



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 33

16th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, February 4, 2011

Pages 5591 - 5622

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker
Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Mr. Glen Abernethy
(Great Slave)

Mr. Tom Beaulieu
(Tu Nedhe)

Ms. Wendy Bisaro
(Frame Lake)

Mr. Bob Bromley
(Weledeh)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Jackie Jacobson
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Krutko
(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Hon. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Hon. Bob McLeod
(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Human Resources
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board
Minister responsible for Energy Initiatives

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Transportation
Minister of Public Works and Services

Hon. Robert C. McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission
Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)

Hon. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)
Deputy Premier
Government House Leader
Minister of Finance
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

Mr. Dave Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations
Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Principal Clerk of Committees

Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

Principal Clerk, Operations

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Ms. Melinda Kellett

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| PRAYER | 5591 |
| MINISTERS' STATEMENTS | 5591 |
| 90-16(5) – Mackenzie Gas Project (B. McLeod) | 5591 |
| 91-16(5) – Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act (Lee)..... | 5592 |
| 92-16(5) – Deh Cho Bridge (M. McLeod)..... | 5592 |
| MEMBERS' STATEMENTS | 5593 |
| Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (Beaulieu) | 5593 |
| Hay River Harbour Dredging Program (Groenewegen) | 5594 |
| Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (Bisaro) | 5594 |
| Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (Krutko)..... | 5595 |
| Energy Issues in Norman Wells (Yakeleya)..... | 5595 |
| Deh Cho Bridge Project (Ramsay)..... | 5596 |
| Impact of Nurse-Family Programs on Early Childhood Development (Bromley)..... | 5596 |
| Respite Care Program Funding Reductions (Abernethy)..... | 5597 |
| Homeowner Consumer Protection Legislation (Hawkins) | 5597 |
| Mould-Free Housing Construction (Menicoche)..... | 5598 |
| ORAL QUESTIONS | 5598, 5609 |
| WRITTEN QUESTIONS | 5612 |
| REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS | 5612 |
| PETITIONS | 5615 |
| TABLING OF DOCUMENTS | 5615 |
| NOTICES OF MOTION | 5615 |
| 30-16(5) – Referral of Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act (Bromley) | 5615 |
| MOTIONS | 5615 |
| 30-16(5) – Referral of Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act (Bromley) | 5615 |
| CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS | 5616 |
| REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE | 5621 |

ORDERS OF THE DAY5621

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, February 4, 2011****Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:14 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 90-16(5):
MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Gas Project has the potential to create substantial economic benefits for the people of the Northwest Territories, helping us to make real progress towards this Assembly's goal of a diversified northern economy providing opportunities and choices for our residents. As Members of this House are aware, we have reached a key milestone in the regulatory review of the project. On December 16, 2010, the National Energy Board released their reasons for a decision on the Mackenzie Gas Project, concluding that the project is in the public interest and should be built. We anticipate that the federal government will approve this decision in the near future.

This brings us closer to building the Mackenzie Valley Gas Project than ever before. When the pipeline is built, the Northwest Territories has a great opportunity to showcase the sustainable development potential of our Territory, to grow the economy of the Northwest Territories and Canada, and contribute to efforts geared towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing our dependence on diesel fuels.

The National Energy Board attached 264 conditions to the approval of the Mackenzie Gas Project in areas such as engineering, safety and environmental protection. A number of these recommendations will require active participation by the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure these objectives are met.

The Government of the Northwest Territories support for the Mackenzie Gas Project includes a

number of strategic objectives all aimed at building a prosperous economy and minimizing any possible negative impacts to our residents, communities and the environment. This is consistent with our plan to maximize the benefits of development, as outlined in the government's strategic plan. As such, we agreed to support the Mackenzie Gas Project provided that the construction and operation of the project is undertaken in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner, that Northwest Territories residents and businesses will benefit from this development over time, and that the project is undertaken in a way that encourages exploration and development of the basin. I am happy to report that all three objectives have been reflected in the National Energy Board conditions for approval.

The National Energy Board requires the project proponents to file an updated cost estimate and report on their decision to build the pipeline by December 31, 2013, and that actual construction of the Mackenzie Gas must begin no later than 2015. These time frames will help us ensure that the people and businesses of the Northwest Territories are prepared to take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities that this project and related activities the project will bring.

Now that the major socio-economic and environmental regulatory reviews for the Mackenzie Gas Project are finished, we are closer than ever before to bringing this project to life. For the past few years the Government of the Northwest Territories has made significant investments in preparing Northwest Territories residents and communities for the eventuality of the Mackenzie Gas Project. These investments have yielded tremendous results.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' policies and positions in relation to the Mackenzie Gas Project during the Joint Review Panel and National Energy Board hearings were developed efficiently and effectively. Comprehensive information related to the Mackenzie Gas Project was consistently communicated to various audiences throughout the Northwest Territories and we have developed excellent relationships with all project stakeholders.

While we are happy with the progress made, we also acknowledge that a lot of work remains to be

done on this project before a decision to construct can be made by the proponents.

From this point forward, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be working on the implementation of the commitments made and the joint government response to the Joint Review Panel report, responding to conditions provided by the National Energy Board and their reasons for decision, and preparing for the coordination and processing of the many permits that will be required prior to a decision to construct.

We need the economic support of the federal government and the project proponents to move this project forward and make it a reality. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to working with all parties to bring this vital project to the next level and we call on the federal government to join us in facilitating this nation-building project for Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my statement by emphasizing, once again, that the construction and operation of the Mackenzie Gas Project in an environmentally and socially responsible way will generate tremendous long-term benefits for the residents of the Northwest Territories and for Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 91-16(5):
RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I will be tabling the Government of the Northwest Territories response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs report on the review of the Child and Family Services Act. The act is a key piece of legislation that regulates many of our Territory's programs and services for children.

The current act represents and speaks to this government's values and beliefs regarding children. I believe the Standing Committee report focuses on the issue of enhancing supports to children, and their families and communities. I am pleased that the recommendations support and enhance the extensive consultation undertaken in developing the act. While the recommendations show there is room for improvement in how we deliver services, they also confirm that the act is still very much relevant.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the standing committee on the work they did as well as to all of the participants. Health and Social Services staff that accompanied the standing committee on their tour have commented how

heartfelt and sometimes painful the participants' presentations were. I commend the people that came forward to speak, for their honesty and their courage. In addition, I would like to thank all the members and the staff of the standing committee for working with Health and Social Services staff and allowing them to be part of the process.

Mr. Speaker, overall, we support the recommendations. They will improve services to children, which is the heart of the matter. The focus on supporting families and increasing community involvement to avoid children coming into care is particularly important. This is one of the priorities in the Health and Social Services action plan, A Foundation for Change, where we are committed to improving services for children in care.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has responded positively to the majority of the recommendations. Some recommendations will require additional funding and some will require a review and analysis of the legislation. The Department of Health and Social Services is planning on moving forward immediately on 22 recommendations that are within its mandate and do not require additional financial or human resources to implement.

The full response of the government outlines which recommendations are ready to move forward and which will require additional support or funding. Mr. Speaker, where additional resources are required, these recommendations will have to be advanced through the regular GNWT business planning process and be decided along with other competing GNWT priorities at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 92-16(5):
DEH CHO BRIDGE

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to provide Members and the public with an update on the Deh Cho Bridge.

Construction has reached a key milestone with the launch of the truss, a key component of the bridge superstructure. The truss is a continuous steel assembly that connects each of the piers and will eventually carry the concrete deck panels and asphalt driving surface. Launching of the truss is the process of assembling the steel members onshore and then pushing them in a continuous line out from the shore to span the piers. Once the truss is in place the contractor will erect the two towers, string the massive cables that will support the centre span and install the prefabricated deck panels. It is expected that the north side superstructure will be completed by spring breakup.

The centre span and the south side truss will be assembled and launched in the summer. I encourage everyone to visit the Deh Cho Bridge website to track the progress of the final phase of construction.

Mr. Speaker, there was a six-week delay in the delivery of critical bridge components that, coupled with the timing of the ice breakup, has caused the contractor to look for ways of saving time. We expect a revised schedule at the end of February, once additional information is known from the truss launch that is currently underway. The contractor is currently making good progress, with the truss now resting on the second permanent pier. It is expected that construction materials, including the steel truss, towers and concrete deck panels, will be on site prior to the spring breakup. This will facilitate the timely re-engagement in the work once the river is clear of ice, and we will continue to plan and work towards a November 2011 completion date.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation recently released the Levelton Report. This is an audit of the work completed prior to the GNWT assuming control of the project. The report is available on the Deh Cho Bridge website and the Levelton Report presented 14 findings and recommendations. In response, the department, in consultation with the project management team, has developed a comprehensive action plan. Almost half of the items are now resolved and the remaining are underway. The work underway includes:

- completion of a design continuity check to ensure the input and the modifications from the three official engineers of record for the project is coordinated;
- remediation of the scour rock protection at the base of the piers;
- completion of an in-situ testing and inspection of the bridge components produced by ATCON that were not subject to a consistent quality control program;
- inspection and, if required, repair of a minor cavity that may exist on the top of Pier 3 South.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to assure everyone that all of the issues that have been identified by the Levelton audit will be addressed without affecting the safety or integrity of the bridge or the progress of construction, and we will have sufficient funds in the project security account to cover the remedial work.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that the Auditor General of Canada is conducting her midpoint performance audit of the Deh Cho Bridge Project, which will be made available soon. The audit was requested by the Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Department of Transportation and other GNWT officials cooperated fully with the Office of the

Auditor General and provided her all the documents and details requested to ensure access to all relevant information.

I hope we can finally concentrate on the prize at hand: the opening of the Deh Cho Bridge. This will be an inspiring structure that will be an icon for generations to come. Thank you. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dene people and their leaders are feeling very under-represented by this government with respect to the Premier signing the agreement-in-principle on lands and resources. Mr. Speaker, whose land are we talking about? The original landowners for most of this great Territory are Dene. In the Akaitcho Territory, land claim negotiations with the federal government are far from being settled and yet this government, with the federal government support, wants to take control of Dene land and resources before these negotiations to be completed. Mr. Speaker, yes, it comes with a promise: we will give you back some of the land when you complete your negotiations with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the track record of such promises to the Dene is not good. This promise does not sit well with the Dene leadership in Tu Nedhe and Akaitcho. The Akaitcho said that once things are signed off, it is very difficult to delete or add to the final agreement. No wonder, Mr. Speaker. When this government, who sits on land claim negotiation tables, the leaders in Tu Nedhe and elsewhere tell me that the GNWT negotiators are harder to make progress with than the federal government negotiators. It will get even worse as this government takes control of the land and resources in the regions with unsettled land claims.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT trying to achieve devolution is not the problem as long as it's with the Aboriginal governments. The land and resources of the Northwest Territories should be managed by our own governments. We can do a better job than is being done now. The problem is that this government is not including all of the citizens in this work, only some.

Mr. Speaker, we see that most Aboriginal governments, from one end of the Territory to the other, feel left out. They are not signing the AIP. Even in regions with settled land claims, most Aboriginal leaders refuse to sign the AIP. They, too,

say it is not a good deal for them and the people they represent. There are too many uncertainties.

I have not listed all the reasons, Mr. Speaker, but here are a few:

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Beaulieu, your time for your Member's statements has expired.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, this AIP has damaged relationships between Aboriginal, territorial and federal governments; the federal resource revenue is much larger; the share of federal resource revenue is much larger than both the Aboriginal and territorial governments' share.

Our cost of regulating development could easily be much more than the federal government will transfer to pay for it. So in the future we as a GNWT and the Aboriginal governments could be facing costs that we cannot cover. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER HARBOUR DREDGING PROGRAM

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about the issue of dredging in the Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, Hay River has a long history as a transportation hub. Hay River is located where it is today due to the waterways that it sits on: the south shore of Great Slave Lake and at the mouth of the Hay River. Mr. Speaker, the federal government used to play a very large role and had a large presence in Hay River with their Public Works dredging operations, and then quite a number of years back they held a big auction sale. They sold all their barges, all their dredges, all their floats, all their equipment and turned the property over either to the territorial government or the Town of Hay River. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, no one has taken responsibility for the dredging program and this plays havoc with getting into the harbour in Hay River.

Hay River has been the starting point of the tug and barge operation, which carries freight down the Mackenzie River and to points east and west beyond. The Canadian Coast Guard has a large installation in Hay River and brings their large ships in and out. The commercial fishermen have boats, which mean that they need access to the Hay River harbour. Recreational boaters need access to the harbour.

Mr. Speaker, the island that is growing in the mouth of the Hay River is also a concern for the spring flooding that occurs. As that island grows, it has an impact on where the water can go when the Hay River floods.

For all of these reasons, it is extremely important that somebody is on top of the issue of dredging the mouth of the Hay River. Mr. Speaker, there may be consultations going on, there may be funding available, there may be things that I'm not aware of, but people in Hay River are extremely concerned about this. So today I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation questions about what is the role of this government and the Department of Transportation in ensuring that we continue to have a clear waterway to access the harbour in Hay River and that this island that is building used to be called Seagull Island when it was a lot smaller -- I don't know what it's going to be called now -- you can practically walk halfway to Fort Providence now without getting wet.

Anyway, it's a real concern and it's a real problem. So I'm going to have questions today for the Minister of Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I was lucky enough to witness a little bit of history, a big piece of history for the NWT. Of course, I refer to the signing of the devolution agreement-in-principle last Wednesday. I fully support the principle of devolution and I believe that it was right to sign the agreement, but I am deeply troubled by the deep divide between the GNWT and the Aboriginal governments that has resulted from this event.

This relationship break has been building for some time, Mr. Speaker, and hindsight is 20/20, but we can now see that the Premier has failed with the Regional Leaders' Forum process. He's failed to adequately communicate with NWT residents about the AIP. We're left with uninformed opinions, opposing views, entrenched positions and mistrust all across the Territory. Residents and community leaders are searching for the facts, real and valid info, wanting to be reassured, to find something they can believe in. I think our people are now dazed and confused, to quote a movie title from 1993. They don't know who to believe and they're looking for the real answers.

Earlier this week the Premier was asked about his and the government's plans to explain the AIP and the next steps in devolution to NWT residents. From his answers, it seems that there will be letters

to regional leaders, an info bulletin mailed out to NWT households, and advertising and info through the media. I have major concerns about this communication plan. History has proven to us that these tactics do not work.

Mr. Menicoche suggested the other day that the Premier needs to take this issue on the road, that his constituents want face-to-face communication. I could not agree more with this approach. That's what's missing in the Premier's plan: the personal element. There needs to be conversation with our residents, not at them. There needs to be a travelling road show on devolution and the AIP to every one of our 33 communities. Sure, it's a big job, a time-consuming job, but if the Premier truly believes that all parties should be at the devolution negotiations table and he truly desires to fix these broken relationships to get us out of the mess we're in, then he will put a better communication plan in motion and he will reach out in person to our residents. He cannot wait for invitations, a part of the plan he described the other day, to go and visit leaders and communities. He must actively pursue contact with our residents eye to eye.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to talk about the devolution process and the lack of coordination, consultation and respect that our Aboriginal leadership should get from a government-to-government relationship.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council submitted a letter dated April 19th last year to the government on issues that they felt had to be discussed prior to a devolution agreement-in-principle going forward. The agreement was signed, as we know, last September, with no consultation and now I've received a letter from the Premier to Mr. Nerysoo, some seven months after they received the letter, outlining their concerns and issues that they felt had to be addressed through the devolution process.

Consultation, negotiations and involvement mean sitting at a table and being full participants in those negotiations, not simply observers sitting on the sidelines or being consulted every once in awhile. I think it's fundamental to improve the relationship between the Government of the Northwest Territories and its Aboriginal leaders by way of formulating a meeting ASAP, even on this weekend or whatever is coming up, to find a way to improve that relationship.

The relationship between the Aboriginal leaders and the Aboriginal communities in the Northwest

Territories is at an all-time low in the history of the Northwest Territories and its political development. I believe this government has done more harm to that relationship through this agreement-in-principle and trying to push something forward for the sake of trying to come up with an agreement without really understanding the implications and effects on the people of the Northwest Territories and the Aboriginal leadership.

At the appropriate time I will be having questions for the Premier regarding his correspondence between himself and Mr. Nerysoo.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENERGY ISSUES IN NORMAN WELLS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of Norman Wells were in the dark on December 21st not just because the sun went down early that day but because the town lost power around 5:00 p.m. and it was out for almost three hours. The backup generators did not come on.

NTPC dispatched a crew from Fort Simpson but it did not arrive in time. Where was our government?

It was 30 below and the town nearly faced a state of emergency. Where was our government?

Imperial Oil supplied power to Norman Wells and was having problems with its turbine. Imperial Oil has three turbines to support its operations. On December 21st only one was working and it failed. Where was our government?

If the power had stayed out any longer, Imperial would have shut down the town's gas line to maintain its oilfield and not the town's. People were left without heat and electricity. The mayor said, in that situation people would have been evacuated.

Pretty soon there won't be any turbines working in Norman Wells. In October Imperial announced that it will stop supplying gas to the town in 2014. Norman Wells is one of those communities that want to be linked to the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline but the earliest that could happen is 2018, we hope.

There are some big problems in the way we supply energy to the Sahtu, an area we have some of the greatest potential. The town has met to discuss some of the options for a way forward. Why wasn't NTPC at this meeting? Where was the federal government that owns one-third of this oilfield and scoops millions and millions of royalties every year? Where were our governments?

The people of my region want to know what is being done to make sure they're not ever left in the dark. Can the real governments please stand up and help my people, not only take, take, take, take? Where is our government?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about the Deh Cho Bridge Project. I appreciate the Minister's statement here earlier today.

I was happy to see the Finance Minister mention that Regular Members will be getting an update from Minister Michael McLeod later in this session. I look forward to seeing that. I'm also looking forward to Auditor General Sheila Fraser's report on the bridge project, which should be tabled in this House in four weeks' time. I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and his department for all the work that they're putting into ensuring that the project remains on time and on budget.

In anything we do in life, we should take lessons, grow, and learn from mistakes that we've made. I am still very troubled about how the former Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, probably with our blessing, allowed ATCON to take on a \$165 million contract 3,000 miles away from its home base and not be bonded to do the work. I wonder how that's even possible.

What we found out is that, yes, we had a \$13 million guarantee from the Bank of Nova Scotia which, after ATCON entered into receivership, was made good by the Government of New Brunswick on the back of the taxpayer in New Brunswick. A construction audit was conducted by Levelton and it speaks to deficiencies in the work performed by ATCON. The question is whether the \$13 million will cover the cost of the needed repairs.

I must also state, for the record, that even though Members had asked to see the report, it was posted on the department's website and technical briefings were conducted with the media in the absence of any real briefing or update for Regular Members. I should not have to find out the report is available on-line from the local media; it should have been given to Regular Members before being posted on the department's website.

I just want to make sure that we have guarantees in place with the current contractor, Ruskin, to ensure they are adequately bonded to do the remainder of the work. Also given the fact that there have been recent delays and the Minister states quite clearly in his statement earlier today that the contractor is looking at bringing forward a revised schedule sometime by the end of February, well, when I read between the lines, it means more time. In a mega-infrastructure project like the Deh Cho Bridge, time is obviously money. I want some assurances from the Minister that delays and cost overruns will not

fall on the taxpayer here in the Northwest Territories.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. RAMSAY: I want some assurances what cost overruns will fall on the taxpayer here in the NWT, and I also want to understand why Regular Members haven't seen a copy of the contract between Ruskin and whoever it's with -- the Government of the Northwest Territories or maybe the former Deh Cho Bridge Corporation -- how that works, what our liabilities are in that contract, what are eligible cost overruns. I'll be asking the Minister for that later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IMPACT OF NURSE-FAMILY PROGRAMS
ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Early investments in the health and well-being of mothers and children through nurse-family programs pays huge benefits down through the years. Good work is underway in four communities through the Healthy Families Program at the Department of Health and Social Services and I look forward to hearing more details on any expansion to be proposed in this year's budget.

Nurse-family programs focus on improving prenatal health, reducing child abuse and enhancing family functioning in the first two years of the child's life. Unlike many mental health, substance abuse and crime prevention programs, nurse-family programs help first-time mothers become effective parents.

Results of this support are enormous, as demonstrated in a growing number of studies and case assessments. In studies of low-income mothers in U.S. cities the nurse-visited women smoked 25 percent fewer cigarettes during pregnancy, had fewer kidney infections and produced heavier babies. Mothers and children had better diets and there were 80 percent fewer cases of child abuse and neglect. By age 15 the children had fewer criminal convictions, by two-thirds. They also had 60 percent fewer sexual partners, smoked almost one-third fewer cigarettes, and consumed alcohol on less than half the days of the control group.

After 15 years, poor, unmarried women still showed major benefits. They had fewer subsequent pregnancies, fewer months on income support, there was an 80 percent reduction in the child abuse again, a major reduction in maternal misbehaviour due to alcohol and drug abuse, and 70 percent fewer arrests. The number of days mothers were in the hospital for injuries dropped by

80 percent. By age six, children had fewer behavioural and mental health problems, grades were better, they were using less tobacco, alcohol or street drugs. Each study showed the most significant improvements were seen in high-risk, poor families.

This type of program is exactly what was recommended by the Child and Family Services Act review for every NWT community. It's the kind of integrated model being called for in the No Place for Poverty workshop recommendations. It's about the integrated cross-government approach we must take to prevent problems, rather than spending on the bottomless pit of battling symptoms.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: The current delivery of the Healthy Families Program in four communities has been endorsed by all and provides the basis for rolling this program out across the Territory. We know dollars are short, but the demonstrated, almost miraculous, benefits of nurse-family programs shows this is where we should be staking our resources. Our existing small community nursing station delivery model and our social services Healthy Families programs provides the basis on which to build.

I will be pushing for maximum emphasis on this approach and will be asking the Minister questions on how to pursue this to the fullest.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RESPITE CARE PROGRAM FUNDING REDUCTIONS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last October there was a lot of talk about respite services in the Northwest Territories. We had a gallery full of people who were very concerned about the future of the YAACL and their delivery of respite services.

As a result of that -- I believe that the Minister and her department actually heard what the people had to say -- the Minister is moving forward with the development of a comprehensive territory-wide respite program, which I think is fantastic. To that end, the department is holding regional respite care focus groups over the next couple of months, through February, that are going to involve the department and stakeholders and NGOs and people that have children that are in respite. I think that's a great approach and I hope that information is going to be used in the development of this territory-wide respite program.

I do have one concern and that is the current program in Yellowknife. The development of a respite program is not going to be done by the end of March. We're still going to need respite services while that program is being developed. I understand that the Minister has been in touch with the families in Yellowknife, as it gave them some assurances that they would continue to receive respite services over the 2011-2012 fiscal year as the department moves forward with the development of this comprehensive respite program. I think that's great. The families needed to hear that. They needed to know that there's some certainty there. But I don't know fully what that certainty means. Later today I will be asking the Minister some questions on what that means for the 2011-12 fiscal year. Does it mean that those 29 families in Yellowknife can expect to receive respite services from the Yellowknife Association for Community Living?

The Yellowknife Association for Community Living has been successful. They have demonstrated that they can provide high quality respite services. Until we do have a territorial respite program, which may change how we deliver respite throughout the Northwest Territories, can we get some assurances that YAACL will continue to provide during the 2011-12 fiscal year?

Just for the record, in the development of a comprehensive territorial respite program, my thoughts are we need a program that is flexible, that will address the realities that communities, towns and cities are different and our delivery mechanisms are going to need to be different in those communities. So as the Minister moves forward, my plug is for, obviously, an incredibly flexible program that meets the needs of our residents regardless of where they live and one program does not fit all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOMEOWNER CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday Canada's most trusted contractor was here in Yellowknife speaking at a construction conference. His name, I'm sure no stranger to most, is Mike Holmes. He raised many topics of interest in his talk, but one area that was of significant interest to me, which I've raised in this very House, is consumer protection for new homeowners.

New homeowners, Mr. Speaker, need consumer protection and it is a growing concern in my constituency, across the North and even in Canada. To be direct, a new home buyer is left to the goodwill of the person they are buying their new

home from. Whether it is a new home bought from a contractor or it is a home being sold to them from another family, the only warranty these people often receive is often joked about in the industry, which is called taillight warranty. When those taillights disappear, that's when the warranty disappears. As Mike Holmes put it, a person can purchase a car, or even a refrigerator or a coffeemaker today and they receive some level of consumer protection through a warranty. The funny thing is they have better consumer rights than someone buying a new home.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, a family buying a new home or even just a used home from another family, and that family, in essence, is risking everything they have with both their finances and their dreams and hopes on what most people in the industry describe as a one-time, 15-minute walk-through. They have no guarantees on anything that their new home is built right or that nothing has been covered up for a quick sale to get it out there.

Sadly, this government has no interest to stand behind our constituents or people of the North. I've raised this matter to the Minister of MACA, and the department feels that if no one is complaining, then they don't have an interest on this subject. Why does this government need to wait for a train wreck before it takes interest on a particular issue?

I even went up to Mike Holmes after his talk and explained that this government has little interest on this particular subject. He was shocked when I told him this, as I continue to be shocked, because good families are put in a risky position if a dangerous situation happens and no one is there to protect them. Our government abandons them. I often wonder why the families in Ontario and even Alberta are better concerned or more concerned than our government takes towards our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, this government could do something today. First, it could agree to take action to ensure that there is protection for families out there, to ensure that they are not unnecessarily put at risk. Mr. Speaker, the Minister would be shocked to know that even industry would welcome this: honest safeguards to protect family and people in the industry. Mr. Speaker, people don't need to get stuck with lemons. I will have questions for the Minister of MACA later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MOULD-FREE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, attended the Northern Construction Tradeshow yesterday at lunchtime. As Mr. Hawkins had indicated, Mr. Holmes from Holmes on Homes was in attendance and gave a speech there. I really

didn't go there for the speech. I actually went there, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate a niece of mine, Ms. Tyra Moses, who got an award for top marks in the second and third-year electrical trade program.

However, the speech did catch my attention, Mr. Speaker. He spoke on many topics, and his experiences and ideas on providing safe and reliable homes to the public were refreshing. It's true for any of the shows that I've watched and I'm sure of our public as well.

One issue that is becoming necessary and even standard in southern construction is mould-free housing construction. In my constituency, as I travel and visit, mould in their homes is raised with me quite often. I have been in the homes and saw the extent of these issues. Constituent homeowners want solutions, Mr. Speaker. The NWT Housing Corporation has several initiatives to combat the mould issues. However, I have learned that we can in future prevent this by building mould-free homes with mould-free materials and construction techniques.

It was said, as well, that mould-free construction will not necessarily impact the cost of construction. So I ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation to begin investigating this and work towards making it a policy of our Government of the Northwest Territories to have mould-free construction in any new home construction. Our constituents and clients deserve safe and reliable homes. The people know that the mould issues are affecting the health of themselves and their children. I will raise this issue with the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation during question period. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 372-16(5):

SUPPORT FOR HEALTHY FAMILY PROGRAMS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I just want to start by noting that the Standing Committee on Social Programs did have the courtesy of sharing with the Minister our draft report on the review of the Child and Family Services Act, and we were pleased to do so. I want to preface my questions by noting that it would have been great to see the department's response to it before it was tabled today. But not having seen it, when is the Minister proposing to get the Healthy Families Program into every community in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a program that we support and we agree with the Members that it does benefit and we would like to see them expanded as the financial resources permit. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I hate to waste questions like this, Mr. Speaker. Sorry. I hate to waste questions like this. I asked what the Minister is proposing, not what she'd like to see. I wonder if I could get that answered. And while we're at it, has there been evaluation of the existing Healthy Families programs? Mahsi.

HON. SANDY LEE: I do appreciate the Member's question and I don't mean to be in any way disrespectful. I just want to simply state that I agree with the Member and we are aware and we share the view that early intervention and working with children and families does help in many different ways, as the Member stated, and it has been a focus of the government to work in those programs. The Member is also aware that the Health and Social Services budget is under pressure, as are all others. We are having to work with a 3 percent growth in the budget, which is almost standstill. So my answer to the Member is that we look to -- and I would like to -- expand the programs, but we can only do that to the extent that the resources are available. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Unfortunately, my questions are accumulating here, Mr. Speaker. I'm just not getting answers. I asked, had an evaluation been done of the existing programs. I asked what the Minister is proposing. Apparently, there is a document to be tabled today. Supposedly, the Minister knows that if she's proposing to do nothing, I need to know that, Mr. Speaker. I will add a third question. Given that major benefits from programs such as the Healthy Families accrue to the Department of Justice, ECE and other departments, including Health and Social Services to get us out from these budget pressures we're under, this is clearly profitable, preventative investments in people that saves our budget, Mr. Speaker. What is this Minister doing to get those departments involved in supporting these programs? I wouldn't mind an answer to all three questions, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: As I stated in the opening statement, there were 72 recommendations to CFSA. We are making this report available a month sooner than required because we do appreciate that Members want to take a look at that. As I stated, we are supportive of the majority of the recommendations. We are moving immediately on 22 and there are others that we support but need legislation change and working with other departments. We do provide a detailed response to

those recommendations. I do believe we have ample time to review those. The issue that the Member raised, yes, we are working with other departments to advance those. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why don't I get a good feeling here, Mr. Speaker? I guess, if I can try and ask a point-blank question here: would the Minister agree that despite an entire section devoted to prevention, and possibly the highest priority in our report, am I to conclude from the Minister's remarks that in fact there is no expansion planned for the Healthy Families Program?

HON. SANDY LEE: No, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member should take a look at the responses. We have very positive responses to most of the recommendations. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 373-16(5):

DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Premier. I would like to say to the Premier, having been deluged, I guess, with questions a couple of days ago, many differing opinions on the AIP and people telling him what to do and so on, I'd like to know whether or not the Premier is open to making changes to the communications plan that we heard about the other day. Has he considered making any changes, and if he has not to this date, will he consider making changes to be a little more personal in his approach to our residents? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, since responding to questions earlier in the week on the agreement-in-principle, the approach we have looked at we have been revising as we've gone forward, taking in the comments made by Members. We are looking towards offering up to go into communities and have a team established that we will be able to go into the communities to explain the AIP, as it is, on top of our communications in Aboriginal languages going into the homes across the North, as well, and on top of that, the householder, as well. We are working on a number of fronts and we've revised the letter I said that we would try to get out, and my earlier response to regional leaders, we have changed that letter now and it's being revised again to offer them an opportunity to meet in the regions with all the chiefs and go into communities as well. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I would like to thank the Premier for the response. I am gratified to hear that Members are being heard, that residents are being heard and that there is going to be a change to the approach to getting information out there and educating our residents.

I'd like to ask the Premier, if we are going into communities, and I'd like to state again we need to go to every community. We can't just hold these meetings in regional centres; every community deserves the right to have a meeting and to hear these explanations. When the Premier and/or his team or a portion of a team goes to a community, what type of community meetings is the Premier planning on holding? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We'd be prepared to hold public information meetings with the community, the leadership and residents within the community. It is about trying to get as much information out to people so that they can understand what this document is and what it means as we go forward. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Good information to hear and I'm glad to hear that. I would hope that in any meeting, that the government would be open at a community meeting to hearing from both sides, and that if an Aboriginal leader, a regional leader or a community leader wishes to be there to speak to the issue, that they would be able to have the opportunity to do that.

One of the other things that the Premier mentioned is that he is sending a letter to regional leaders to invite them to come back to the process, so to speak. I have to ask myself why would they do that. What can we say to leaders at this point that is going to want them to come back to this table? I guess I need to ask the Premier, and I have to state as well, that I think, to me, the letter is the most formal method of communication that we have. So to the Minister, to the Premier: what is he doing at this point, apart from the letter to regional leaders, to try and mend these broken bridges? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I think the language we use here, it sometimes can help inflame the situation that we find ourselves in, to a certain degree. Not all of the regions are in disagreement. We know some are right now planning to hold some of their meetings. We're in communications with them on a number of fronts around the devolution process and again offer up the meetings. We do have to follow up with a formal process. So there are calls going on to stay in touch and keep in touch with what some of the regions are planning, what they are saying out there or what we are hearing. But we will follow up formally with the letters, as I stated, with some of the revisions that I mentioned earlier.

As we look towards the future and do what we can within the next number of days and weeks, looking

at trying to schedule those community meetings that we can and get some acceptance of, we're prepared to go in and have these information meetings so that people will be fully informed as we progress in our work plan as the Government of the Northwest Territories.

I think it is important to also recognize that as we've offered up through this whole process that at times there may not be agreement on some of the key issues. Some of the issues raised by some of the leaders as we've responded to are matters outside of the devolution of the authorities, right now practices by the federal government. They're more matters of self-government negotiations or of amending land claims agreements, which this devolution agreement is not intended to do. We have to get that type of information out to the public as well. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Premier for his statement, I guess. I appreciate the information. I certainly had no intention to inflame. It's simply a query that has entered into my head and I'm glad to hear the Premier say that there are phone calls going on so there is some personal touch that's happening with regional leaders. The more of that that happens, the better, in my mind.

One last question, Mr. Speaker, and it has to do with the scheduled meeting for the Northern Leaders' Forum in March. I wonder if the Premier could advise what the purpose of that meeting is. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The Northern Leaders' Forum is a side table to the regional leaders' meetings that we had, we established, inviting other participants to be a part of the work we were doing on building a common vision. At our recent meeting we were presented materials from the Inuvialuit and the Metis, as well as the Association of Municipalities, and we are pulling that information together. Our response now is with that material. We're sending it back to all of the participants, even those that were not there, as they were provided funds to be a part of this and we hope that although they were preoccupied with the days up to the agreement-in-principle, that they've got information that they can share or at least provide feedback on the information we have received. The basis of that meeting is to have that response from them as well as the others that did provide a formal response, to look at the next steps as we go forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 374-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to my statement, I made reference to a letter that was sent on April 19th to the Premier on six outstanding issues that the Gwich'in felt had to be addressed before they'd come back to the table. It clearly states that the Gwich'in were withdrawing, and also they were withdrawing the support for the signing of the agreement on May 19, 2007, because they felt it did not accommodate them in regard to the areas of concern.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it took almost seven months for the Premier to respond by way of a letter. Again, he commits to a lot in the letter, but it doesn't really address the six outstanding issues that are mentioned in the letter that was forwarded to the Premier. So I'd like to know when are you going to deal with the six outstanding issues that the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council put forward in his letter of April 19, 2010.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've already mentioned this letter a number of times in this House by the Member and spoke to the reasons it's taken so long, apologized for the delay in some of them, but with all the events happening, it was better to respond with a full deck of cards and positions and send those responses out.

In the letter that I sent back to the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, we touched on those issues that he raised. In fact, we spoke of the fact that a number of those issues were outside of the agreement-in-principle and would be better dealt with, as I was saying in an earlier response, through other tables and other discussions, or final agreements in other areas such as self-government.

We've responded to that letter and I know that the president may not be happy with that response, but it is our position that a number of those issues are outside of the agreement-in-principle. There are a number of issues raised in the letter that we feel are actually a part of the negotiations to go forward. For example, resource revenue sharing, that is part of the agreement-in-principle under Section 12 that talks about having bilaterals with Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories. So there are a number of areas that we address where we feel we could better deal with those as we go forward. We would work with all the leadership, giving them time to respond to the letters that were sent by the chief negotiators, as well as work on and sit down together to work on a protocol to see us go forward on the AIP. Unfortunately, that fell through at the eleventh hour, but hopefully with those principles that I believe are common to all the

parties, we'll be able to use that and go forward in the next steps. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, we ask for input from Aboriginal organizations. They put it in writing, they forward it to the government, we develop a protocol agreement, we have the Aboriginal governments assuming that they were going to have a say in the agreement-in-principle in regard to devolution. Again, that whole process collapsed on itself and I find it kind of odd. Is that a government stalling tactic to not allow the Aboriginal groups to be at the main table during this negotiation and eliminate them from having a real say at the negotiating table?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The Member knows, from his own history as a negotiator, there are times when the main table has participants there from different parties that share that responsibility, and there are times when it's a team approach and the chief negotiator works with other groups as preparing for the main table so that the messaging is consistent. So we don't need to go there and debate who has the actual say at the table. There are places in this agreement-in-principle where, in fact, it's going to be a bilateral discussion between Aboriginal governments and the GNWT. So we'll, in fact, be at the table across from each other negotiating the final, for example, resource revenue sharing bilateral agreements. There are areas where we're going to have to work on the jurisdiction and sharing of responsibilities as we go forward in how they would work together where there are private settled lands and there's the Crown lands that are being transferred and how that integration would work. So there's that responsibility.

Let's not forget, from the start of this process from 2001 forward, we've had the input from their negotiators, their legal people in the language that is throughout the AIP as it's signed now. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, I have to remind the Premier that we do have a legal and constitutional obligation to the land claim governments where the government clearly stipulates that they shall involve the Aboriginal governments in the development and implementation of a northern accord or a devolution agreement. That is on constitutionally protected land claims agreements. But yet, by submitting a letter with six outstanding issues that they wanted to address, which basically states that they are putting forward suggestions on how we can improve the agreement, and also include them in those discussions. So, again, I'd like to ask the Minister exactly why these six items were not taken to the main table of negotiations and put forward in front of the federal government, and why they had to wait seven months for a reply, knowing that

these issues won't be discussed at the main negotiating table.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Quite clearly -- and I've shared this with regional leaders right from the earliest days as we received the letters from the chief negotiators -- there are some matters that have been brought to the table, brought to the negotiation teams, that were outside of the agreement-in-principle.

Let's go back to what this agreement-in-principle is about. It is about what the federal government is making decisions on today with their present infrastructure, their present regime in place, it is about transferring that existing system over to us and once we have the authority as governments in the North, we will be able to influence and make changes to that regime that better reflect what we want to see as Northerners in that type of regime and legislation. So there is that process that will bring all the bodies back to the table to be a part of this process in dealing with those.

So the matters that the Member talks about in the initial letter -- division of power, responsibility and authority that has not been resolved between the Government of the NWT and Aboriginal governments -- well, chapter 6 sets that process up. The resource revenue sharing part, chapter 12 sets that process up. So this AIP incorporates that we will deal with a number of those key matters.

There are some purely bilateral issues between the federal government and the GNWT when it comes to the human resources and the staff of the federal government becoming staff of the Government of the Northwest Territories and then the new positions that we'd have to go and hire and the contract that's in place that we'd have to work with, the HR side. That's purely a bilateral issue with the GNWT.

So there's a number of facets to this that we have to clearly identify, and that's why we're working on bringing the regional leaders back to the table so they can help us in some of that work. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, one of the items in the letter was the whole area of decentralizing government and the concern that they are raising is that it seems all the populated centres are the ones where all the policy analysts are, people that control those decision-making decisions and making them, knowing that those decisions are having effects on Aboriginal people and their traditional lands. I think it's important to realize that decentralization is one of the issues that also was addressed in those suggestions and yet that's not being discussed. I'd just like to propose, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier maybe he can get his staff to maybe have better contact with

the Gwich'in Tribal Council, because I know that in your cc's you have a whole bunch of chiefs there that no longer are chiefs in those positions and vacated their positions last spring. So I'd like to know if maybe you can get your department to get out there and maybe know who those leaders really are.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We will continue to update our files on the different elected leaders throughout the Northwest Territories and we will continue to do that as we go forward. Yes, we will focus and make sure we have the right contacts. Of key importance is responding to the person writing the letter originally, and that is the president, and respond to that and go forward on that basis.

Again, as we've looked and done this work, it has been inclusive. We have had a seat at the table, whether it is at the bilateral working teams as we presented and even when it was purely a bilateral issue of the GNWT and federal government, we updated all the parties as to the positions and the outcomes of those discussions. We have been at all fronts working to incorporate the groups at the table. In fact, it wasn't until this opportunity to sign this that some of the positions that are now out there were raised, not in the sense of negotiation positions but of the stance of not agreeing with the signing. For example, in the signed agreement I tabled here, the signatories for this agreement were at one time all in one. It was at the request of the Aboriginal members at the table who said they did not want to have that part of it, because they felt they had to have opportunity to address it at a different stage. That adjustment was made and that's why the section about coming in whenever they're ready to come in was put in place.

We've adjusted things, as we've gone forward, to try to incorporate as many of the changes, but some of the key ones that are being raised are either to be negotiated as we go forward or are outside of the mandate of the agreement-in-principle.

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

QUESTION 375-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Premier on the AIP. The devolution AIP is a roadmap that sets out the course of negotiations for the final agreement that the final agreement will follow. Five Aboriginal governments have already indicated some portions of the AIP are not in their best interest. Aboriginal governments have reiterated their substantive concerns with the AIP to the GNWT. The Premier wishes to include Aboriginal in the final agreement and if this requires a departure from the existing terms of the AIP to accommodate the interests of

the Aboriginal, will the Premier agree to alter the course that the AIP currently sets for negotiation of the devolution agreement in order to make devolution work? In other words, is the Premier prepared to deviate from the terms of the AIP if that's what's required to accommodate the interests of the Aboriginal?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been through the process of working up to the AIP. We've heard some of the concerns. We've tried to address it through, for example, chapter 4, where we talk about protection of Aboriginal rights as concerns about those groups that have land claims and self-government that are in the negotiation process. We've incorporated the language in the signed AIP that sets out the protection and the wording and with the input of the representatives of the groups at the table to put in the language that protects Aboriginal rights. Certainly the fact that the Constitution itself stands and we respect all of those rights as we go forward. We've incorporated the language. I could go clause by clause to do this, but we'd use up all the time of the Assembly on this. We've incorporated the language to try to bring comfort to the groups that we will not take away any rights that are established out there. In fact, through this and chapter 6 we think we can grow together.

As for saying we will alter the agreement that has been signed, that is not the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We believe we can accommodate some of the issues as we go forward in setting our mandates for negotiations towards a final agreement in that. Again, that is why it is so important that the groups come back into the tent and join those that have been there and look at a way forward on this.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to thank the Premier for that answer. I think a deviation of the AIP is needed, but it's apparent the government is not prepared to do that. According to the history, Aboriginal people are the true landowners of the Northwest Territories. Does the Premier acknowledge that the Aboriginal people are the true landowners and also landowners of the resources in that land?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The Canadian Constitution is clear about the agreements that have been signed and settled, and those that are... In fact, this agreement-in-principle goes clearly even into the areas where there are negotiations ongoing. The fact that both ourselves and the federal government have heard from the groups that are in negotiations, the clause that's in there that the federal government can come back in and reach into those Crown lands that have been transferred to the GNWT and alter that so that the

groups negotiating aren't squeezed into a box that has been predetermined. It leaves that open for future negotiations as we go forward.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories, the agreements that have been signed, the language in this agreement-in-principle clearly states that we recognize those rights and authorities that are established.

MR. BEAULIEU: On January 13, 2011, Aboriginal governments presented a protocol agreement to the Minister. The Premier had made some changes and presented it back to the Aboriginal governments. The Aboriginal governments didn't accept that. Is the Premier prepared to go back to Aboriginals and seriously consider the protocol agreement that was sent to him in its form on January 13, 2011?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The protocol agreement that we helped in the process -- mind you, we were given a final draft copy late and let's realize that a protocol is worked on with all partners -- we helped and supported the protocol work of the regional groups. I'd asked at a number of meetings if we would be provided an early draft so that we could respond, if there were concerns with the language that was in there that would not work with us. Unfortunately, we were given a final draft, we had to respond quickly. As I was open with the leaders that I met with and the technical staff that they had that I met with on January 6th saying that it was the last week of January that we were aware that Minister Duncan was coming up and we were planning to work on an agreement-in-principle signing and hopefully we would have the protocol at least initialled by the groups and a way forward. Clearly, the protocol that was written had language in it that said if we signed it, we would not sign an agreement-in-principle, that there needed to be some of the key issues, as they felt, negotiated first; which was the Constitution, which was resource revenue sharing, which was power sharing, which all have their place but have their place in a negotiation process.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to shift gears a little bit and recognizing that the Premier covered some of this in response to Ms. Bisaro, when will the Premier start a communication strategy to begin dialogue with Aboriginal governments and consider their input in the AIP?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We are working at a very fast pace since the signing to begin to put plain language, number one, householder in there and then to have Aboriginal languages do the interpretation, and we'll provide that to homes across the North as well as through the radio. As well, the communications with the regional leaders, we're picking up and getting back to them to say

are they ready to sit down with us, and looking at going into communities with information sessions to have all of that information ready.

In the Executive side, devolution, we're a small team now. We've returned much of our money, previous years', because things were not moving ahead. We'll have to revamp and look at how we get into those communities with those information sessions so that we can provide that. We're working at that now. I can't give you an absolute date but, for example, I'll be looking at material this weekend so that we can hopefully get something out to the firms that could print this information and get it out to households as soon as possible. The Aboriginal language piece we're working with Education, Culture and Employment on the language side as well as looking to communities for interpreters that could help us in this work.

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

QUESTION 376-16(5):

HAY RIVER HARBOUR DREDGING PROGRAM

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about dredging and my questions today are for the Minister of Transportation. Since the federal Department of Public Works vacated their role in Hay River in ensuring that the mouth of the river and the shipping channels in that area were dredged on a regular basis, whose responsibility is that function at this time?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The responsibility of maintaining navigable waterways is with the federal government.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Since this lack of dredging is impacting industry in Hay River, what role does the Minister see himself in in communicating with the federal government on this situation? Have meetings taken place? Has the Minister met with industry? Has he met with federal counterparts who may have a role to play in this and could help bring some resolve to the situation?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I guess several Ministers could have a role to play in the concern that's being raised by the Member. The fisheries are being impacted, as was stated in her comments. I guess it could fall under ITI. As a potential disaster, it could fall under MACA. NTCL is concerned about the channel there, so I guess that would fall under DOT.

We as a government have had the concern raised to us by the municipality and we have indicated to

them that there was some potential programs that we could flag for them to provide that information to them. We've also had a meeting with the Member for Hay River North, our Speaker, who has also raised this concern as something that's beginning to be a real serious challenge of how we move forward. I believe our MP has had an opportunity to speak with Minister Gail Shea, who is the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and those talks are ongoing. We have, of course, raised it also as a department with our federal counterparts and those discussions are ongoing.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Is the Minister aware of any federal funding which is specifically available in relation to these kinds of issues in navigable waters? I have observed from the air, flying into Hay River, the buildup of silt that's creating its own delta beyond the delta. Vale Island is a delta in the mouth of the Hay River and I've observed it, flying over this summer. It is going to have a huge impact if something is not done about it. I will not recite all that again. Is the Minister aware of any federal funding that we as a government could access to address this?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We certainly agree with the Member's description of what's happening on the harbour. The silt buildup is of concern, of course, but the low waters are compounding the problem. We've had several users identify some programs that could potentially be resourced. I believe the municipality was provided with that information and followed up. My understanding is that it wasn't successful.

We have talked to our federal counterparts. We have been talking to the Coast Guard and we're hoping that they'll be able to identify some dollars to at least provide some relief to the situation that's growing in the town of Hay River.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard that it's not the GNWT's responsibility. The town is looking to this government for some assistance. It does impact our people. It does impact our industry, even if it is not technically our responsibility. Does this government have any money to help address this situation? I observed, with interest, the anticipation of the flooding of the Red River in Manitoba again, and I think technology has changed a bit since those old federal DPW dredges were out there.

There's equipment, there's people, there are contractors who are in this business. Like I said, I read it because it's in the news with respect to the Red River and the anticipated flooding there again this year. If we could at least identify the scope of the problem and what needs to be done, then we might have a better idea of what it could cost. But

does this government have any money to help Hay River in this regard? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I was going to say right up front that we didn't have any money or resources to allocate to this situation, but it is a serious issue. It's been raised by a number of sectors of people that live in Hay River and also the Hay River Reserve. We want to follow up on our discussions with the federal government. We are hoping our discussions with the Coast Guard are going to be successful; I can't say that it is right now. We haven't had anything confirmed in that area.

We need to bring in the federal government, especially the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. This is their area of responsibility. For us to step in and start assuming that without any resources, we'd have to take the money from another project or another area and that's going to be difficult as resources are tight. I want to assure the Member that we'll follow up. I am meeting with the Minister of Transportation in the next couple of weeks and I will certainly try to raise this as an issue that needs attention. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 377-16(5):
RESPIRE CARE PROGRAM

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are with respect to respite services in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Health and Social Services is currently developing a territorial-wide respite program. I'm wondering if the Minister could please provide me with a bit of an outline on the timeline how they're going to move forward and when they expect to actually see a territorial respite program ready to go for review by the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and also when we think a territorial respite program might be rolled out for all residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member laid out in his statement, there are various components that are being conducted right now, including the community workshops. So we expect that the work will be done by April/May in time for next year's business cycle. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: As the Minister pointed out, there are regional respite focus groups taking place starting in February and going through February. That information, I understand, will then go to the advisory group who will provide some recommendations to the department on how to

design or what might be the best model to use in the Northwest Territories. Could the Minister please tell me what is the makeup of that advisory committee? Does it include non-government organizations like the NWT Disabilities Council as well as the Yellowknife Association for Community Living? Is there representation from small communities and towns throughout the Northwest Territories, and who else might be on that particular advisory group? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: There are employees of the department on the committee as well as NGO groups and regional organizations. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: That is not particularly helpful. If she could please give us some examples of the NGOs that are on that, that would give us a better sense as to who's represented on this committee.

A second point that I'd like to ask about is: there are a lot of people here, 29 families who currently access services from the Yellowknife Association for Community Living. Clearly, this program is not going to be in place. It doesn't sound like there will be even something to go forward to committee until the next business planning cycle. Is the Minister working with the Yellowknife Association for Community Living to provide services in the interim until a territorial respite program is designed? Specifically, will YACL be supported by the GNWT to provide respite services for those 29 families and any other new families that come to the table for services in Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: The Member is aware and we've had discussions with the committee about a way to go forward. I would like to just reiterate that we are committed to providing support to the families who are under the YACL program. Yellowknife Health and Social Services is currently negotiating a contribution agreement with YACL so that we continue to provide the programs to those families who are currently getting the services from YACL as we work toward a respite care program. I have communicated that to the Members and I'm happy to confirm that again in the House today. Thank you.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for that. I think hearing that in the House is very important today for those 29 families and important for us to hear as MLAs.

I'd like to just go back to my previous question. If she could give me a bit of an understanding of what groups are represented on that advisory group. Are some of the groups in the Territory that are providing these types of services going to be represented on that advisory group? Specifically, the NWT Disabilities Council and Yellowknife

Association for Community Living; are they part of the advisory group? Simple question. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: The advisory group is not formed yet and so I will get back to the Member on that.

I just want to caution that we will, if that's what the Member is wanting to know, definitely consult with the Council for Persons with Disabilities and YACL and other groups that are involved in this work. We need to make sure that eventually, at the end of the day, those are the groups who will be vying to provide the program and we don't want to interfere with their ability to be able to deliver the programs. I need to make it clear that we will definitely consult with them to advise us. We will work with them throughout the process, but we don't want to do anything that would jeopardize their ability to be a service provider when all the work is completed. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 378-16(5):
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a few questions today for the Minister of Transportation. It gets back to his statement earlier and my statement earlier about the Deh Cho Bridge Project.

I want to start off by thanking the Minister. Concerns were raised in this House a year ago in regard to some deficiencies with the project and the quality assurance on the project. I'd like to thank the Minister for directing the department to conduct the Levelton Report, as it's called, and come up with the 14 recommendations contained in that report. I know that work is proceeding to address those concerns and, again, I want to thank the Minister for that.

The question that I want to ask the Minister is we had no bond in place with ATCON. We had a \$13 million guarantee with the Bank of Nova Scotia. That's been made good by the Province of New Brunswick. I just want to ask the Minister what analysis is the Minister and his department basing their estimates on, on getting the deficiencies addressed that would fit within that \$13 million range. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Member for thanking me. I think this is the first time he's ever thanked me for anything I've done on this project.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a guarantee on this project all along on the work that was to be done. I think we

have better than what would be in the bond at this point. We have cash in the bank. We have done an analysis. We have had our contractors look at what needs to be rectified. In most cases, Mr. Speaker, it's a matter of going in and doing the actual testing, as we haven't had all the documentation that we require. But to go in and do the testing on something that's under water and is covered with rock at this point is just about as expensive as fixing the situation.

Mr. Speaker, we have some very good estimates. Of course, at this point, they're still estimates. We feel that the cost of doing the work that was outlined in the Levelton Report will be anywhere from \$4 million to \$7 million, Mr. Speaker. That's not even half of the money that we have as holdback for this project as we go forward. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, last year, as well, given what happened with ATCON, I had asked some questions about Ruskin and the Minister had confirmed that Ruskin had a 50 percent performance bond in place for the remainder of the work. I'd like to ask the Minister who holds that 50 percent performance bond that Ruskin has. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'm not sure as to who actually holds it. I would have to go and find that out. I will commit to finding that out and providing the information to the Member. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, in the Minister's statement earlier today, he had advised the House that Ruskin was going to come up with a revised construction schedule sometime by the end of February and, as I mentioned in my statement, time is money. If this project gets delayed, it will undoubtedly cost more. I am just wondering why it is that Regular Members have not seen the contract between Ruskin and the Government of the Northwest Territories for the remainder of the work on the Deh Cho Bridge Project so that we can better understand what our liabilities are and what would be eligible cost overruns, should the project be delayed much further. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the Member has seen any contract from any projects we have across the government. It is not a practice that we provide the information to Regular Members on. We would need the consent of the contractors and, in most situations, the contractors would not agree to it, so that is why we haven't provided it. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am handing out thank yous here, but I will thank the Minister for providing the Concession Agreement to committee some time ago. It was an embargoed

copy, that Concession Agreement, that we could have a look at in the committee room. We couldn't make copies of it and hand it out, but we at least got a copy of it. If the department would let us have a look at the contract so that we can have a lawyer have a look at it and make our own judgments on what eligible cost overruns and delays in this project will mean to the overall cost of this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, more thank yous. Since assuming responsibility for this project, I made every effort to provide information to all Members and to the public. We have tried to make all documents available. We have provided regular updates to the MLAs. We have set up media briefings. We have had technical briefings. We have set up a website that has a camera that shows progress of the construction. We have now formed mail-out newsletters to the general public. We provided access to the Levelton Report, something that normally would not be done for any project, under any circumstance. We have had a review by the Auditor General, Mr. Speaker. It is our job as a department to ensure that due diligence is done on any contract we sign. At this point, we are not prepared to release the contract. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 379-16(5):
MOULD-FREE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in my Member's statement I spoke about mould-free home constructions and mould-free techniques for building homes. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation what policies and guidelines are currently in place for our Housing Corporation to do this initiative. Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The standards that we use today are basically mould-free construction. There is moisture-resistant gyproc that is used in the washrooms, and all the proper ventilation that is needed. When they move into a brand new house, they can be assured that it is a mould-free unit and if they continue to maintain the unit as it is supposed to be, it will always be mould-free. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Minister is aware of some of the techniques that we are using, but as I have learned yesterday, there are other new materials out there. Does he know what BluWood is? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to see Mike Holmes building a house in Sachs Harbour at 40 below. Then he will see blue wood.

---Laughter

Actually, I don't know what BluWood is. I will find out and I will get back to the Member and will share that information with him and all other Members. I can assure the Member that...(inaudible)... construction practices, if we're able to incorporate them into our designs. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I had used that question only to show the Minister that there are new techniques and materials out there. BluWood is the new standard in construction that actually resists mould in homes. Can the Minister direct his department to start looking at mould-free construction in homes, the new materials that are out there? I think that would go a long way for our clients and constituents, if we start constructing our homes using the mould-free method. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are always looking at new technology that is out there and see how we can incorporate that into some of the design of the houses that we have. I still believe that you can have a house using regular wood frame and material, that as long as you maintain the unit properly and build using moisture-resistant standards, you can still have a fairly mould-free unit. We have to also understand that, in the climate that we operate in, it is awfully expensive and it is not as easily accessible as a place like Toronto where there are millions of people and thousands of places to choose materials from. We don't have that luxury. We work with what we have. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister to direct his department to change some policies and guidelines that we do have mould-free construction techniques and materials and investigate it thoroughly, because that BluWood is almost the same cost as regular wood that we are using. I don't think it would add to the construction of new homes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister to start directing his department and looking at policies and guidelines. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the department to have a look at the different types of construction and some of his concerns that the Member had raised.

I just want to point out again that the construction that we use nowadays are construction standards that are acceptable if the units are maintained properly. There are lots of different reasons you can have mould. We can get into that discussion today or I can share them with the Member, but part of

the responsibility is on the builder, obviously, and some of the responsibility, again, is back on the tenant. I will ask the department to have a look at the different technologies out there and see if we are able to incorporate them into our designs. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 380-16(5):
HOMEOWNERS CONSUMER
PROTECTION LEGISLATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like Member Menicoche, we certainly heard and learned a lot of interesting information from Mike Holmes when he discussed it. I was really glad that Mike Holmes shares my concerns about the lack of consumer protection for residents. The funny thing is, when we told my son the other day he was coming to town, he asked, "Is he coming to fix my house?" Mike Holmes brought to light a lot of important issues.

Again, to hearken back to my Member's statement, the consumer protection issue is a very significant one. He highlighted in Ontario it is important for new home warranties, as well as the fact, when you get a house, we can talk about protection for disclosure agreements. Mr. Speaker, I have raised this issue with the Minister of MACA before, which the answer that basically came back was a polite, "go away." "Until it is an issue that is raised outside with screaming constituents, it is not an issue on the radar of MACA." Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of MACA be willing to relook at this particular issue to create consumer protection for our territorial residents, which could be mirrored somewhat similar as Alberta and Ontario? It is a very simple process. Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't wait for the next episode of Holmes on Homes when he credits Mr. Hawkins with some of the information that he shared with him.

Mr. Speaker, real estate sales are regulated under the Real Estate Licensing Act and there really is no provision in there right now for mandating a warranty on homes. With so little time left in this Assembly, I am not sure we would be able to do it within the life of this Assembly. But if it is something that the Member feels strongly enough about, we could put it in a transition document for the 17th Legislative Assembly to consider. I have stated before that this is not one that we have a lot of concerns with, but if it is one that Members feel strongly about, I would propose we put it in a

transition document in the 17th Assembly. They can then decide if it is a priority for them. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of MACA is correct about the probable placement of this regulation, but I believe that this could be a regulation that we can start working on today and we wouldn't have to wait and hope that the 17th Assembly would make this particular decision.

As we all know, government likes to take its time and I often phrase, we move at the speed of government, which means it probably won't happen. My fear is the momentum would be lost and the reality is we will allow people to continue to be put at risk. Mr. Speaker, what would stop the Minister today to review and see if a regulation could be put into our existing policies to ensure that we come up with some new homeowner protection for people out there? Again, it is the most expensive purchase most people will ever make in their life. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I can explore that, but being the most expensive purchase someone will ever make in their life, they would take the necessary precautions to make sure they have somebody go and inspect the unit before they buy it, and most reputable and good builders will have a warranty on their product because they are quite comfortable. You look at a lot of the builders we have here in the Northwest Territories. They all live here amongst us. It is to their benefit to have a good product that they warranty, because you may run into them and you would have them come and fix the unit or anything that needs to be worked on. The days of the fly-by-night operators that came and built units and disappeared into the night are long gone. I think we see that today.

I will tell the Member that I will have a discussion with the department and see if this is something that we can maybe move on a little sooner and the amount of work and resources that we may be required to do. I will commit to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for taking the issues as serious as I do and being willing to address it by looking at it and see if there is something we can do.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of homes fail even after a good inspection. That is ultimately the concern. Mr. Speaker, if the NWT had a policy to ensure that that would be the case, does the Minister see a need for this to become a government policy for government housing? What type of inspection do we have from a MACA point of view on this type of industry that would any of our new houses built through Housing Program, we don't provide any inspection? I know

his housing experience and housing maintainer would probably be very clear on saying that they have spent a lot of time repairing brand new houses. That is the type of issue that I am referring to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member that all Housing homes that are built are inspected by the Housing Corporation and are signed before we take responsibility for these units. When we get the unit from the builder, there is usually a warranty that comes with these units. I can assure the Member that we just don't take the keys and walk in without the proper inspections. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Before I go on with orders of the day, the Chair is going to call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Back to orders of the day. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions, on the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

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

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 381-16(5): ENERGY ISSUES IN NORMAN WELLS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleagues. I'd like to ask questions to the Minister of NTPC, Mr. Roland, about the incident that happened in Norman Wells in late December with the outage of power. I want to ask the Minister if he has had a briefing from his officials on an update as to some of the concerns that were stated in the January 7th letter to the Premier about the situation that happened in Norman Wells with the power outage.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for that question. It gives me an opportunity to highlight a number of changes that we've made recently within the Power Corporation to better address the customers that we serve across the Northwest Territories. We've recently added -- as we've provided information across the Territories -- a new CEO, Mr. David Axford, to the Power Corporation, who is situated in Hay River. Also, we've brought on a new chair of the board of

the Power Corporation and we've added a new member for the Sahtu to the board as well.

It was unfortunate that the incident occurred in Norman Wells. As the Member has pointed out, the generation of power happens through the Imperial Oil facility. We have backup and when the initial problems occurred we did have, I believe, the backup unit fired up, but we had problems in the transmission side. After reviewing, we had to send a team up to do that.

We are working with the community. I was informed that the CEO and the chief operating officer of the Power Corporation met with the town council on February 1st to deal with some of the issues that came out of the outage.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister indicated there were several new personalities within NTPC. Hopefully this will satisfy residents in the Sahtu, especially the community of Norman Wells.

I want to ask the Minister if his office is going to respond in terms of having a meeting between himself and the town council of Norman Wells to look at some of the issues that were raised in the January 7th letter addressed to him about the response and role of NTPC.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I have committed to Members of this House, when invited to a community we take all the opportunity we can to do that, so I'd be prepared to travel into the community with the Member to deal with this and other issues that may arise. I'm hoping that the initial meeting and the discussion that occurred with the CEO and the chief operating officer with the council has started a process in place of continuous updates and contact as we look towards the future. I am committed to travelling with the Member. At some point we can find our calendars aligned and travel into the Sahtu.

MR. YAKELEYA: Certainly the Town of Norman Wells and myself are very pleased that the Premier/Minister is making commitments to come to Norman Wells to talk to the Town of Norman Wells on these issues.

I want to ask the Minister about the backup system and the adequacy of the power plant. Is that something that's going to be looked into right away? I know there were discussions to see how fit this power plant could be of use to the community if the power does go out in the next week or so.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: On the power generation side, I know the Power Corporation itself is involved with the parties on the conversion of natural gas to diesel for the community of Hay River, so we're much more involved. With the new attitude of the CEO and the board, I think we will be much more proactive in working and engaging with our communities to find satisfactory solutions to power issues with our communities.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide to the House if there is any type of analysis as to why NTPC does not have representation in the Sahtu, specifically a request to have one in Norman Wells? I know there are personnel in Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Fort Smith that have to fly into the region for situations like this. Can he bring that also to the attention of the regions, how we could have representation in Norman Wells to expand our support services to the communities?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The board and new CEO are looking at the operations of the Power Corporation. They're taking into consideration a recent report that was done on the structure of the Power Corporation and looking at it from an operational side, again with more focus on customer relations. I look forward to the work that they're coming up with. I know the board is engaged in that.

As for operations, I know that at times even the community of Inuvik, for example, with a number of serious outages, had to have staff flown in from other parts of our Territory to help deal with the outages and issues that arose from them. As the board looks at the operation's structure, we'll have to see what type of recommendations they may come out with and changes they may come out with in their operational structure. Of course, I will include Members in that and we're trying to find some time that works for all parties to actually have the new chair and CEO meet with Members.

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

QUESTION 382-16(5):

DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. One of the concerns that have been raised in regard to the AIP and devolution agreement is the formula being used for other net fiscal benefit and the government having a limit on the cap of 5 percent of gross expenditures under the agreement. I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if we have taken into consideration mega projects such as the pipeline down the Mackenzie Highway. I think we're looking somewhere in excess of \$900 million. I'd like to know if the government has done an assessment on how this formula is going to work at the end of the day for these major projects that will benefit the federal government or ourselves.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those facts have been considered. If

the day comes when we generate as much wealth as Alberta, for example, then we won't require territorial formula financing. We will be able to make do on what we generate in wealth out of the Northwest Territories. Until that point, the net fiscal benefit policy and agreement that is being proposed is there with the cap and the 50 percent. Yes, we have looked at those factors.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, I'd like to ask the Premier with regard to justifying the net fiscal benefit, and using the cap of 5 percent of government gross expenditure base I think this will seriously affect the GNWT and Aboriginal governments with regard to our share of resources revenues, in which I see a major increase in share revenues going directly to the federal government from all these large projects because we have the cap net fiscal benefit. I'd just like to know from the Minister if we have an idea of how much money is going to flow to the federal government on these major projects compared to what's going to flow to the GNWT.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We will get 100 percent of the royalties but there's a 50 percent offset against our territorial formula financing. We can keep up to the cap of 5 percent of the gross expenditure base.

I would point out, as well, I just saw a news story on CBC where the folks over in the Yukon were already making arrangements to see if they could start renegotiating their agreement because what they've seen on the table for the Northwest Territories is considerably better than what they were able to negotiate.

The other thing to keep in mind as the AIP goes forward and the final agreement is signed, there will be review periods built in periodically going forward.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd like to ask the Minister if there were any other proposals put forward than the 5 percent cap. Did we consider a 15 percent cap or was the 5 percent cap something that the federal government wanted? I'd like to know from the Minister if we considered other options than the 5 percent cap of gross expenditures under the agreement-in-principle.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: That 5 percent cap came about in the Assembly and the last go-round with negotiations on equalization and the territorial formula financing. It is not tied directly to or a result of the AIP that's been signed and that we're now moving on. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, another major concern was the whole area of the resources that excluded the Norman Wells revenues from the total NWT resource revenues under the agreement-in-principle. I'd like to ask, have we considered exactly how much revenues

are there in the Norman Wells oilfield, and more importantly, the revenues that are generated out of Norman Wells, the amount of money that's flowing to the federal government, and more importantly, is there any opportunity to reopen this. More importantly, can the Minister give us a breakdown on all these assessments and costs associated with this so we can see it for ourselves? Can the Minister of Finance let me know how much we are leaving on the table, excluding the Norman Wells revenues from the AIP?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The debate over the Norman Wells royalties and access to them have been going on for years throughout this process. There was a settlement made out of court with the Sahtu and the Gwich'in in terms of a one-time cash settlement over the issue of access to royalties. As we go forward with the AIP and negotiate a final devolution deal, there's nothing to preclude us from continuing to raise that issue, hopefully to our satisfaction. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 383-16(5):

DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have more questions for the Premier on the agreement-in-principle.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of resource exploration and resource development, what is the Premier's plan to address any unforeseen costs that exceed what is agreed to by the federal government in the agreement-in-principle? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process that has led up to this has been a very comprehensive one and areas where we were not able to identify, we have had language built into the agreement-in-principle that would ensure that the GNWT would not inherit these unseen liabilities. There's been a fair bit of work done and we'll have to do more work as we enter into actual negotiations on some of these areas where there would be full responsibility and accountability by the federal government where it would be shared, one, between the federal government and the GNWT and Aboriginal governments, as well, in some cases, to where it may just be a GNWT area.

We've done a fair bit of work of mapping out and we'll still have to do that as we go forward to ensure that we do not find ourselves in a position where the development of the past catches up with the future in the sense of remediation and dealing with the liabilities. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, will the Premier secure some sort of decentralized model for the

resource development personnel that will positively impact Aboriginal communities with the federal government? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, as Members have raised this issue in a number of our meetings, as well as Aboriginal leaders have, my response has been consistent, that as we draw down these jurisdictions and we negotiate the human resource transfer, there are a number of jobs that are already existing in the North, but there are approximately 175 new positions coming to the North. As we begin that work in setting our mandates, we'll begin to be able to set that model of how we'd like to see it structured.

I would say that we have that opportunity to set that mandate and look at a decentralized model and, in fact, try to move that along as best we could. I would say we do have that opportunity to address that. We've heard it. It's been raised even at the Cabinet table as we look forward. As we begin to design our mandates, we will take that and look to seeing how we could set it up where we could impact positively communities across the Northwest Territories, not just the regional centres and the capital. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier plan to address what appears to be a very complex regulatory process right across the Territory and specifically in the unsettled areas? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I think this is one of the areas that is of particular interest from the Aboriginal government and organizations across the North, is how would that occur, what type of design, how it would work with existing land claims. As we've stated through this agreement, there are land claims in place and we recognize those. Whether it's co-managed bodies, it will be that type of a design that we'd be looking first to ensure that we don't cause unnecessary overlaps in areas. Clearly, as we've highlighted, initially we'll draw down a mirror approach to the federal government and once we have that authority, we then can design our ability as Northerners of how we would best influence that, respecting the rights that are established already through claims and self-government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In that design, is the Premier in active discussions with the Aboriginal governments in designing a regulatory process that sits well with the Aboriginal governments of those regions? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The work that has to occur, as the Member has just raised, will need to happen as we begin our negotiations and establish those mandates. We haven't even started that work

as the GNWT. We've started to look at the team we need to put forward and preparing a work plan and a schedule to that work plan, and that's where we're wanting to get the Aboriginal groups back to the table at the earliest opportunity so they can help in some of that work and put their concerns on the table as well. That work would happen as we begin to set those mandates and we go forward. I see that as work to be done as we go forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Written Questions

QUESTION 17-16(5): ABORIGINAL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT INITIATIVE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

1. What amount is identified in the 2010-11 budget for the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative?
2. What amount is identified in the 2011-12 budget for the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative?
3. Provide a breakdown of these funds showing
 - a. the activities this funding has been / is being / will be used for;
 - b. the amount for each activity;
 - c. the community(ies) where it will be spent.
4. How are the activities in question 3 being evaluated?
5. Provide a copy of the evaluation framework for this initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Replies to Budget Address

MR. KRUTKO'S REPLY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to reply to the budget address. Again, we are at the end of a government which, basically, we had high hopes coming in here, especially with the priorities we set in the 16th Assembly, to look at things such as reducing the cost of living. I'd like to thank the government and Members of the House for putting the initiative in

regard to the power rates across the Territory and reducing the cost of living in that area.

I think, again, that's one thing that we've done as a government, but I think that we still have to realize that we have a Territory that has some real challenges in regard to our aging population. I think that we have to be realistic that our aging population will take up a large percentage of our dollars going forward and regardless if it is elders in my riding, in which I have some 170 elders over the age of 70 in my riding alone in the three communities I represent, they will need different care programs regardless if it is home care, respite care, palliative care, and more importantly, ensure that they can adequately live out their days on a limited income that they will derive from their pensions, because I believe that they will be greatly affected by the downturn of our economy. We see what is going on around the world with rising food prices. We are not immune to that. I think we have to be realistic when we start looking at the social side of what is happening elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we are working on was the area of anti-poverty in the Northwest Territories and trying to find ways to deal with poverty. Mr. Speaker, when we have communities with 45 percent unemployment and seasonal economies and the high cost of living, poverty is alive and well in the Northwest Territories and in a lot of our Aboriginal communities throughout the Northwest Territories and even here in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we as government take a close look at what is in the budget when we get down to detail. Having been here in the 13th Assembly and seeing what we were handed off, it makes me worried about this budget. We talk about looking at reducing our expenditures and that, for me, means we are reducing programs and services.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do have to look within ourselves and see exactly where those expenditures are made. For 43,000 people, realistically, are we delivering all the programs and services we would like to with 5,000 employees and expending over \$350 million of our budget annually? Personally, I think we do have to take a close look at our delivery systems we have in the Northwest Territories and look at exactly how we can improve that. I know there has been a lot of talk about board reform, looking at reducing cost of living, but, again, I would like to state publicly that I think it is time we did seriously look at reducing administration overall costs of boards and agencies in the Northwest Territories and also look at the delivery systems we have on one department competing against another. That means deregulation, programs and services and focusing on exactly that we are not seeing conflicts between intentions in one department and being hindered by

a policy decision in another. Again, I think we as government have to take a close look at exactly how those programs and services are delivered. Again, I think we cannot afford Cadillac programs for the sake of having programs. You can't have one program in one place and not allow it to be delivered elsewhere. I use an example of the midwifery program out of Fort Smith. For me, I can't get a nurse in Tsiigehtchic. There is no place in Tsiigehtchic but yet we are spending \$185,000 for one position in Fort Smith. To me, that is not fair. I, for one, will raise that issue when it comes before the House.

We talk about safe communities. Mr. Speaker, our communities aren't safe. Our communities are seeing the affects of the alcohol and drug problems that are working their ways into those communities that they know they don't have policing. Tsiigehtchic is bombarded by people who basically know that they have liquor restrictions in Fort McPherson or elsewhere and know that there are no RCMP there, that they basically have their hands tied when it comes to resolving public safety and dealing with the matters that basically those activities bring. I think we as government have to do a better job on delivering on what we say we are going to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I was totally appalled at the decision by the Department of Justice to reprofile the dollars that were supposed to go into community policing programs for small communities, and reprofiling those dollars to Behchoko and Inuvik. We are letting the communities down by simply saying, well, we did Sachs Harbour so that is good enough. For me, we made a commitment and we should follow up that commitment with those 10 communities in the Northwest Territories that do not have policing.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that we as government have to be realistic when we look at numbers. As I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, we have in our communities 45 percent unemployment in McPherson, 38 percent unemployment in Aklavik and 38 percent unemployment in Tsiigehtchic. Those are the three communities I represent. The unemployment statistics just went up in Aklavik, with a layoff of 14 people from the Government of the Northwest Territories. People in our communities that are living in social housing on income support are living on less than \$7,000 a year. That is pathetic.

I have had an opportunity with the Minister of Health to meet an individual who was medevaced to Edmonton, had surgery, came back to Aklavik and with the strict instructions from his doctor on specific diet that he is supposed to follow, and trying to purchase those items in the Northern Store did not even get him through the first two weeks. Then he applied for a program under disability, because he was basically having to use a walker,

and being told, sorry, you have to wait four months. Well, excuse me. Four months is a little too long when you are disabled.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be realistic of the incomes that we are seeing in our communities. In a lot of our small communities, statistics have shown that Aboriginal incomes in the Northwest Territories averaged in the area of \$18,000 a year, yet the non-Aboriginal incomes ranged to \$50,000. We also see that in the public service in the Government of the Northwest Territories which, again, I think that we definitely do have to talk about reforming how people are being paid.

Mr. Speaker, in our public service annual report, it clearly states that P1 Aboriginal average income is \$66,000 a year. Yet, Mr. Speaker, P3s from southern Canada have come north and take up these jobs and are making \$81,000 a year. In regard to long-term Northerners in regards to P2, their average a year is \$85,000. Mr. Speaker, no wonder we can't attract Aboriginal people to our affirmative action programs in the Northwest Territories when other people are making \$20,000 more than they are and yet you call this fair. I, for one, feel that this government has to seriously look at not only reforms but pay equity for all government employees in the Northwest Territories. Just because they live in the Northwest Territories, it doesn't mean that you have to be told, sorry, you are worth less than people coming in from the South.

Mr. Speaker, an area that I had grave concerns about was in regards to the issue of the promotion program that we are spending \$1.4 million on in regards to promoting the Northwest Territories through a national marketing campaign and raising awareness in southern Canada through those people to find jobs in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, we have people in the Northwest Territories having no choice but to leave the Northwest Territories to find jobs elsewhere. So what are we doing to ensure that those people stay in the Northwest Territories? Every time one of those individuals leave we are losing \$22,000. If all the people left in Aklavik, in regards to the 14 positions, and move to Whitehorse to find a job in the Yukon, they will take \$300,000 of transfer payments to the Yukon with them. I think, when we make these types of investments, we should first look within and do everything that we can to ensure that we are basically providing those jobs for Northerners first. We hounded the diamond companies, the oil companies in socio-economic agreements, but we are not even practising what we preach in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of reducing the cost of living, again, I think the electrical rates decision is a good one, but I think we have to take it a step further. We should set a goal for the Government of

the Northwest Territories, regardless if it is 2020, and basically make our communities energy neutral in regards to green energy, regardless if it is biomass, geothermal, hydroelectricity, and that should be the goal of the government going forward.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding there is a major review that's taking place of biomass for the community of Fort McPherson. The community of Tsiigehtchic is also interested and I feel that is an objective that should be reached in working with communities, and more importantly, reducing greenhouse gases throughout all of our communities in the Northwest Territories and allowing for these initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, in the report that the Minister made, he made reference to the whole area of adequate, suitable and affordable housing. I think we should also add another word to that: accessibility. We have a lot of empty units out there that people aren't acquiring or occupying and yet we're spending a lot of money on O and M for empty houses.

Mr. Speaker, I think as a government we have to do a better job of ensuring that we have sustainable communities and vibrant communities and look at those economic potentials that we have in the Northwest Territories, especially in the area of a renewable resource economy. We seem to put a lot of focus on the non-renewable resource economy, such as the diamond mines, the oil and gas sector, the mining industry, but we have a resource that's plentiful in the Northwest Territories, regardless if it's forestry, regardless if it's trapping, fishing that takes place in our communities, and making use of the forest sector, making use of our renewable resource sector such as trapping that takes place, and refocus those programs so they really go to where they're needed.

Right now we have a conflict between the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Take a Kid Trapping Program, Department of ITI in regard to the SEED program, then we've got the Department of Environment. Realistically, all they do is manage forests and basically look at training programs for trappers and whatnot. But again, I think that we have to re-profile those dollars and put it in the area where they should be expended in, such as the renewable resource area and the non-renewable sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's critical that we as government do a better job. In going through the report yesterday, all over the place we're seeing the word support, ensure our consultation process is meaningful and effective and current. Especially in the area of consultation with Aboriginal governments in the areas of moving forward. Mr. Speaker, shouldn't we have been doing that all along?

Mr. Speaker, again, I think it's important that we do look at the programs we put in place, especially in the area of a Program Review Office. I had high hopes for this office, high hopes for the Ministers that sit on it, deputies, to find ways of re-evaluating our programs and services, get rid of the red tape, make them more accessible, and more importantly, improve the programs and services for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Again, Mr. Speaker, from the report that was given, it seemed like all that work and energy was put into an office building in Yellowknife. I think, Mr. Speaker, if that's all they're going to come up with, they should have maybe had a public process and allowed for public input so we can seriously hear from the people in the Northwest Territories on exactly how that program is going to be administered and delivered to meet the needs of the people in the Northwest Territories.

I noted in the presentation in regard to the Community Harvesters Program, again, I think that we have to do a better job of dealing with our local products that we produce in the North, regardless if it's different food such as caribou, moose, fish, and also marketing the Northwest Territories in regard to traditional foods. Also ensuring that we have a market for them in the Northwest Territories.

We committed to reducing the cost of living in communities and in offering power rates to commercial users, such as the stores and whatnot. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to ensure that we do follow-ups to ensure when they say that they are going to find ways of reducing the costs of goods and services in those stores so that it reflects our commitment to reduced power rates to those corporations and companies and also making sure that they've followed up on their commitment to really reduce the cost of living and the cost of goods in those stores, especially in the diesel communities.

I think it's important to realize that we have to do a better job of inclusion and not exclusion of the residents of the Northwest Territories on whatever we're doing as government. I think it's important that we do set up a process. As I noted in the agreement, the government is now looking at developing consultative policy. You would think that should have been done a long time ago.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot over the last number of years in this House, knowing that as all Members and individuals on this side of the House had theme days, we passed motions, we presented suggestions to the government of change to improve the housing needs of our residents, education, programs and services. Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't really see a lot of those recommendations in this budget. I think it's critical that whatever motions are passed in this House, that the government seriously take them into

consideration when they're developing a budget for the following year.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am concerned with having a simple \$7 million surplus next year knowing what we see going on around the world, regardless if it's global warming, floods, the effects we're seeing with the permafrost, and more importantly, forest fires is something that we have to be cognizant of. Mr. Speaker, we have some major, major projects that are still out there, such as the Deh Cho Bridge, the super school in Inuvik, and also all of the public infrastructure that the government has put in place. Mr. Speaker, with one bad fire at a school or a public facility, that will do away with the \$7 million surplus. I feel that we as Members of this Legislature have to ensure that we do find ways of cutting the fat in the government and, more importantly, the bureaucracy that serves 43,000 people, but do it in a way that the public can see that they are getting a return on their investment. They see that the system is working and it's not simply building an empire for the sake of spending public funds because they know they can do it within their departments, within their responsibility for their infrastructure.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Members and Ministers for listening. Hopefully they'll take that into consideration and I look forward to moving forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 12, petitions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Petitions

PETITION 9-16(5):
NWT HOUSING CORPORATION
RENTAL POLICIES

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition containing 101 signatures, signatures identifying themselves as residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Government of the Northwest Territories revise the current rent policies to encourage tenant employment and to have base rent calculations on income after expenses and deductions, and that the Housing Corporation rent scale be graded at the first opportunity in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 135-16(5):
RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 16, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 30-16(5):
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 135-16(5),
RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 7, 2011, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

At the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

Motions

MOTION 30-16(5):
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 135-16(5),
RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT,
CARRIED

WHEREAS Tabled Document 135-16(5) has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act requires detailed consideration;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, 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; Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010; Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-2012; Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act; Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: tabled documents 4, 30, 38, 62, 66, 75, 103, 133, and 135; Bills 4, 14, 17, 20; Ministers' statements 65 and 88. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee wishes to continue, please, with general comments on the NWT main estimates and after the general comments are completed to get into the detail with the first department, that being Health and Social Services, as time permits.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Before we go, I'd just like some direction. I know there were a bunch of questions or general comments made yesterday. I wonder if the Minister wants to respond to them now or wait for the other general comments.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a wide range of general comments made and I thank the Members for all their thoughtful feedback. All the Members, of course, are on notice and starting with Health that we're now going to get into the detail and we'll all be prepared to come to the table and have that detailed discussion of the very many specific issues that were mentioned by the various Members who did reply to general comments. For those that are yet to speak, I just want to offer that same assurance that we're listening closely and will stand ready to respond when our departments come forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree with that suggestion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to provide a few general comments to the opening address. First and foremost I will say that I am pleased, as a number of my constituents are certainly pleased, that there are no new taxes in this proposed budget. People are finding it difficult through the cost of living that we're working through in Yellowknife. I can only imagine that is amplified in the communities, undoubtedly. That's certainly well-taken news, if I may define it that way.

People are concerned about taxes the government may be flirting with. The expression is mixed, of course. A hotel tax may bring in new benefits, but exercising caution. A carbon tax being flirted with, as well, and again the general constituents who have stepped forward to provide me advice and guidance on this particular issue stress that caution needs to be exercised before we put a new burden on the average consumer, who is almost at the breaking point as it is.

The big fear, of course, from another side of the equation, is the supplementary health benefits and how that will proceed forward and look. There has undoubtedly been many calls of support for reform

on how we provide our health benefits. That said, in a fair and collective manner. I wish to take that point clearly to the government that this budget is presented and as the working group continues to make forward through our health programming, that they need to make sure that message is understood, that fairness is an important priority throughout.

Highlighting in the budget an additional \$150,000 through SFA I think will be well received by our students, and often I like to say our students in university are the future taxpayers of our health care dollars and we should always make sure we support them correctly. In all honesty, they are our guiding gems towards our future and we must make sure that the compass rose always points to a way to support them. Critically, we have to be there for them and they will be here for us when it's their turn to step into the leadership roles.

I see that there is going to be a continuation of a support of the tourism industry and I think that's welcome news. I know the sector is still trying to find new ways to diversify as well as to attract a new clientele throughout the world. It was interesting bringing the mayor of Edmonton up. He talked greatly about the unexplored market of Edmonton being a primary target or focus of our tourism campaigns, which I will bring up on further days to discuss in detail. Although it falls under the broader scope of ITI, in the direct scope of our NWT tourism organization, but I know ITI provides them both with guidance and advice and certainly much needed programming dollars. There are many other areas that could be helped.

Just continuing on ITI, additional money for a marketing campaign into this new year is probably very significant. We've all looked at the challenges of our decreasing population and that affects all throughout the North about trying to get qualified people here to do the jobs that we need and we need a lot of people here, because I think a lot of skills are not being met and the demand there defined the pool of resources of human resources is very thin. I welcome the new or cranked-up national marketing campaign.

I believe strongly, as the Finance Minister had mentioned, about the child advocate position. I think that is a new way of doing business and certainly the right way of doing business. I think that establishing an Office of the Children's lawyer makes a lot of sense. Sometimes when you say these things, you often wonder what took us so long to do such an obvious step, and that's just the way things sort of roll. The reality here is, I think it's a great initiative and if used properly, could do wonders.

As I said in my Member's statement yesterday, as well as many other colleagues of mine, I'm still concerned about the underutilization, if I may

describe it as that, of our Program Review Office. Although I spoke at length yesterday, I still think that office has a lot of promise and can do a lot of good work. I'm just concerned on what's come forward thus far.

As far as the surplus goes, I would not think of a surplus of \$7 million as a lot of money when comparing it to a \$1.3 billion budget. Truly it could be described as a drop in the bucket, but the reality says it's more like dew on the side of the glass, it's so small. One serious supplementary appropriation due to some horrible fire campaign we have in the summer would quickly draw that down. We need to protect communities, we need to protect people. That one example alone could eat up that whole surplus in a moment's notice. That's one example. There could be many others. Now not being the time or place, but the reality is we all know there are many other examples.

It was highlighted in the budget, and even I made mention of it yesterday, about the \$41 million in drop of corporate tax rates. I did spend some time yesterday trying to highlight doing business better, because if business changes on us, such as a drop in corporate tax rates, how are we able to respond without cutting and slashing? That's always the big concern of everybody, is there's sometimes only one way to respond and it's not a very pleasant way. I've often articulated our need for a revenue stabilization fund and I know that we will be seeing a Heritage Fund come forward one day, but I really think we need to be directing part of our projected surplus into a stabilization fund that can protect our revenues. As highlighted again, when we lose \$41 million in corporate taxes, we're able to respond quickly and safely to build stability through our system without sending shockwaves throughout.

Of course, we often forget about how lucky we are with 75 percent of our federal transfer being our money in the bank, but that also leaves us a very small zone to find revenue through our taxation and service fees.

Another area I'd like to highlight, although I welcome it under the principles of cost of living, where the government has made some adjustments to power rates throughout the Northwest Territories, we should not forget Yellowknife's power rate was about to drop off due to the rate riders, although the government red circled it at its higher rates. It's done a cost of living shift onto government as opposed to the end user. I only hope that adjusting the power rates -- although I'm very nervous about how they did this -- I welcome the fact that the target is to make things like food cheaper in the communities. We don't have to look too far for examples of what frustration that's caused around the world. Take a look at Egypt; there is one primary example of food costs

and crisis added together under the perfect storm of frustration. People express that with grave dismay.

Mr. Chairman, \$925,000 is committed in this budget to support community employment and, I'll be quite honest, I think that's such a great thing, because if we can empower people to be healthy, employed within their own communities, that will create great synergies throughout the northern small communities, which makes a lot of sense. That also takes pressure off the Yellowknife region or even regional centres, whether that be Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Simpson or Fort Smith, where people are coming into those larger centres desperate for opportunities. That allows different types of pressures to come off in the larger communities.

As this is just an opening comment, I just want to thank the Finance Minister. I think, by and large, as many have said, it's sort of a status quo budget. Not a lot of shocks, not a lot of surprises. I think we're probably pretty safe with this particular budget. As I've highlighted, the big issue for me right at this particular case is the fact that are we prepared for any sort of financial shock and how do we work to prevent that. The efforts we put on focusing on that I don't think have truly borne any fruit.

As I said earlier about the Program Review Office, I think some of the things that they could have proposed and we've been asking for is more detailed information on synergies we can create. For example, board reform, I don't think, in principle, was a bad idea. It made a lot of sense, but it seemed as if it looked like lumping them all up and doing it all at once. That could have been a good economic way of doing business smarter, more efficient, but the problem is it seemed to be this is the way or nothing. I've often proposed, and I'll suggest again, that small initiatives showing that they can work makes sense. Work with the communities, work with the Territory, industries, associations. I mean, people will work together in finding ways to find efficiencies.

I just want to leave on a last note, Mr. Chairman, as I had said yesterday that we can be caught up in the details of how to do things, but I think we have a lot of people who have a lot of skills and we have to empower them with the surety that we'll stand with them, we'll stand with the managers who are willing to make good, reasonable decisions. It's unfortunate that politics sometimes get into the concern about who to blame and who to pay on a particular decision, but, Mr. Chairman, the real issue is to ensure that we stand behind our public service to make good decisions. As colleagues have said before, we're spending too much money on contracts and whatnot. I think we could rely better on our public service to make those decisions and I support that. Give them the

direction and they'll find a way to save money and run programs better. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As indicated by my colleague Mr. Hawkins, I think it was a very good thing through the Committee on Rural and Remote Communities to put in an employment program for small communities. Very much needed. I've talked in this House about employment rates a lot, the low employment rates in the small communities. This is really an opportunity for some of those employment rates in these small communities to be increased. I know that this money that's going into the sustainability of rural and remote communities goes into the base, so it's a very positive move on the part of government. I certainly appreciate the committee's efforts in putting this money in place.

I think that by using local labour we can use this money and also gain some economies of scale by working with the Housing Corporation, I believe, through some sort of contribution agreements with the communities and fix up the homes for the elderly, the elderly that can't really go on a mortgage but are sometimes not able to access because of outstanding tax arrears on land. There's a principle issue there with some of the elders that they don't believe they actually owe money on the land that they believe belongs to them where their house that they own sits on.

There is some work to be done there, but I think that's an opportunity with this employment program to work with the Housing Corporation. There may be an opportunity to bring a couple tradespeople into the communities and use that employment program, and with money from the Housing Corporation for materials and so on, may be able to leverage some of that money.

In addition, I think that there are also a lot of people in the communities that like to work on the land and so on, and I think we should start putting the pieces of the puzzle together with this money to at least complete assessments on the cost of remediating some of the sites, some of the more easily accessible sites near some of the communities using local people to clean up the land. I think that everybody knows that that has a lot of positive impacts to it. We're cleaning up the land. We're providing some employment in the community. Even if at this point all of these programs are even just to get people ready to draw employment insurance. Work for five or six months and draw employment and, you know, remediate all summer long, work all summer long on houses when the cost to do those jobs are at its cheapest, and get the federal government to support and put some income into the communities through the employment program and help the communities get

off income support and increase the employment rates in the communities. I think that's a really positive thing in addition to the increased money into the SEED program for small businesses. I think that is a very positive thing as well.

And putting some money into tourism. Tourism operators are benefiting from that and that's keeping money... One of things that it does, I think that it pulls money in from other jurisdictions, other countries and so on, and that's very positive for small communities and even the larger communities as well. I feel that's something that drives the money directly into our economy, the NWT economy, from outside of the country. Essentially, easy money to get into the community.

I was very pleased to see the Housing Corporation doing a \$300,000 review of the policies. I think that's going to be something that's positive, I'm hoping. One of the things that the people had indicated to me always in the past when we've made changes to any of the policies in the government, is that they want to be consulted. I think this might be a good opportunity to consult people.

Still with some of the things that we need: I think that the government should look at a winter road into Lutselk'e. That's something that I think is important, but again, it's my job to discuss with the Minister and to see the cost of the whole thing. At least to have an assessment of that would be a positive thing, so that when we know that when we're standing up here talking about this project, that we know exactly how much it's going to cost the government in order to do it. I think that additional money to increase the budget of access roads from about three hundred and something thousand to \$1 million, I think, was, again, something that went to sustainability on rural and remote communities. I think that's, again, very positive.

The \$475,000, that additional money that was put into the Community Harvesters Assistance Program; again, has a direct, positive impact on the communities. I feel that's something that the trappers, hunters, gatherers, harvesters are able to use that money to help sustain their families and provide much needed income through trapping or even through hunting and into the families.

The reduction of power rates, of course, the impacts will start to become apparent in the small communities, in the diesel communities especially. I think that's important and impacts Lutselk'e to a large degree, the power rates for diesel communities and then also impacts Fort Resolution to some degree, as well, that the power rates there are through diesel.

I think that the Education department getting back into career technical services is very, very good for the kids. I see all the brand new equipment. That's

after the industrial arts class in the Deninu School in Fort Resolution sat dormant for 20 years. Now you can see all the new equipment and everything. That's a very positive thing, very positive for the school. The next thing maybe we'd start working on some sort of physical education to that type of degree as well. I know that it's in the schools, but maybe turning our attention to some of that in Lutselk'e, as far as the career technical services go. They have the money, they just need a place to put the equipment that it will need to continue that.

Of course, the continuation of the construction of Highway No. 6 is something that I am very pleased about, the reconstruction, I should say, of Highway No. 6. They are going to be finishing the chipseal that goes from Little Buffalo River into the community of Fort Resolution and then from Little Buffalo River out towards where Pine Point used to be. I think that is positive and, of course, the thing where we are looking at continuing some discussions on the mini-hydro on the Snowdrift River outside of Lutselk'e that, again, is expected to have additional positive impacts of the energy costs in that community.

I think that a very important thing in education that this government has to turn its attention to in a large way for small communities is daycares and preschool. We know that the kids leaving preschool and going to daycare and through preschool are showing up in kindergarten and are far ahead of the other kids that are not going to preschool or having stayed in daycare. The whole system seems to work well as kids go through the daycare system and so on. The way to build up daycare, again, is to go right back to my first topic, and that is employment in the community. Get the people employed. Get the kids into daycare and preschool. They have a much better chance at success in the education system if they are able to go through daycare. That is one aspect I think that is not here in a big way, and that is daycare and preschool for the kids in the small Aboriginal communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. General comments. Maybe I will just ask the Minister again if he would like to respond to general comments that were just given.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been asked by some Members to respond more specifically to some issues that were raised in some of the opening comments.

One of the issues that Member Bromley raised was the Program Review Office. As I pointed out yesterday, there was a presentation done last March 2010. The committee has yet to respond. The Member indicated there is a huge sense of frustration from Regular Members. We have a letter coming that I am going to be sending to committee

to offer a briefing based on some of the comments. As I pointed out yesterday, there was all the work that was outlined and laid out, and while we can provide the briefing, clearly we missed the window of opportunity to make any substantive changes at this point since the budget is now set and before us.

The issue of the investments in energy reduction are clearly that we are going to be monitoring those. The initial number of \$775,000, the plan is to try to set up the table of revolving fund for their initiatives in terms of conservation and to be more effective and energy efficient.

We are, as the Member raised as well, the size and role of government, what do we do? How much can we afford to do? If we are not going to do some things or if we are going to add on new things, what things don't we do? I can just quickly go through the lists.

There is a concern, of course, by the Member about the provision of basic needs, using northern materials, northern foods, trying to be self-sufficient as possible. We have tried to identify funds to do that. We are working on community energy plans. We are investing hugely in biomass and other alternative energy to control one of our biggest costs, which is our energy costs. The Member made a comment and he indicated he thought I misspoke about lowering the cost of electricity. It depends on how you would look at that particular issue. We have lowered the cost of -- and I think that was the intent -- electricity in the thermal communities or the cost to thermal communities. We recognize that we haven't come up with a way to generate cheaper electricity at this point, but we looked at a way to make our system fairer and more equitable. By doing that, we believe we made a significant impact on the cost of living in communities, especially for the business, commercial rates which have come down dramatically, which we hope to see reflected in things like the grocery basket costs to individuals in communities. We continue to work on the issue of X-ray, reducing the costs. Clearly, as we invest in alternative energy and as the price of oil surges past \$100 a barrel on the Brent scale, which is somewhat higher than West Texas crude costs, but it clearly indicates that those are going to become more efficient and be more economical.

We are going to continue to try to invest -- not as much as the Member would like, of course -- in agriculture and the commercial harvesting of wild foods, the push for communities to grow as many things as they can in their own communities.

Mr. Chairman, those are some things. I appreciate the general support the Member indicated that he would save some of the rest, but there are broader issues. The one that is going to be there for the next Assembly, the Member has identified in his

comments, so there is feedback for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. There are no more general comments. As we agreed, we will go into main estimates. At this time I would like to ask the Minister of Department of Health and Social Services if she would be providing opening comments. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would.

Mr. Chairman, we must work together with our residents, communities, governments and agencies to meet the health and social services challenges that we face, to help ensure a sustainable health care system for the future.

Today I am presenting the Department of Health and Social Services' main estimates for fiscal year 2011-2012.

Across Canada and internationally, leaders are being faced with difficult choices around the sustainability and accessibility of health care. It is no different for us in the Northwest Territories. We know that we need to make changes to our health and social services system so our children can access the same quality care that exists in the NWT today.

Current demands include rising cost of health care providers, pharmaceuticals, chronic disease and treating our aging population. The department is requesting \$345 million for 2011-12. This is a 6 percent increase from the current year. Twenty million dollars of this request is forced growth which is needed to try to keep up with demands to the system. This includes incremental salary and benefit increases to staff, higher medical travel expenditures, and increased costs for out-of-territory physicians.

One of our initiatives to reform the system is our strategic document, a Foundation for Change. Sustainability, wellness and accessibility to health and social services are three pillars of the Foundation for Change.

Mr. Chairman, we launched the Foundation for Change with the support of the Members of this House through the Standing Committee on Social Programs. I have committed to regular updates to show progress to Members. Since the plan was launched, we have made progress in a number of areas. Some highlights include expansion of the Health Promotion Fund, which has allowed communities of all sizes and from all regions to support Northerners in making healthy choices. We have increased supports and services for people who experience family violence and continue to implement the Small Communities Homelessness Fund.

We have been able to make great progress improving residents' access to care, through continued implementation of the HealthNet electronic health system, which is bringing Northerners closer to quality care through technology. As well, residents have more equitable, needs-based access to long-term care through the Territorial Access Committee.

One of the key first-year activities of the plan was to engage with stakeholders regarding wellness priorities through the regional health and social services dialogues which were completed with the final session in Inuvik in mid-January. We also are working with health and social services authorities more effectively and as a system, and have implemented contribution agreements that clarify the roles and responsibilities around system funding.

The 2011-2012 proposed budget for Health and Social Services also includes \$1.8 million in new funding for strategic initiatives. These include:

- \$650,000 to enhance continuing care services within the authorities by increasing the number of trained home support workers. This will allow the authorities to increase the hours available to clients, which has become increasingly critical as the NWT health and social services system responds to the new 48-hour rapid discharge of patients from Alberta.
- \$500,000 in further investment in the Healthy Choices Framework to fill in the gaps in early childhood initiatives at the community level aimed at promoting healthy living, including expanding the Healthy Family Program to Inuvik and Fort Simpson to allow for better supports to families before they are in need of a social worker.
- \$75,000 to expand respite services, which will enhance caregiver support and training to families of children and youth with special needs in areas outside of Yellowknife. This enhancement will meet the developmental needs of children with disabilities and reduce reliance on southern placements.
- We will be investing \$375,000 in our health benefits administrative systems to better deliver and achieve efficiencies in the delivery of extended health benefits. In addition, we are investing \$10,000 in our HPV vaccination program as well as \$23,000 to enhance our response to family violence.

I would also like to report on the extension of the Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative, THSSI, until March 2012. This federal funding was used for a number of initiatives, including nursing midwifery and support for the Foundation for Change, as well as medical travel. This limited extension is an opportunity to consolidate progress

made within the first five years. However, we are faced with difficult decisions as federal funding is time limited.

Ensuring sustainability and addressing the challenges in our health and social services system will not be easy and requires the full support of this Assembly and our stakeholders. I look forward to working with Members and completing the vision of the 16th Assembly.

This concludes my opening remarks and I would be happy to answer questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. At this time I would like to ask the Minister if you will be bringing in witnesses.

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that the Minister can bring in witnesses? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): 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. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Before I go to orders of the day, I would just like to take a moment to thank all the Pages who have been working for us this week in the House.

---Applause

Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Orders of the day for Monday, February 7, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Replies to Budget Address 12. Petitions 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees 14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills 15. Tabling of Documents 16. Notices of Motion 17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills 18. Motions 19. First Reading of Bills 20. Second Reading of Bills 21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012 - Tabled Document 135-16(5), GNWT Response to CR 3-16(5): Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act - Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act - Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights - Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Report of Committee of the Whole 23. Third Reading of Bills 24. Orders of the Day <p>MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 7, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>---ADJOURNMENT</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The House adjourned at 1:58 p.m.</p> |
|---|---|