundation for Change. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, in my Member's statement I talked about the lack of services in a lot of our communities. I think the importance that we talk about here, we talk about respite care, we talk about home care, we talk about supplementary health, but a lot of the times people in a lot of our communities don't have those fundamental services. Like the communities I represent, a large portion of the population are elderly. We want to keep our elders in our home communities. We want to keep our elders close to their families, but, again, they need that important delivery and service and care, regardless if it's respite care or home care. So I'd just like to ask the Minister, I know that there's a lot of wants out there, but what are we doing to ensure that those services are spread fairly throughout the Northwest Territories and everyone has those types of programs and services in the communities that we serve, regardless of the size of the community.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. The Member is absolutely right in what he's saying and this is why our work in the department has been in creating a territorial team where doctors, nurses, everybody is working as a team to make their services available to everyone in the Territories, especially the small communities. The Member is right when he says that a lot of our communities, actually over 25 of them have to wait for doctors, eye doctors, specialists, and nurses even come two or three

times a week, they're not there permanently. So we are working and medical directors and all the nursing professions are coming together to work out a territorial plan so that at any given time, anybody in the Territories has access to the essential medical and health services, at the same time, enhancing respite care and home care and community level care so that our residents can stay in their communities as long as possible. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Another item that I touched on is the importance of medical travel, of medevacs. In most of our communities that's the only means of getting in and out of our communities. People have to travel to meet with the different specialists either in Inuvik, here in Yellowknife or Edmonton, or by way of clinical services out of Inuvik hospital. I think it's important that we have to enhance that program to have a better delivery of medical travel services for the services we do provide. Again, that's another way that we can improve our medical services in the Territories. So what are we doing to enhance that program so that people really understand medical travel is an essential way of delivering our health care service in the Northwest Territories?

HON. SANDY LEE: The Member is right when he says that medical travel is an essential part of delivering health care in the North, and this is why we fought for and got, and we have a federal Minister who understands the importance of medical travel in the North and all across the North. That's part of our additional funding we got under THSSI. What we need to do on the medical travel is that we use the money wisely so that anybody who needs medical travel gets to their medical care. So part of what we're doing is using technology to make sure that we have the money available to those who really need to get medical travel -- and often they need medical escorts -- where we can use technology and local staff by supporting them where they are we get the diagnosis at home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the Minister's comments, a lot of times in the House, I think sometimes we lose the perspective of the territorial health care delivery system we have in the North. A lot of the time the focus is on the Yellowknife delivery system. I think that we have to ensure that the people outside of Yellowknife are being taken care of and that we are ensuring that their issues are being dealt with. So I'd like to ask the Minister, at some point can you make a statement in this House clearly identifying the delivery service that your department provides to the Northwest Territories as a health care provider. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: We do have a dichotomy of our residents going down to the Primary Care Centre and they're concerned that they have to wait for half an hour on the phone for an appointment, whereas in many of our communities we have people who have to wait for days and if they miss a doctor's appointment, it's weeks.

So, Mr. Speaker, when Action Canada, the research tank, was up here, when they looked at the fact that we are delivering health care to 40,000 people in 33 communities over a land mass that's four times bigger than France, he just said that is a challenge. Medical travel, medical technology and efficiency, we need to find those so that we do as much as possible to provide equitable health care service delivery all across the Territories. I will undertake to make a statement on that in the House, as per the Member's suggestion. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 322-16(5):
ANNUAL COST OF SUPPLEMENTARY
HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services how much it costs her department to provide the supplementary health benefits to residents in the North.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I'll have to get back to the Member on that. I believe it's about \$8 million, but we often ask for about \$3 million for supp health.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'll look forward to the Minister's answer in terms of an exact figure. If it's around seven or eight million, I want to ask the Minister about the supplementary health benefits that we do provide for our people in the North. What's the percentage of increase every year of this special program?

HON. SANDY LEE: I believe the incremental increase for that budget has been somewhere between 6 to 8 percent over the last number of years. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Okay, so that looks like we've got a couple of million every year to support this program and to support the benefits of this program for people in the North. I want to ask the Minister about the sustainability of this program on a yearly basis in regard to some of the needs in the smaller communities and some of the basic access to health care. It seems like we're going through crunching time. How much can we sustain and

continue on with this program? Can the Minister answer that?

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. Sustainability is a question on all health care programs, including the Supp Health Benefits Program, and this is why I believe that the recommendations made by the Supp Health Benefits Joint Working Group is timely, because it's tasked us to find ways to encourage people to get third-party insurance.

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated many a time in the House, this is one of the few government programs where some people can get the assistance elsewhere, and we need to encourage that. So a part of our work is to encourage employers to offer health care benefits and then individuals to take on private insurance where they can, also to extend retirement health care benefits when they retire. So there are many parts to the instructions we got from the Joint Working Group and this is why we need to do that in the name of sustainability going forward. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister advise this House as to the type of dollars that they will be required to provide to the lower income families without any health coverage? The department surely must have done some assessment as to what it's going to cost this government to provide coverage for the people that don't have coverage as we speak today.

HON. SANDY LEE: The working poor and the excluded coverage that the Member is talking about, we are talking about those who don't have dental or vision care coverage, because they would get health care and drug coverage and such from the regular health care coverage we have. At this time we could only guess how many numbers there are. We believe there are about 2,000 people in the Territories without employer coverage that gives them dental and vision care. We cover \$1,000 for seniors for dental and \$250 for glasses every two years. So that's the cost we'd be looking at if we were to cover them immediately.

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

QUESTION 323-16(5):
HOLDBACK POLICY FOR CONTRACTORS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions. The department has lots of contracts out there and I just wanted to ask him a little bit about the holdback policy for contractors. Typically how is it run and what's the percentage, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the policy to hold back a percentage of the contract is something that's right across the government in all our contract practices. That's to ensure that we have a product that's free of deficiencies prior to releasing all funds. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: There's probably different ways it's written up, but typically at what point are the holdbacks released? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The holdbacks are usually released upon the deficiencies being dealt with. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: The reason I'm raising it, I've got a business in my riding that ran into an issue with the holdback. I think the issue was that there were circumstances beyond their control and that led them to not cleaning up a site. I'm trying not to get into too many specifics, Mr. Speaker, but if there's something beyond their control, will the department consider special circumstances with regard to that? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We do take into consideration if there is an issue that has been unforeseen or an issue that comes about that is beyond our control. However, that has to be raised by the proponent and brought to our attention, and the rationale has to be drafted accordingly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that answer that they will consider mitigating circumstances, and I will follow up with the Minister on the specifics of what I was talking about. Just one more question on the holdbacks. How soon are they typically released? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I think it would be pretty evident that as soon as the deficiencies are dealt with and we're comfortable that all is well, we usually do our best to get the holdback released. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 324-16(5):
COR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Public Works regarding the COR program. It's the Certificate of Recognition. I've inquired with the Minister to find out where this program is when it comes to implementation out there on our tenders and

processes. So where is this initiative and is it being implemented into our tendering process for northern tenders, with the expectation that people who do comply and respond to those tenders are part of the program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not decided whether we're going to incorporate the COR program into our tenders. At this point, the Northern Construction Safety Association has been working on a rollout schedule for their members. They have endorsed it and we're kind of providing support in that area. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: That was quite a confusing answer. We haven't decided what we're doing, but we support it through the rollout. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could make sense on the particular issue, is the government behind this initiative and are they anticipating that they'll be involved and support this initiative? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I apologize if it was confusing to the Member. I'll try to speak a little slower.

Mr. Speaker, I've already stated that we have not, as a government, endorsed the COR program to be part of our contracting. The NWT Construction Association is going to consult with the industry and they will talk to their members. We are not moving forward and incorporating it in our contracts. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank goodness we have rules so I won't respond appropriately to how the Minister should get a response, but I'd like to know what the Minister is doing, or I should say what's causing the Minister and the department from holding back on implanting this COR certification program, especially in light of the fact that the Department of Public Works, several months ago, seemed to be in favour of this initiative. As well, they went and sent one of their staff members, a senior staff member, to become certified in the program. So, again, it seems to be a mixed message. They support it, but don't really support it. Are they waiting for industry to tell them what to do, or are they just sort of in the dark as to how important it is and what a northern program this is, because a lot of northern businesses are involved in this initiative? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We're quite familiar with the COR program, but at this point we're not prepared to move forward. We don't feel it will allow all communities to be involved, especially small contractors in the more remote communities. We are working with the NWT Construction Association, the Safety Association also and they are rolling it out to their membership and getting

feedback, we are working with them on drafting proper wording and it's not something we're prepared to do at this point.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister saying that if the NWT Construction Association is behind this, that the Department of Public Works will support it? Is the Minister as well saying that if we can prove, which I already have, that this can be implemented and supported by business in small communities, he'll support it? Is that what the Minister is saying? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'm saying that once we're comfortable that all the companies and all the communities will have the same abilities through this program, we will provide further consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for question period has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 112-16(5):
TOURISM RESEARCH UPDATE,
NOVEMBER 2010

TABLED DOCUMENT 113-16(5):
BUILDING THE ABORIGINAL TOURISM
PRODUCT: DEVELOPMENT OF A NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES ABORIGINAL TOURISM SECTOR,
OCTOBER 2010

TABLED DOCUMENT 114-16(5):
ABORIGINAL TOURISM ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY FINAL REPORT,
MARCH 2010

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled Tourism Research Update, November 2010; Building the Aboriginal Tourism Product, October 2010; and Aboriginal Tourism Engagement Strategy Final Report, March 2010. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 115-16(5):
DECEMBER 13, 1994, LETTER FROM
DIAND MINISTER RON IRWIN TO
GNWT ENERGY, MINES AND PETROLEUM
RESOURCES MINISTER JOHN TODD
ON DEVOLUTION

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter from Ron Irwin to Minister John Todd.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 25-16(5):
EXPANDING STUDENT FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 4, 2010, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly recommends that eligibility for the Student Financial Assistance Program be expanded to include students taking full-time secondary school upgrading programs in preparation for post-secondary education. Mahsi.

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

MOTION 26-16(5):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO FEBRUARY 2, 2011

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, November 4, 2010, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, November 4, 2010, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 2, 2011;

And further, that any time prior to February 2, 2010, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at earlier time during this adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you.

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

MOTION 27-16(5):
NORTHERN MANAGEMENT REGIME
FOR LAND AND RESOURCES

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 4, 2010, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Premier immediately commence a public consultation process, in partnership with the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, to determine the shape of a northern management regime for lands and resources;

And further, that recommendations on the proposed implementation of this regime be included in transition documents and planning for the 17th Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills, Item 17, motions.

Motion 23-16(5) has been called for the second time and will fall off the Order Paper.

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 14:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Conflict of Interest Act to provide that a member of a municipal council or a public board who is an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada or an agency of either government does not, by that reason only, have an indirect pecuniary interest in a contract or other matter in which his or her employer has an interest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Bill 14 has had second reading and stands referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

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

BILL 15:
AN ACT TO AMEND
THE FIRE PREVENTION ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Fire Prevention Act to enable the fire marshal to apply to the Supreme Court for an order authorizing him or her to take corrective action in respect of a structure or premises if he or she is unable to identify an owner or occupant.

The bill also makes other minor amendments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Bill 15 has had second reading and stands referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

BILL 16:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE DOG ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Dog Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Dog Act to:

- prohibit a person from causing a dog distress;
- enable an officer to take custody of a dog in distress or an abandoned dog;
- enable an officer to apply for a warrant to search a place, premises or vehicle where he or she has reason to believe a dog in distress is located, and in exigent situations, to enter a place, premises, other than a dwelling-house, or a vehicle without a warrant;
- enable an officer to inspect a place, premises, other than a dwelling-house, or a vehicle for the purpose of enforcing the act;
- increase the penalties for contravening the act and provide for other remedies the court may impose;
- make consequential amendments to the Charter Communities Act, the Cities, Towns and Villages Act and the Hamlets Act to provide authority to municipal bylaw officers to enforce the act; and
- renumber provisions for convenient reference.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of

the bill. Bill 16 has had second reading and stands referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger

BILL 17:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Income Tax Act to facilitate a child tax benefit that is also applicable for shared custody arrangements. It also adjusts the dividend tax credit and deductions for corporations with foreign investment income. Minor amendments are made to update or otherwise improve terminology. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Bill 17 has had second reading and stands referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

BILL 18:

AN ACT TO REPEAL THE SETTLEMENTS ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill repeals the Settlements Act and makes consequential amendments to other statutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Bill 18 has had second reading and stands referred to a committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

BILL 19:

MUNICIPAL STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Charter Communities Act, the Cities, Towns and Villages Act and the Hamlets Act. Amendments are made to clarify the process involved when the voters of a municipality, by petition, require council to either

make or not make a specific bylaw, including determination of the number of voters who must sign a petition, requirements for a petition and the exclusion of names from a petition. Amendments are made respecting the making of municipal grants. The bill also makes minor amendments to improve the expression of the three statutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Bill 19 has had second reading and stands referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

BILL 20:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE EVIDENCE ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Evidence Act in respect of the use in legal proceedings of quality assurance records and information about the proceedings of quality assurance committees that examine health services. In addition, a number of minor improvements are made throughout the act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Bill 20 has had second reading and stands referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

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), Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy; Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future;" Table Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts Over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Committee Report 3-16(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act; Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights, with Mr. Abernethy in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Today in front of us we have Tabled Document 4-16(5), Tabled Document 30-16(5), Tabled Document 38-16(5), Tabled Document 62-16(5), Tabled Document 75-16(5), Tabled Document 106-16(5), Bill 4, Committee Report 3-16(5), and Minister's Statement 65-16(5). What is the wish of committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wish of the committee today is to deal with Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future." Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Okay. With that, we will take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break we agreed to review Tabled Document 75-16(5), which is the Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future." First on my list is Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't attempt to repeat the title. I want to begin by pointing out that we are reviewing the Joint Review Panel's letter of response today in Committee of the Whole only because the letter was tabled by a Regular Member, permitting this limited opportunity for public debate.

This government has again failed, first, to provide Members with regular updates, leaving Members to rely upon public registries to receive information. Second, it has failed to proactively provide opportunities for debate of this matter by Regular Members in this Assembly. Again, Mr. Chairman, this is not the spirit or the letter of consensus government.

The Joint Review Panel's severe criticism of the interim government response is too lengthy and too detailed to present here in the time available, but I want to highlight a few of the most significant criticisms and observations in the JRP response letter.

The Joint Review Panel says in their letter, "Governments have qualified their acceptance of some recommendations to such an extent that the

difference between accept the intent and outright rejection is not easy to discern." This speaks for itself, Mr. Chairman, but it is a particularly worrisome condemnation as it undermines any lingering hope for confidence in the government on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, further, "In the panel's view, the generic wording of the government's response with respect to funding is non-committal and provides no certainty that, where the intent of a recommendation has been accepted, there is any demonstrable commitment to implement it."

Another quote, "The panel has reconsidered all of the recommendations that the governments are proposing to reject on the ground that they were 'outside the scope of the JRP's mandate.'"

"In each case, this panel disagrees with the government's conclusions in this regard in each case."

Another quote, "In the panel's view, the argument that certain of the panel's recommendations would fetter the discretion of future decision-makers is groundless. The panel reaffirms its recommendations directed to regulators with responsibilities for reviewing future facilities applications."

Another quote, "there is little if any evidence to indicate the cumulative impacts on areas of ecological and cultural importance can be effectively mitigated as they occur."

Again, if the panel's recommendations are not implemented, then the panel cannot be assured that the GNWT will be able to fund its health, social and policing services and programs to address project impacts sufficiently or to plan for or fund a transition to a sustainable future.

Mr. Chairman, the panel says, "In the absence of further regulatory review of future developments that are not the subject of current applications but that would be required to support throughput on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline at a level of 1.2 billion cubic feet per day and above, the panel is of the view that the adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts of such developments could be significant. I should note that this is in direct opposition to the public submission made by the GNWT in the National Energy Board's consult to modify proceedings in Inuvik.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, "...the panel cannot reaffirm its previous conclusion on the likely significance of the adverse impacts of the Mackenzie Gas Project in the Northwest Alberta facilities and their contribution towards a sustainable northern future."

Mr. Chairman, these are just the headlines from the 16 pages of categorical and detailed dismissal of any confidence in the government's interim response. What is the result of all of this? The JRP sums up

what the government's failure to commit the recommendations means with a scathing statement. Again I quote, "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 the project could be significant and its contribution toward sustainability could be negative. In that event, the opportunity for the project to provide a foundation for a sustainable northern future would be lost."

I want to call again on this government to take the Joint Review Panel's criticism to heart and radically alter the context of its response from the positions outlined in the interim government response, but there is another side to this, Mr. Chairman. This situation is an enormous practical demonstration of where we are in philosophy and capacity when it comes to the resource agreement-in-principle and the devolution of resource management responsibility. We are proposing, through the agreement-in-principle, to become the stewards of our own resource birthright. We want to take on the responsibility for managing non-renewable and additional renewable resource development. We talk a lot about our commitment to sustainability and environmental protection. Let's hold this response to the JRP report up against those aspirations. After almost five years and \$20 million in community-based consultation combining the best in traditional, scientific and resource management knowledge, this government has decided that this process was largely meaningless. I don't want to ignore the opportunity to change that interim position.

Mr. Miltenberger's Minister's statement of yesterday laid out the rationale for acting mirror resource management legislation to federal legislation and turning later to necessary tune-ups if the agreement-in-principle proceeds and is added to the final agreement. That is a statement of good faith and intent for what will be a detailed and, actually, laborious process. Here in the response to the JRP report, we have the biggest possible test case of what that good faith and commitment to process is all about. For the many people who committed their time, energy and faith to the joint review process, it hasn't turned out to mean a lot. Now the government is poised to move from a specific project to all development and, as an example, the government's review of the Mackenzie Gas Project is far from providing us with a good feeling about this proposal.

Again, I call upon this government to take note of the drastic criticism levelled by the Joint Review Panel upon its interim response and ask for radical revisions that uphold in letter and spirit the vast majority, not the least minority, of the Joint Review Panel's recommendations. Please provide us with some evidence that the Government of the

Northwest Territories has the maturity and responsibility to seriously consider devolution of federal responsibilities to this government. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you Mr. Bromley. General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you Mr. Chairman. In reviewing the report and the government's rejection of the 28 recommendations, I think it is like anything else; it is just like reading a book and you take out 28 pages and you say continue to read the book and you'll get the whole story, but I don't think you can get the full story with these 28 recommendations being rejected by governments. I think, if anything, it basically eliminates the whole process of due process, allowing people the opportunity to speak their minds, raise their issues, and more importantly, ensure that the public would have an opportunity to make sure that the government, who will be ultimately responsible for the final outcome of this project, will make sure that those responsibilities are carried out and the obligations that we have by way of regulatory responsibility, and more importantly, obligations from governments.

I think the area that basically alarms me the most is the area that we have by way of land claims obligations. Mr. Chair, I think the thing that very much alarms me is the land use planning processes that are underway are being developed and ensuring that those plans under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act clearly stipulates that the land use plans will be the fundamental basis for management and development in the area of consolidating information and to allow compliance of those plans.

But yet, Mr. Speaker, one thing that we see in the agreements is that there is an area that has been extracted from those arrangements. More importantly, when we talk about sections of the agreements, especially in Section 11, which talks about those special management requirements and arrangements under land claims agreements, such as special management areas in the Mackenzie Delta, protected areas in the Sahtu, land use plans for the Sahtu, Gwich'in Land Use Plan and also the Dehcho Land Use Plan, in regards to the approval of those plans as the basis of any future developments in the North and taking them into consideration of how those developments are going to happen.

The area that alarms me is the whole area of harvesters' compensation agreements under Section 12, 12(2) to 12(3), 12(4), which very much is on the minds of most harvesters in the Northwest Territories. What will that do to their livelihood? What are we going to do when we continue to see the downgrade of the caribou? Where are we in regards to issues such as the protection of the

Woodland caribou under Section 10(6), the future development in regards to Woodland caribou? What we are seeing in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories in regards to our barren-land caribou should be sending alarm bells to the rest of the world, but yet that is one of the items that was taken out of the response to the report under 10(6). Again, especially when the Government of the Northwest Territories is saying it is responsible for wildlife management and wildlife responsibilities, to take that out of a document in regards to a recommendation in regards to the report clearly illustrates the reluctance to ensure the protection of endangered species in the Northwest Territories, and more importantly, the protection and well-being of the people in the Northwest Territories.

Again, falling back to the suggestion and recommendations of wildlife harvesters agreements, or harvesters compensation agreements, and under Section 12, it clearly illustrates the importance of harvesters compensation agreements and the effect that pipeline will have on the harvesting areas of aboriginal people up and down the valley and exactly what is going to be in place to ensure that these harvesters will be compensated for the effects of that pipeline, but more importantly, the mitigating effects that will come with it.

Again, I think it is important to realize that through the 28 recommended changes that this Government of the Northwest Territories, on one hand, is asking for devolution and saying give us the responsibility so we can show you exactly how we are going to manage the repairs of the federal government, and again under Section 15, 15(11), it talks about revenue sharing agreements and the recommendation of the report basically says that the Government of Canada sets aside 50 percent of the non-renewable resource revenues received from the Mackenzie Gas Project and hold it in trust for the Government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal authorities until such time as resource revenue agreements have been concluded among the three parties. It talks about the three parties, but yet right now we are only talking a party of two. The same thing applies to Section 15(12), in regards to translation plans.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Go ahead.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do I get an extra 10 minutes for that?

---Interjection

MR. KRUTKO: What? Five? I was just getting started.

Again Section 15(11) and 15(12) talks about resource revenue sharing agreements which they talk about setting aside 50 percent of those royalties.

The other issue that people have raised is the issue of what happens to the \$500 million that the federal government was going to set aside for training for the duration of the pipeline and into future years. What effect would that have with the exclusion of the 50 percent set aside in royalty revenues for those type of royalty trust so we can fund those types of programs? More importantly, the transitional plan in regards to the responsibility of how we will see the transition from development, post-development and also in regards to future developments. Also in regards to the area, the royalty revenue sharing arrangements, Section 12(13) talks about the Northwest Territories identifying and allocating specific portions of the share of the non-resource to fund the mechanisms established pursuant to the panel recommendations in 12(15) in regards to how those are going to be. Again, that has been excluded from this report and by excluding that, it takes away the understanding that people have had that groups and territories will have a system of sharing of resource revenues and, more importantly, ensuring that they are able to benefit from these types of developments, but more importantly, protect the future well-being of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, moving on to Section 18(21) in regards to future developments, I think that is another one that has been excluded and also looking at the potential of other resource potential areas in the Northwest Territories to tie into this pipeline and also ensuring that there will be specific audits done in the future to audit this development and, more importantly, to ensure that there is a public process in place to ensure that there is an oversight of those responsibilities. The one that alarms me the most is Chapter 19, it talks about sustainable and net contributions from this pipeline and also the requirements of governments in regards to the federal government, the Government of the Northwest Territories to file these reports in regards to the general public in regards to the general recommendation ensuring that the recommendations that have been put forward will have an audited system by way of annual reports to the Parliament and also to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government. I think that it is important that we do find ways to mitigate this arrangement, but more importantly, ensuring that the well-being of the groups are protected.

Again, Mr. Chairman, one of the other areas that I know they excluded the part dealing with the woodland caribou. As we all know, woodland caribou are presently being classified as endangered species. But also in Section 10(15), which again was taken out of the report, it talks about the future development of polar bears. I think we realize the threat the polar bears are under in

regards to climate change and future oil and gas developments, either in the offshore or Beaufort Sea will have on polar bears and the affects that will have with regard to this report.

Again, Mr. Chair, I think my quick oversight of some of the recommendations that have been identified, it clearly illustrates... I don't think the public really understands the importance of these exclusions or rejections of these 28 recommendations. Just touching on a couple of those recommendations clearly illustrates the importance of these recommendations to the people I serve and, more importantly the harvesters, the people who do make their livelihood through harvesting off the land, the importance of the caribou, the importance of the waterways and the importance of the future developments in light of what's happening in southern Canada with the major overhaul of the Fort McMurray requirements and what's going on with the oil spill.

Again, it's important to realize that we have not done justice to this report by simply gutting it and taking out the aspects and important elements of this by removing 28 recommendations. That really doesn't do justice to the work that has been done, the public's involvement in consultation and making their issues heard and not really taking them serious. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. General comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Abernethy?

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future" and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

---Carried

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

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 12:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. Bill 12 has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, November 3, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 24-16(5), Lower Maximum Unit Rents for Housing
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010
 - Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2009-2010
 - Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011

- Bill 24, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011

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 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future"
- Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010
- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
- Committee Report 3-16(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act
- Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights

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 Wednesday, November 3, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

