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Monday, February 18, 2008

Pages 363 to 398

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker
Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
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| Ms. Wendy Bisaro (Frame Lake) | Hon. Michael McLeod (Deh Cho) <i>Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs Minister of Public Works and Services Minister Responsible for Youth</i> | Hon. Floyd Roland (Inuvik Boot Lake) <i>Premier Minister of Finance Minister Responsible for the Financial Management of Board Secretariat Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations</i> |
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Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Monday, February 18, 2008

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Before we proceed this afternoon, I would like to provide my ruling on the point of order raised by the Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen, on Thursday, February 14, 2008. Mrs. Groenewegen raised her point of order in response to answers provided by Premier Roland's Oral Question 66-16(2) on Wednesday, February 13, 2008. Mrs. Groenewegen raised the point of order after reviewing the unedited *Hansard* for that day and therefore did so at the earliest possible opportunity.

In summary, Mrs. Groenewegen's point of order suggested that in his reply to her question, the Premier contravened parliamentary rules by referencing specific matters contained in a document not before the House; namely, the Deh Cho Bridge concession agreement. In debate to her point of order Mrs. Groenewegen requested that the Premier table the concession agreement such that all Members of the House could have access to it in debate.

In rebuttal Premier Roland suggested that his answers were based on information contained in briefing notes and other information items ordinarily given to Ministers in preparation for question period. The Premier concluded by stating that he did not reference a page or any section of the concession agreement.

When debate concluded, I reserved my decision on the point of order to allow time to review the unedited *Hansard* from Wednesday, February 13, 2008, and rule on the point of order the following day.

In dealing with similar matters in this House, presiding officers have focused on one primary question: did the Member or Minister in question quote from or cite a document not before the House? Rulings by Speaker Gargan on February 13, 1998, and on February 18, 1998, exactly ten years ago, were particularly instructive.

The Rules of the Legislative Assembly are silent on this matter, so in addition to past rulings, I sought guidance from two parliamentary authorities: *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* and *House Of Commons Procedure and Practice*, more commonly known as *Marleau and Montpetit*.

Beauchesne's citation 495(2) reads as follows:

"It has been admitted that a document, which has been cited, ought to be laid down upon the table of the House if it can be done without injury to the public interest. The same rule, however, cannot be held to apply to private letters or memoranda."

Citation 495(5) provides clarity on the parliamentary use of the term "cited."

"To be cited, a document must be quoted or specifically used to influence debate. The admission that a document exists or the reading of the salutation or address of a letter does not constitute citing."

Marleau and Montpetit adds further instruction on the matter of citing documents not before the House and the requirements to table them, quoting from page 518:

"Any document quoted by a Minister in debate or in response to a question during Question Period must be tabled... The principle upon which this is based is that where information is given to the House, the House itself is entitled to the same information as the honourable member who may quote the document. A public document referred to but not cited by a Minister need not be tabled."

A careful review of the unedited *Hansard* for Wednesday, February 13, 2008, shows no clear indication that the Premier made a direct quote or a citation from any document in his response to the Member for Hay River South's question.

The Chair concludes that the Premier did not exceed the parliamentary limits imposed by previous Speakers' rulings or our common parliamentary authorities; therefore, the Member for Hay River South does not have a point of order.

Even if the Premier had quoted from the document in question, the matter of the public interest would still have to be taken into account. While I will not address this directly today, I will remind all Members that one of the things that makes our system of government so unique is the free flow of information between the executive and legislative branches of government. While this is often referred to as a double-edged sword, without it consensus government would cease to exist.

I want to encourage Members on both sides of the House to be diligent in terms of both sharing information when necessary and appropriate and showing discretion when that information is received. Thank you, colleagues.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day and item 2, Ministers' statements.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 17-16(2) EDUCATION WEEK — “OUR COMMUNITY, OUR SCHOOL”

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, this week is Education Week and Aurora College Week in the Northwest Territories. It is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate education in our communities.

I would like to kick off the week by providing great news. The graduation numbers for 2007 in the Northwest Territories have recently become available, and they continue to increase. In 2007, 370 students graduated high school. We are now graduating over a hundred more students each year than we did five years ago. I would like to congratulate all of these graduates.

Our students are required to successfully complete diploma exams that meet graduation requirements that are comparable to most provinces. Students who graduate in the N.W.T. with the required course work have achieved a meaningful and important accomplishment that we can all be proud of.

Students are most successful when they have many supports. Education Week is a time to encourage and thank the people who provide those supports.

This week is a time to thank educators for continuing to support our students and families by ensuring that our young Northerners are able to meet the requirements for graduation and can

move on to further studies or employment of choice.

The NWT Teachers' Association is continuing in their 11th year of the “Thank You for Making a Difference” campaign, and they continue to receive many nominations from across the North by students who want to recognize their teachers for making a difference in their lives.

Northern educators give a great deal of their time, both in and out of the classroom. They are some of our greatest front-line workers in our government's goal of ensuring that our people are healthy and educated, and they often volunteer in our communities as coaches, for example.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all the Northerners who sit on the Education Councils, authorities, the Commission scolaire and the Aurora College Board of Governors. The time and commitment they give to our system of education and to Northern students is so important. Their willingness to step forward and fill the important role of governance is important for ensuring our schools and colleges reflect the wishes of the people in our communities.

This week is also a time to encourage families and communities to keep working with their children to ensure they get to school on time, are healthy, proud of themselves and their communities, ready to learn, and develop excitement about learning and education. Helping children succeed is important for our future.

The theme of Education Week this year is “Our Community, Our School.” It is about another important component in student success: our schools themselves. We know it is easier to learn in a space that is cared for and well maintained, and our Education Councils, authorities and the Commission scolaire expend a great deal of time and effort in ensuring that that is the case.

This year's theme recognizes that our schools are an important part of our communities and also recognizes the important role that all community members play in ensuring that our schools are respected as spaces for learning, for cultural events, for recreation and other positive community activities. When schools are successful, they are a centre of the community's activity and the pride of the people in that community.

During this week Aurora College is celebrating their accomplishments with a number of events, including team-building activities and on-campus seminars. Aurora College continues to be important to the development of the Northern workforce, and I would also like to recognize their contributions during this special week.

In closing, I would like to thank all Members for their support of education, and I encourage everyone — parents, elders and municipal and aboriginal government leaders at all levels — to take time during Education Week and Aurora College Week to celebrate education and learning across the North. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 18-16(2)
YOUTH AMBASSADORS PROGRAM —
2008 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to provide Members with information on the 2008 Arctic Winter Games Youth Ambassadors Program.

As Members may recall, in 2007 youth from across the Northwest Territories traveled to the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse, Yukon. They were excellent representatives of our Territory.

Youth volunteered with the Host Society in a wide range of activities. They demonstrated that they have immense strengths and showed great promise as future leaders.

Building on the success of this project, the Yellowknife Host Society for the 2008 Arctic Winter Games has encouraged youth from all our communities to apply to be part of the 2008 Youth Ambassador Program. Selected youth are given an opportunity to volunteer with the Games' cultural program and related events at a wide range of venues in and around Yellowknife. They will also be provided with specialized training and be given an opportunity to enjoy other Games' events.

The Arctic Winter Games require a significant amount of volunteer support. The willingness of the selected youth ambassadors to assist will ensure that the Games are a success and provide these youth with an exciting volunteer experience.

I am pleased that the government has been able to support this worthwhile initiative with funding from the Youth Corps Program. Opportunities like this will help to build future leaders among today's youth, while ensuring that the Arctic Winter Games are a success.

Mr. Speaker: Item 3, Members' statements, Ms. Bisaro.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHLAND TRAILER
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bisaro: Yellowknife is home to a potential health and safety risk, Mr. Speaker.

Water and sewer infrastructure exists in one small corner of the city that is well beyond its shelf life and badly in need of repair. These pipes are more than 30 years old and a disaster waiting to happen. Northlands Trailer Park, Condominium Corporation No. 8., sits just outside downtown Yellowknife and provides low-cost and affordable housing to some 1,200 Yellowknife residents. Many are low-income earners or are on fixed incomes.

Because the trailer park is a condominium, it's treated like a private homeowner. The costs of repairs to their infrastructure must be borne by the homeowners. Estimates of the costs to replace or update Northlands' roads, water and sewer range from \$10 million to \$15 million. With about 275 condo members, that works out to a potential \$50,000 per member.

These owners are facing a huge personal expense for basic infrastructure needs, and they have been struggling for years to find a fair and equitable solution. I believe that the cost should not be borne by this group alone. The federal government has infrastructure program funding that must be made available to these residents through the G.N.W.T. Nor is the G.N.W.T. blameless in either a moral or an ethical sense.

At the time the Condo Corp No. 8 was formed, the NWT . Condominium Act was very outdated and inadequate. It provided no protection to buyers from less-than-ethical sellers. The Condo Corp got stuck with degraded infrastructure and had no legal recourse with the seller. The city bears no responsibility for this parcel of land because the Condo Corp is treated like a private homeowner.

To the city's credit, they have been assisting Northlands for several years. City funds have been spent in man-hours and seed money for studies, and the amount is considerable. Northlands' owners are not looking for a handout, but they are looking for a helping hand.

We are the parent of a struggling child, in this case, and the G.N.W.T. can assist. We can facilitate some of the Building Canada Fund dollars for this project. We can provide funding for community emergency assistance. We can provide a low-interest loan to the Condo Corp.

Government assistance for this type of situation is not unprecedented. In previous years other N.W.T. communities have received funding for water and sewer emergency repairs.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Ms. Bisaro: This is an issue of public safety. A major sewer collapse will create both unsanitary

and uninhabitable conditions in the trailer park. It's not inconceivable that 1,200 people will be displaced from their homes with nowhere to go.

So when planning this year's budget, consider the plight of the Northlands residents. Be the helping hand and get this infrastructure replacement going before it is too late.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO
THE FAMILY OF TOMMY KING**

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to mention that on Friday, February 15, 2008, at 11 or 11:15 in the morning, Tommy King of Fort Resolution passed away here in Yellowknife. Tommy was 65 years old. He was born September 15, 1942, in Rocher River and was one of the last families to remain in Rocher River. He was a trapper. He spent years working for Patterson Sawmill out around Hay River, falling logs and so on.

They'll be returning his remains to Fort Resolution tomorrow, and then there will be a funeral on Thursday in Fort Resolution.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROGRAM DELIVERED AT
THE THEBACHA CAMPUS OF
AURORA COLLEGE**

Mr. Hawkins: One of the consequences of decentralization is that even where we have good intentions, it may not work. Such is the case when concentrating Aurora College programs at the Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith.

As much as it pains me to say this — and it does — the Thebacha Campus is not meeting the needs of all Northern students. I've had concerns from constituents brought forward to me who fear for their personal safety because of the incidents of violence and intimidation in Fort Smith. This causes them to change their mind and refuse to want to continue training at the Fort Smith College.

How can we expect people to attend these courses and gain qualifications when they're not welcome in this community? How can we expect students to enroll into programs that take them into greater degrees of isolation?

There's a clear demand for trades' training in the N.W.T., yet trades' programs in Fort Smith have suffered a drop of two-thirds in enrolment last year alone.

I really have to question whether it is the best use of government funding to continue focusing activities and programming at the Thebacha

College. Mr. Speaker, with two-thirds of an enrolment drop, I question if funding for instructors and programming drop by the associated amount. I understand the lights and the heating bills need to be left on, but I question the programming.

I am of the opinion that we should be offering more programming at the Yellowknife Campus, particularly in trades, and in doing so, a greater interest in residents would result. They need to expand the Yellowknife Campus. And that has been proven, because it has been deserving of this opportunity for many years. I think good discussion needs to finally, seriously take place.

Mr. Speaker, in tight fiscal times, we need to concentrate our resources where they make sense and question if they being spent properly in that community. It's not as much in the people as a whole, but if our students are going there and they're not welcome, we should be asking ourselves hard, tough questions. The program may not run smoothly, but sometimes there's a bump in the road. Those need to be addressed, and those questions need to be answered.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to discuss how we can get to the bottom of this and start treating our students fairly.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
G.N.W.T. HIRING PRACTICES**

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to use my Member's statement today to talk about affirmative action or, in some cases, the lack of affirmative action.

I look to a time when most of the jobs were taken up by southerners who were just up here for the money. Many of those people decided to stay and make the North their home, and for that, I've always thanked them.

As more and more aboriginal Northerners became trained to take over many departments, Mr. Speaker, I thought we were turning a corner. But I was wrong. After what I heard from this individual with two degrees — a P1 candidate who can't even get an interview for a management job — I think we're back in the old days when that was the standard way of operating within the government.

I heard from a young lady who applied for a position with the G.N.W.T. and didn't even get an interview. That angered me, Mr. Speaker. She attended Aurora College, but she's not qualified for work with the G.N.W.T. Is this an indication of what we think of the programs that are offered by Aurora College, where we don't even use some of the graduates?

The qualifications.... Departments are coming up with creative ways to eliminate Northerners from positions. Qualifications are asked that take many Northerners out of contention for positions within the G.N.W.T. Then when some are put into a position, people who have been there for years are asked to train them. Yet they apply, and they can't even get an interview, or they're not qualified for these positions and are asked to train someone that comes in.

I want to see Northerners trained for advancement within the G.N.W.T. Transfer assignments should not be a way to get around the system and hand-pick people.

We can contribute, Mr. Speaker. We want to be able to contribute on merit and not just to fill statistics or fill a quota. We've come a long way, and we want to be a part of the future of the N.W.T. We have the most to gain or lose from this, because it's where we're going to live for the rest of our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I look around in this Assembly and see over half the Members in here are aboriginal. I see the other half that are longtime white Northerners who plan on being up here for awhile.

We should use this as an opportunity to get an indication of where we've come from, where we can go, and how we have to use this to protect the people that are out there that are trying to advance within the government system. We have to ensure that we do whatever we can to move these people along, because they can do the job. Like I said, they want to do the job on merit. I see it.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, as I tried to enjoy myself at home this weekend in Hay River, I couldn't mistake the feelings of disappointment and frustration and unrest over the course that our government has charted for us in relation to the Deh Cho Bridge project. I had many people come up to me and remind me about the Deh Cho Bridge project, because everyone who came up had concerns as well.

I'm disappointed in the leadership, who are prepared to sacrifice transparency and accountability and the right of the people to know. I'm frustrated because, in the absence of clear and full communication on this project, some people are willing to throw up their hands and say it's too late, it's too complicated, and it would cost too much to reconsider.

The editorial in today's paper is right in pointing out that people don't know if they should be for the bridge or not, because it's hard to understand the business case, the liability or the benefits.

To me, it's like someone decided they're going to build this bridge at any cost. We keep being told that the price has nowhere to go but up if we wait. I think we just saw an unprecedented inflation of construction costs in the past seven years while this bridge was being considered. I'm not an economist, Mr. Speaker, but certainly, if you look to our neighbours to the south — you hear all the news coming out of the U.S. — I would say perhaps that with this run on development, there's a window ahead for a cooling-off period.

I know that allowing ourselves to lower the bar of what is an acceptable standard of accountability is wrong. It's demoralizing, because we came here to do a job with good intentions of upholding what we believe in. I'm not prepared to let that go. Mr. Speaker, I can't do that, because this bridge project process stinks.

People now hide behind the technicality of what they legally can do as opposed to having the courage to rise to the challenge of doing what they should do. What they should do is admit that this government had no business entering into a 35-year financial commitment three days before a new government was elected. They had no business in putting through a piece of legislation which had been passed on the pretense of a \$60 million project that has now risen to \$150 million. They had no business committing this government to a \$9 million loan guarantee which, at numerous times, they said would not increase. They had no business proceeding without government support.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mrs. Groenewegen: They had no business proceeding without federal support, even though they said that if federal support wasn't forthcoming, the project wouldn't continue. They had no business committing future governments to additional investments of \$2 million a year. They had no business exposing our government to financial harm by agreeing to absorb eligible cost overruns as long as they pertain to things that are unforeseen.

They certainly had no business assuming what was most important to Northerners in light of their knowledge of upcoming financial circumstances that resulted in this same government looking for \$135 million in reductions over the next two years.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Ramsay: I'm going to speak today about the Deh Cho Bridge project.

I'm very concerned that the government is so far into this project that it now can't even begin to estimate what it would cost for us to get out of it.

Regular Members of the 15th Legislative Assembly passed two motions in this House — one in May of last year and the other in August — demanding an updated economic analysis and some detail on the concession agreement before it was signed.

Mr. Speaker, we had assurances from the Premier that we would have that type of information prior to the government signing off on that project. As we all know, the deal was signed on September 28 — three days, 72 hours before the election on October 1.

The former Premier stated in the House on August 21 that:

"When we come to negotiations, we don't negotiate this in public any more than we negotiate most things that are negotiable in public. We are elected. We will do the negotiations. We will assess whether or not it is viable. We will go ahead based on whether or not it makes good economic sense."

Mr. Speaker, like my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen, I am not an economist. But I do know that if you are going to go from a project cost of \$50 million to \$60 million to \$150 million and the net positive benefit of \$38 million to a negative impact of \$50 million, then it would be most prudent — especially if it's not your money but that of the residents of the Northwest Territories — to just say no to the project before signing off on it.

Mr. Speaker, it may be wise of us to ask for DNA samples from all the Ministers so that they can't conveniently claim it was the last government to sign the agreement and thus there's nothing for them to do.

There are some things the Premier and the cabinet can and should be doing. They should order a peer review of the financing of the project. They should develop a policy on future P3 investment and involvement. They should determine who is accountable for signing off on that agreement three days prior to the election.

Mr. Speaker, we're a small government. As I see it, we'll be on the hook for the project if traffic volumes don't materialize, if there's a design defect five years from construction, or if interest rates climb.

If we index our \$4.5 million of government money over the next 35 years, that's \$264 million. Can we afford to do this? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICE MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION BENEFITS

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about the problems of the drug plan for G.N.W.T. employees.

The G.N.W.T. drug plan is administered through Sun Life insurance. Its administration seems to be rather complicated. If an employee needs prescription medication, they have to pay the cost out of their pocket. Once they fill out the form and send it to Sun Life, they will be reimbursed for 80 per cent of the cost. It often takes two months for people to get their money. That is two months where people are short on their budget, two months waiting for reimbursement of a drug benefit they are entitled to.

Now let's look at a chronic illness like diabetes, where the patient needs insulin daily. The N.W.T. extended health care plan covers the cost of insulin, so G.N.W.T. residents get the full amount for insulin reimbursed through the public extended health care plan.

But now let's see what happens if a G.N.W.T. employee has diabetes and needs insulin. First, the employee has to pay the \$800 per month for the insulin out of their pocket. Then they wait for two months for 80 per cent from Sun Life. Only after this wait is the employee allowed to claim the remaining 20 per cent from the G.N.W.T. extended health care plan.

Basically, this government discriminates against its own employees. They need to wait the longest to get their essential medicines paid for. This causes distrust and anxiety.

Mr. Speaker, there is a solution to the problem. The Yukon Government employee drug plan — with the same company — has a smarter way of administering and processing the claims. In the Yukon, employees get a swipe card that the pharmacist swipes, and they receive the 80 per cent Sun Life payment directly. So the patient only needs to pay the 20 per cent out of pocket. In the case of a chronic disease, the remaining 20 per cent could be charged directly by the pharmacy to the extended health care plan.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Human Resources to explain why we cannot do the same.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, women make up 48 per cent of our population, yet they are way under-represented in elected positions, government and industry. While industrial development changes social conditions in the N.W.T., women bear the brunt of the stresses and tensions that take place.

We have an opportunity to take a preventative approach that will reduce these stresses and the long-term costs associated with them.

Women typically have primary responsibility for family and often for community and cultural wellness. Thus, their priority concerns for health and social safety, security, education and social harmony are natural. They have knowledge, skill and experience in these areas that are essential, as we develop preventative policies.

Under-representation by women in political and policy decision making means less public support for social, cultural and community needs. It sends the message that families, communities and cultures are less important than profit-making interests.

Mr. Speaker, this situation has developed through history, as in ancient times humankind shifted away from societies that were matriarchal or that gave equal status to both women and men. Through global colonization, we have arrived at today's world, which is typically patriarchal and does not ensure that women are included in the decision-making.

In this situation, as reflected here in this government, the few women that get into political and economic decision-making spheres tend to be there for a long time and continue to be the first women in these positions — i.e., they remain in a minority position. I know you all agree that we are greatly appreciative of their voices and that we need to hear more of women's perspectives and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the incredibly high rate of violence against women in the N.W.T. reflects the absence of women in the power dynamic here. Since the diamond mines opened a decade ago, the rate of violent crime has doubled, and it has risen by 40 per cent in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, women have different perspectives than men, and they belong at this decision-making table. We must recognize that gender is an issue that impacts the socio-economic circumstances of women, families and communities. We need to collect and monitor social data by gender and put a gender lens on the development of public policy. We need to support annual gatherings of women and demonstrate that we understand this issue and are willing to take action on it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to continue my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Bromley: Will this Assembly put gender on the table by recognizing women's central and equal role in society? We need to adopt gender-based

analysis as part of our routine decision and policy making.

For prevention and real progress on real issues, let's choose to do things differently, and let's start now. Quana, thank you.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CUSTOM ADOPTION PROCESS

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, my statement today is dealing with the area of custom adoption and the length the process takes for something that you would think is straightforward and simple.

Mr. Speaker, custom adoption has been in place for hundreds or thousands of years. First Nations people — our grandparents — have adopted their grandchildren for many years. Yet the process this government is using is lengthy, cumbersome and also frustrating for a lot of custom adoption parents who have gone through the process.

Mr. Speaker, a year and a half later, the process continues on. We have legislation in place that doesn't work and is not user-friendly to the client. I think it's important, as government, that we take a close look at that legislation and find out why it's not working, especially in regard to adoptions and the number of children we have — especially First Nations children — in our system by way of foster care. I think it's important, as government, that we do whatever we can to ensure custom adoption is used and also that grandparents have the ability to understand a process that's simple, straightforward and allows for a process that does not take a year and a half.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to the Minister on this matter. Also, I have spoken to the parent of a Gwich'in child with regard to his granddaughter, whom they spent many years trying to reunite. Also, working with other parents in our communities — especially grandparents — where their children are apprehended, their grandchildren are taken away, the grandparents find it very frustrating that they can't get access to their grandchildren because of the courts' apprehension orders and the policies and procedures this government puts in place. A lot of grandparents are frustrated, and they're wondering what did they do wrong because they can't access their grandchildren.

I think that as a government, we have a responsibility to clear that up, to see that effect on people in the Northwest Territories. I think this government has to find ways to ensure that our legislation is user-friendly.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services questions on this matter.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF CURLER
HEATHER MCCAGG-NYSTROM**

Hon. Bob McLeod: I'm pleased to recognize my Yellowknife South neighbour, Heather McCagg-Nystrom. Heather's curling with the N.W.T./Yukon women's curling team, skipped by Kerry Galusha-Koe, this week in Regina, Saskatchewan, at the Scott Tournament of Hearts. Other members of the team include Teejay Surik and Dawn Moses. Husband, Jeff, and daughters Jenna and Ava are cheering Heather and the N.W.T./Yukon team on. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Bromley.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Bromley: I'd like to recognize Miss Amanda Mallon in the audience today. Miss Mallon is president of the NWT Teachers' Association and, I believe, also a member on the board of directors for the Canadian Teachers Federation.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to recognize Amanda Mallon, president of the NWT Teachers' Association. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions.

Oral Questions

**QUESTION 97-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT**

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I came to session with a lot of things to talk about, but I have to keep asking questions about this bridge, because that's what the people want. They want answers.

I think everyone understands that the money that has been spent to date on the bridge — the \$9 million — has been by way of a loan which was guaranteed by this government. But I want to move on to the larger issue of the loan to build the bridge, which is being secured by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation.

I want to ask the Premier if our government is in fact guaranteeing that loan. If things go wrong and the loan is defaulted on, whose responsibility is the over \$140 million — the \$160 million — loan that is being secured by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation? Who is responsible for it?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the Member in this House a number of days ago talked about the facts of where we are involved, why we are

involved, questioning as well, as was stated in the House, that the government is backstopping this through the concession agreement. But there are limitations.

We're not guaranteeing the large loan. We've guaranteed the \$9 million, which will be paid out once the dollars flow from the lending partners. We are involved through the concession agreement, through the overall indemnification of the lenders.

Mrs. Groenewegen: So in fact, we are co-signing the loan with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and indemnifying the corporation with the lenders, which is kind of a fancy way, a different way, of saying that in fact our government is backstopping. We are the guarantors of the loan should something go wrong.

If that is the case, then, we are way out on a limb on this project. I need the people to understand. I need the public to understand where we're at on that.

So will the Premier please confirm that when he says we are there as a government to indemnify the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation if the loan is defaulted on, it is in fact like guaranteeing the loan?

Furthermore, I'd like to know if that \$160 million — or whatever the amount of the loan turns out to be — is calculated into our \$500 million borrowing limit as a government.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the total amount of the project that is being financed by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation doesn't fall onto our books because as the project is established, it is the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation that is seeking the money and going to lenders. We are a part of it, yes. As has been said in this House, as has been laid out from the start through a number of factors — that is, the toll structure — it is also a part of the fact that we're taking money on an annual basis that we put into the ice-road crossing and the ferry crossing

As well, as was made known months before the last election, the government would also, once we did not get confirmation from the federal government, have to bump another couple of million dollars on an annual basis to make this project a go. That was discussed and was known since the days of the 15th Assembly.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier a few days ago committed in this House to putting together an estimate of what it would cost for us to terminate this agreement to proceed with the Deh Cho Bridge. A few days have now passed. I'd like to know where we're at on that evaluation on what it would cost to terminate this agreement.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that we would have it today, but it is being worked on as we speak.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, because the Premier so freely said that this information was known to the 15th Assembly, I'd like to ask him if he's willing to produce any proof that Members of this House knew all these facts which are now just coming out. I mean, I'm finding out stuff every day on the Deh Cho Bridge project that I didn't know before.

I'd like to now ask the Premier if he will lay some proof on the table that Regular Members of this House were aware of what was going on. We didn't even know the concession agreement was going to be signed on September 28. That is out there.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I guess if nothing else, we have to acknowledge the Member's passion to ensure that her questions get asked on a regular basis from the 15th Assembly into the 16th Assembly.

The fiscal plans for this project were known. We can provide a chronology of these things that happened. We could even look at *Hansard* when questions were asked by the same two Members about this specific project: of the parameters, of the additional money the Government of the Northwest Territories is willing to put into this project that is over and above the ferry contract, the ice-road crossing. That's been known. The guarantee that was in place: that's been known because that's been in place for quite a number of years. So it's public, the fact that the questions have been raised in this House.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the question about "Why was it signed three days before an election?" is one of concern to Members who've carried on, but the fact is that if the Members in the last Assembly had the support to cut the project, they could have cut the project. They didn't.

Now let's get on with work, because we've got to start building the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

QUESTION 98-16(2) CUSTOM ADOPTION PROCESS

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It's in regard to the length of time that these custom adoption processes are taking.

Has her department looked at the possibility of doing a review on the program to find out where the barriers are or why the process is taking so long? Has the Minister directed her department to look at the possibility of finding out, of streamlining this process so that it doesn't take as long as it does

now, where it's taking a year and a half to approve an application?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question and for talking to me about it.

I can advise the Member and the House that normally a custom adoption process should not take that long at all. It's quite a routine process. The department does not have a direct role to play. It merely ratifies adoptions that have been agreed to. Usually this is a pretty speedy process and without too much hardship.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if she had an opportunity to talk to the Minister of Justice to see if it's possible to make amendments to improve this program and also look at the possibility of improving access for, especially, grandparents to their grandchildren? Since the legislation has been passed, grandparents' rights to their grandchildren seem to have been watered down, that they're no longer part of the approval process and also of having the ability of access that they had in the past.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding — and I'd be happy to look into that — that as the system stands now, as long as the parties agree on the adoption arrangement, they put the documents together through the adoptions commissioner in regional offices. They just have to submit that to the Supreme Court, and the department issues adoption certificates thereafter. In the situation that the Member has brought forward to me, there were some logistical errors and uncompleted documents that caused difficulty.

I just want to reiterate that the custom adoption process is quite simplified. It's a process that the department and the government support, and I'd be happy to look into the possibility of making it easier for grandparents, which I believe can be done because we, by and large, as a government support custom adoptions.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the adoption process, I mentioned to the Minister that a lot of times children are taken away from their home community, from their immediate family, and moved elsewhere. I'd like to ask the Minister: is there a program in place to reunite the children with their families, say at Christmas, Easter, summer, whatnot? Also, who pays for that cost of bringing these families back together during special occasions of the year like Christmas, Easter, summer holidays, whatnot? A lot of times I get that question asked by grandparents wanting to see their grandchildren. Again, if they're taken out of their home communities, they don't have that day-to-day access, and they might be lucky to see them at Christmas.

I'd like to ask the Minister: is there that program in place, and is it being explained to the public exactly how that program works?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I think one thing we should be aware of is the fact that adoptions of any kind — and that includes custom adoptions — make an arrangement between a parent and child more like the natural parent and child relationship, in that once you adopt a child, you become responsible for all of their financial issues and other responsibilities that a natural parent would. The adoption process legalizes that relationship. This is a question that often comes up in cases comparing foster-parent situations to adoption. Once you adopt a child or if a grandparent adopts a child, a lot of financial support that might have been there in other circumstances will not be there anymore.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, custom adoption is nothing new to aboriginal people. They've been doing it for thousands of years, and I think it's important to realize that that process still exists in a lot of our communities. The frustration that we're having in the aboriginal communities is that because the way the legislation is drafted, a lot of people are losing the traditional ability to custom-adopt, of how it used to be in the past. So I think it's important that as government we look at it to see if it's meeting the measurement of aboriginal people on exactly what their expectations are, especially grandparents.

I'd like to ask the Minister again if she would get back to me on the possibility, dates and times, of whether there are going to be amendments made, along with the Minister of Justice, so that we can amend it to make sure that it takes into account those issues that I raised here today.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to make that commitment to look at the process to see what improvements, if any, could be made and whether or not it would require legislative amendments. It is my understanding that over the years we have gone a long way in improving and supporting this process, but obviously if there's any room for improvement, I would be happy to look at that with the Member.

QUESTION 99-16(2)
PUBLIC SERVICE MEDICAL
PRESCRIPTION BENEFITS

Mr. Menicoche: In my Member's statement I pointed out that the Yukon government has a better way of ensuring that their employees receive their prescription drug reimbursement in a timely fashion. I pointed out that the G.N.W.T. puts unnecessary stress on its employees who are already sick and need their medication to get better, to stabilize their chronic illness so they can actually make it to work.

New in the mail to me I've got an update from the Public Service Health Care Plan, Mr. Speaker, indicating that they are working at getting us a pay-direct drug card, but they've put it off for another year, till sometime in 2009. I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources: can the Minister look at and work with the negotiation process to see if they can speed up the process of getting it implemented back to 2008?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that the Member asked that question, because we always want to make sure that our employees are well treated, and we don't want to inflict any undue hardship on our employees. I'd have to get some more detailed information from the Member, because as I understand it, employees, on a monthly basis, fill out a declaration form with the drugstore of their choice or the pharmacy of their choice, and as long as they submit this monthly form, they only get charged for 20 per cent. Having said that, I'm certainly prepared to improve the system.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, there are still employees out there using their cash, and it's being tied up in the health care system, and it's much-needed cash, especially in these times.

Can the Minister tell me when he can get back to me with the information he's committed to? I think he mentioned about some kind of form that they fill out. I don't know if that exists. Maybe he can tell me about it. I think that the important thing here is that a drug care card will be a lot more efficient and effective for our employees. I'd like to know when the Minister will be working on this issue so that employees get it a lot sooner. Mahsi.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we can check into that right away. I understand that in the communities drugs are provided at no cost and that in the larger centres that do have pharmacies, with the forms that are submitted, they are only charged 20 per cent. So we'll undertake to look at which employees are falling through the cracks, and also we will work towards having a more efficient system.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, just in terms of implementing this pay-direct drug card, I'd like to know: what exactly are the issues? Negotiations have been underway since 2006. It's been a couple of years now. What exactly is the issue that's delaying it for another year, to 2009? Mahsi.

Hon. Bob McLeod: There are a number of issues that have to be dealt with. I guess the most critical one would be for the businesses or pharmacies that dispense the drugs to have the equipment and technology to be able to utilize such a drug card.

Secondly, how do you control costs or dispensing of drugs? It would have to be a system whereby

only approved drugs would be dispensed, and there would have to be some sort of cost control.

QUESTION 100-16(2)
PROGRAM DELIVERED AT THE
THEBACHA CAMPUS OF
AURORA COLLEGE

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I spoke of the Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith and the fact that we may not be meeting all the needs of our Northern students. It really is a question of safety and effectiveness. We cannot have a 67 per cent drop in our trades program without that raising a warning flag.

I'll go a little further and say that we had a Social Worker program offered in that community. For two years in a row it had little or no attendance. It had to be cancelled and was moved to Yellowknife. There it was picked up, and it's being subscribed to quite fully.

My question really comes down to safety and effectiveness. Would the Minister of EC&E be willing to commit to this House to do an independent survey of current students, and students from the past two years, to find out their concerns about the program being offered at the Thebacha Campus, and to make sure we can look into solving some of these issues?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, safety, effectiveness and efficiency are our top priorities as a government and, more specifically, the trades programs that we offer in the communities.

We do have campuses that deliver various programs in the communities — Inuvik, Fort Smith, Yellowknife — and in other smaller campuses at the community level. We do provide pilot programs as well, all leading towards certification or diploma programs, and also towards a teacher education program. We are very proud of the programs that we deliver on all campuses.

With regard to a review, there is one currently being conducted. It's in the works as we speak, and our department is looking into that as well. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, if there's a review going on, I'd like to know what the review means. Does the review mean you're going to go to an independent survey? Does it mean you're going to create questions, or you're going to check with students? What is the definition of a review? Does it include the staff, the management and the bureaucracy of Aurora College, to make sure we're delivering safe and effective programs for our students?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment

is working closely with Aurora College to perform a thorough review of apprenticeship and occupational certification programs. The review is being undertaken right now on a final technical report. There are surveys happening, and we're trying to get input from different sectors about what is working and what is not working. Then we will provide recommendations on moving forward. That is currently under review, and it will be brought forward for our department's discussion. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I heard nothing about review of students past and present to find out about the students' safety. I heard nothing about — if I may quote from the Minister's statement today: "Students are most successful when they have many supports...." I want to make sure we're supporting our students.

Would the Minister be willing to make sure that the terms of reference are provided to Members? Would the Minister be willing to accept more questions as to what type of survey questions should be out there, just to make sure that we're doing the right kind of review at this time?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi. Mr. Speaker, like I said, there is a review undertaken right now. The communities want to have some input into this review.

On the trades sector, the programs that are being delivered, the trade apprenticeship programs, the management programs and distance programs are out there. We want to find out what's working. What kind of programs are we delivering successfully? We are getting input from the students and program staff about how to deliver effective programs to our communities. We are listening to people out there in the community. We serve 33 communities, and we are certainly taking into consideration all their recommendations. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, let me say it very clearly: MLAs want input on this survey. Rather than doing a survey without any consultation in this House.... It's nice to hear that a survey is going on, but I didn't hear when this was going to come forward. I didn't hear about consulting MLAs or any details about that. These are some important issues that need to be decided in this House, and if we are going to do a survey, we should be having input from this side of the House to make sure it is effectively done.

Would the Minister ensure that MLAs such as myself have input on this survey? If this is done in isolation and we're handed a report — and even if we are handed any reports — by that time there is no chance for input and there's no way we can influence some of the direction it should be looking into.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we accept recommendations and input from our Regular Members as well. We very much appreciate their input.

This review has been undertaken for just under a year now. It will be brought to the attention of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The results of these recommendations will be brought forward. Any recommendations and advice from Members will certainly be taken into consideration in our discussion. Mahsi.

QUESTION 101-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask some questions today to the Premier in regard to the Deh Cho Bridge project again. I listened with interest to the comments he made previously with Mrs. Groenewegen. Yes, he is right: the last government could have looked at rescinding the Deh Cho Bridge Act. But I disagree with him on his take on the information being free flowing between the last government and Regular Members. If it was so free flowing, why would Regular Members have to pass not one but two motions calling on the government to disclose an updated cost-benefit analysis, and also to let us know what was contained in the concession agreement? So I just wanted to get that out there.

I also want to ask the Premier today if he would look at striking a peer review of the financing of the Deh Cho Bridge project.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, once again in this debate, those are actions of the 15th Legislative Assembly in terms of those motions that were passed. But in the life of this government, the 16th Assembly, the information has flowed. We've showed that information. We know where the dollars are. Those dollar marks haven't changed since the last update to Members.

With the request for a peer review, this project.... The lenders have been involved with our lawyers and looking at all documentation; the process has undergone quite a review in the sense of where it is required to go.

Yes, the Member quoted the cost-benefit analysis, but let me say that as the Government of the Northwest Territories, if we used that business case for all of our communities, many of our communities would have shut down, because we would not have afforded to build in our communities. The Mackenzie Valley highway is something that at least a number of us were talking about in the 16th Assembly. It would never get built. Highway expansion in the Northwest Territories would never happen. So we are going to have to look at other ways of doing business as the Government of the

Northwest Territories, and look at other options available to us.

I don't know what it would require to do an active peer review on the financing of this, but we have had some of the largest lending agents in Canada, the Ontario teachers' association, as well as the Sun Life Group. They are the largest lenders. They're doing due diligence along with us. So do you want a peer review of what they've decided, if they decided to proceed or not.

Mr. Ramsay: The Members of the 15th Legislative Assembly put a lot of faith in what the government was telling them at the time. The former Premier said he would come forward with information that was going to be contained in that concession agreement before it was signed off. That never happened. The concession agreement was signed on September 28, 72 hours before the election, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the Premier if he is aware of whether or not the former Premier and cabinet had access to the cost-benefit analysis when Regular Members first found out any information — a little bit of information — on November 17 of last year.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, all the Member has to do is look at the date when that report was published, and he can answer his own question.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I believe the date stamped on that thing was December of 2007, which would lead me to believe that the government — the 15th Legislative Assembly — signed a \$160 million deal on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories without that cost-benefit analysis, which says that we're going to go from a positive \$38 million impact to a negative \$50 million impact. Is that true?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, once again the Member wants to debate what the previous government did, what the previous Premier did; I'm talking about the 16th Assembly and what we've done. We've provided all the information Members have asked for. They may not like it, but they've got the information. We've committed to and honoured the delivery of what they've asked for, and I say let's now get on with business.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the previous government was signing on to a \$160 million infrastructure deal, I'm wondering what role the Finance Minister would play in that. The impact that's going to have for 35 years to come is \$242 million. The former Finance Minister is still the Finance Minister, and I think he has some explaining to do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I don't know if that question is in order or not. I will allow the Premier to answer, if he would like.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as Finance Minister for the 16th Legislative Assembly, the requirements that have been made upon myself to provide information have been provided. Thank you.

QUESTION 102-16(2)
GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS
IN PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, we face many challenges getting women's voices to the table because of the way we have set up our society of the day. We have some opportunities to do that a little better in this government. I'd like to ask the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: does this government have a policy in place that ensures that a gender lens is brought to the development of public policy?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, first I'd like to thank the Member for the statement, which sounded like music to my ears.

Mr. Speaker, on the question the Member is asking, I have to say that my understanding.... I don't have all the detailed information with me on the gender-based analysis, but it's something that has been going on in many different jurisdictions. Also, there has been some work been going on by previous governments. I'm going to have to make a commitment now that I'd be happy to look into that and come back to the Member to see where we are with that.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Minister for that response. I'm well aware of the Minister's personal interest in this issue — and appropriately so, of course.

I would also like to know if the government will look into bringing gender-based analysis in on all of the legislation that we contemplate, as well, as a routine matter?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there has been quite a bit of work and analysis that has been done on this and on how the policy could come about, how that would be implemented and how we could lay that out. I have to get the details of that to see what work, exactly in detail, has been done and where we are with that. I just haven't had the time to look into that further.

But I do want to assure the Member that a lot of work has been done on this issue by this government. I'd just like to look into that further, get back to the Member and then maybe we could have more discussion at that time.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you again to the Minister on that. It's good to hear that there has been a lot of work done. I'm looking forward to hearing the

results of that. I think we are early in our four-year term. It would be great to see this put in place as early as possible so that it could become a routine part. We've got lots of legislation, I'm sure, that we're contemplating. So thank you for that response.

Of course, following the formula, when might the Minister get back to me with the details on that?

Hon. Sandy Lee: We've been very busy with a lot of things. One of the things we are working on is some new initiatives and new ideas in time for the next business plan process. As a new Minister in a new government and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, it's something that I'd like to look into further. Hopefully within the next two or three months we can have some documents to review and discuss.

QUESTION 103-16(2)
G.N.W.T. HIRING PRACTICES

Mr. McLeod: I came into this Assembly with rose-coloured glasses, thinking I could make a difference. After a week I left them outside. It's frustrating, sometimes, Mr. Speaker, hearing from constituents who run into one road block after another. It's equally frustrating because it seems like there's nothing you can do about. You can bring your concerns to Members across the floor, who've all shared our concerns before. They've heard these before, and I'm sure a lot of them have spoken to our issues before.

I don't know what's changed. You're in a position now to provide direction to the departments. You know what it's like being on this side, so start providing that direction to the departments so the constituents will be the first people we look after, not the departments.

I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister of HR. I'd like to ask him if the regional offices are the ones that determine the qualifications for job ads that go out.

Hon. Bob McLeod: The departments determine the qualifications for the job.

Mr. McLeod: I'd like to ask the Minister if there are standard requirements across the N.W.T. so that an admin assistant in Hay River or Fort Smith would need the same qualifications as an admin assistant in Inuvik.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Our job-evaluation system and process does provide for that. At one point we had a great number of job-evaluation committees. We've now reduced the number so we would have more consistency between the different regions for similar jobs. We regularly undertake reviews and clarifying exercises.

Mr. McLeod: I think that's part of the problem. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would commit to looking into the review and having the standards.... I know there are a lot of jobs where the qualifications are different in each region or for each job. That's not what I'm questioning. They are some where the standard requirements could be the same across the N.W.T.

I'd like to ask the Minister if his department would consider having the job requirements for certain positions standard across the N.W.T. so, like he said, there can be some consistency.

Hon. Bob McLeod: I would be pleased to do that. Also, it would help us immensely if the Member would make us aware of the job categories or positions that he had concerns with.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: The reason we bring our concerns to the floor sometimes is because we're not getting the answers we think constituents deserve. I'd like to ask the Minister... I'd be happy to sit down with all seven of you over there and give you my concerns as to what could be changed, what needs to be done. Whatever you do with them would be up to the department.

I'd like to ask the Minister if his office reviews all job transfer assignments and job applications or job ads.

Hon. Bob McLeod: This is a priority that we've undertaken. We review all job ads for consistency. We also try to reduce our costs as much as possible so that we can facilitate the hiring process.

QUESTION 104-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has sort of inferred that he doesn't like the idea of this debate. I can certainly understand why. It's not a debate that he could actually win, because he says that we did not ask for the updated cost/benefit analysis and we didn't pass any motions in this House asking for the concession agreement.

I'm looking at *Hansard* from May 10, when Mr. Ramsay states that it is very important that the government shares the information with the Members of the House so that we can ask questions so we can access the risk to the government, speaking of the Deh Cho Bridge project. That was on May 7. At that time the former Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche, said "Yes, we can provide that to the Member and to the committee at the appropriate time." Well, the appropriate time was about two weeks ago, and this was in May 2007.

How can the Premier stand here today and say that they were forthcoming with information as a government when we asked in May and we just got the agreement two weeks ago? Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, maybe I'm having a dream and I've woken up in the 15th Assembly. This is the 16th Assembly. Members have asked for information, I've committed to that information, and we've provided that information. Thank you.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Let's talk about what's happened in this Assembly. We got elected on October 1. We came back here and stood up in this House and asked question after question after question about the Deh Cho Bridge project. The Premier stood up and answered those questions, and not once did he mention the fact that the concession agreement had already been signed on September 28.

I don't know exactly how stupid he thinks we are. However, I want to tell you that I wouldn't even have asked him the questions if I had known a concession agreement had been signed on September 28.

Yeah, let's talk about the 16th Assembly. When did the Premier think he might tell us that the concession agreement had already been signed after we asked all those questions at our very first sitting of this Legislature?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Yes, questions about the 16th Legislative Assembly. The fact is that Members did not ask the question itself. I responded to questions that were given to me in this House when the Members asked for the specific information, worked with the departments, brought that information, and had that delivered to committee.

Mrs. Groenewegen: In light of the absolute barrage of questions that the Premier was asked, and given that he had full knowledge that the concession agreement had already been signed, I want to ask the Premier did he not feel that he had any duty to the Members of this House to just inform us of this very significant milestone which had been passed on the Deh Cho Bridge project: that the concession agreement had, in fact, already been signed? We had to find this out weeks and weeks later, after asking all session.

Did the Premier feel no obligation to open this and transparently share something that significant with Members of this House when we didn't ask exactly that question?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, if we go back to *Hansard*, the first session that we had was in late November — or was it mid-November? — shortly after our election. I was just voted in as Premier of

the Northwest Territories, had not yet assigned portfolios the first couple of days of session, and I took every question from every area of concern in the Northwest Territories.

I can't go back to all the other types of questions, but I did my best to answer Members in that area. As I already stated when this previous question was asked of me later on, if I didn't jump to the conclusion that that was the specific item the Member wanted, I apologized for that. Do I need to apologize again?

Mrs. Groenewegen: Now we're talking about the 16th Assembly. On October 19, the Premier stated:

"The contracts that are being signed are not from the Government of the Northwest Territories; they are through the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation group as well as potential constructors of the bridge...we know that there's a commitment to start some of the early earthwork process. But ultimately no contracts or, from our government side, no liability is being held until we know, for example, they get the permits from the federal government...."

I mean, that's pretty clear — no contracts, no liability. And that was on October 19, 2007. How would the Premier respond to that?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we need to go back a little bit and see what the actual question was that I responded to. The questions were about actual contracts for doing the work for ordering materials. That's my understanding. I have to qualify this; otherwise, I'll be thrown out for saying something or committing to something else.

I've been trying to respond to Members of this House the majority of the time on this specific project. I've looked at the information, I've provided what knowledge I had and what issues I was trying to address on the day, and I've responded since then when we've got the specifics and provided that information. So what more do the Members want in the sense of this specific area? We've given all the update information.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, as the 16th Legislative Assembly, we are, in a sense, married to this project. We're going through this process. But I think we need to take a step back from here and look at the bigger picture of the Northwest Territories. Are we saying that as the Northwest Territories, we're not prepared to look at any major infrastructure for the North, so that we can see the dreams for the development for the North happen in a more proactive way than it has in the past?

QUESTION 105-16(2) REVIEW OF TASERING INCIDENT IN INUVIK

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, last year I had e-mail from a constituent of mine whose daughter was subject to tasering at one of our facilities in Inuvik. I

had spoken to the Minister of Justice, and he assured me they were looking into it.

I would like to ask the Minister of Justice if his department has conducted their internal review of the tasering incident in Inuvik.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's question on this specific area.

I did manage to talk to my department to try to get more information on what really took place in Inuvik. I did get some feedback on the incident that had taken place. The Member was asking how many were used during 2006-2007. I'm willing to share.... We did have 12 incidents in the community of Inuvik during September 2006 to November 2007 — fifteen months.

Mr. McLeod: I thank the Minister for his response.

I'd like to ask the Minister if the RCMP have conducted an internal review as to the tasering incident in Inuvik and if that report was made available to the Justice department.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the department may have that information, which I don't have in front of me today. I can certainly get that information, and I'm willing to share with the Member.

Mr. McLeod: Again, I appreciate the Minister's response to that, and I'd like to ask him if he gets the department review and the RCMP review, would he commit to sharing these reports with the mother of the girl that was tasered? She is the one that raised the incident, and she was quite concerned. We've been communicating for about a year now. Will he commit to sharing their findings with the mother of the girl?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, it is important to share information and have fair communication. I'm willing to share that with the Member and also the parent, if we can set up a meeting with our department and allow the Member to sit down with the parent. I feel similar incidents need to be addressed — why this took place and whatnot, and therefore this information can be shared from the department. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: I'd also like to ask the Minister if he would report back to me on any actions that may have been taken against the folks who did the actual tasering.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, our department is working carefully with the "G" Division, the RCMP headquarters, trying to get as much information out as we possibly can with all these incidents. Once that is shared with our

department, I will be more than willing to share with the Member. Mahsi.

QUESTION 106-16(2)
PROGRAMS DELIVERED AT THE
THEBACHA CAMPUS OF AURORA COLLEGE

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, while I quickly ran upstairs to type a written question, my office was contacted again by someone else who had another unhappy experience at the Thebacha College, which I referenced.

Mr. Speaker, the point is — I hope it is being well made — that there is something strange going on there, and the fact is that if students are not feeling safe or their safety is being put in jeopardy in any way, I hope that message is being delivered to the Minister of EC&E.

Mr. Speaker, with all that I've said right now, will the Minister be willing to put this so-called review on pause just so we can have a quick look at these terms of reference to make sure that the problems that are being identified are being looked into and effectively dealt with?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, the review we talked about earlier is before us, within our department. That has been conducted ECE and also Aurora College on apprenticeship and occupational certification and the program set that we'd deliver.

Of those issues that the Member is referring to — some of the areas that have been referenced as well — he listed intimidation and fear. Our department is aware of things that are happening within that community. We do have a team that is reviewing these documents. There's more ongoing communication happening within our department and Aurora College on that specific item. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, without hurting anyone's feelings or insulting anyone, I have to tell you when the Minister says that ECE and Aurora College are doing this review, it's like putting the fox in charge of the hen house, for goodness' sake. I mean, why doesn't he say to me that the president is reviewing the effectiveness of the campus in Fort Smith — by the way, where he lives and runs the program. Wow, I'm sure that will be independent.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm asking for is an independent review. What I'm asking for is: will the Minister bring to Members — maybe just myself, but I'll tell you that I've heard more concerns from other Members...? Would he be willing to bring forward the terms of reference so we could have a look at them and make sure that we're doing a proper review?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we are willing to work with the Members on any issues that

have an impact in their riding, whether it be Yellowknife or Fort Smith. We are willing and accepting any recommendation, any advice, any input that Members can provide to us that can benefit the community, that can speak for the community. How can we improve at the community level? Program delivery, where students are living — as much information that the Members can provide, we're willing to work with it. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I had a mother tell me that her kid woke up in the health centre in Fort Smith because he got a beating. Like I said, he woke up in the health centre.

Mr. Speaker, I had another person tell me about being chased running to the store. And the stories go on and on and on. I've heard that the students feel intimidated throughout the community; it's like the community doesn't want them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know exactly who is doing this review? Who? Do we have a name of who's doing this review? And how much is this going to cost us, and where are we going to take it?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, again, our department is working with the community of Fort Smith, identifying what's happening out there — the incident the Member is referring to — because it does reflect on the programs being delivered, the enrolment and so forth. So I'm not going to specifically say this person is responsible. It's all departments that are conducting the review. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: As I said earlier today — and I'll reference again that people don't want to go there — we have a Social Worker program that people don't want to go to. It wasn't fully subscribed to, cancelled, moved to Yellowknife and was fully subscribed to and even over-subscribed. The trades have dropped by 67 per cent — two thirds. So the fact is that people aren't wanting to go there.

What is this Minister doing about this process, and is he cutting back on the college's budget and funding because people don't want to go there?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: For the campuses, we've delivered many, many graduates, post-secondary, in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Yellowknife campus, especially with the journeyman ticket holders. We're proud to say we've graduated those individuals from the communities over the long years that we've serviced the communities. So we're very proud of that. The programs we deliver have been very successful in the communities.

There may be some issues that we may be tackling, but it's all workable within the three campuses. Three campuses are working together to remedy the situation.

QUESTION 107-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mrs. Groenewegen: I had a chance to look over a bit more *Hansard* here. I want to go back to this. You know, these things just don't go away just because we decide to sweep them under the carpet.

The concession agreement was signed on September 28. We found out November 27 — two months later. Now, the Premier said we didn't ask the right question. We didn't say, "Did you sign the concession agreement in the last government?" We weren't that direct.

Here's a quote from *Hansard*, again on October 19. This is Mr. Ramsay: "Are we going to be able to see the concession agreement? Are we going to be able to see the contracts that have been signed? What has been signed?" He says: "What has been signed?"

This is a month before we found out the concession agreement was signed. Mr. Roland comes back: "I'm going to commit to you and Members of this Assembly to share the information that is necessary to make sure we make good decisions for the residents of the Northwest Territories."

I have to ask again: on October 19, when the Premier — whether he was assigned portfolios or not; I don't care. He was in the last cabinet. He must have known that the concession agreement had been signed. When he was asked that very direct question — "What has been signed?" — why did he not offer up to this government that the concession agreement had already been signed, significantly committing this government to all the liability we're now talking about?

Hon. Floyd Roland: The Member again quotes the *Hansard* from October 19, the first day we had oral questions in the 16th Legislative Assembly. Most of us around the table — at least from this side of the House, because I had not assigned portfolios — were expecting a light day as was past practice of new governments. But I ended up taking questions from across the delivery of programs and services by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

As the Member has quoted, I committed to providing the necessary information that is now in the hands of Members. Do we want to relive the past? I committed to stuff. I provided that. What more does the Member want from myself? I should be careful asking that question. I have ideas, and I think I know where this is going. But the fact is, what I've committed to, I've delivered.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'm interested to know what the Premier thinks I'm looking for. He was only elected as the Premier a short few months ago, and

I was certainly on the record in telling him that I did support him. I still support him. I don't see a lot of other options sitting over there for Premier. I'd like to work with him. I'm being honest here. I'd like to work with him.

But the fact of the matter is that we need transparency. And I believe the Premier.... You know, as I said, you can't sweep these things under the carpet. I believe the Premier knew full well what we were looking for that day, and he didn't have the guts to tell us the concession agreement had been signed.

Did the Premier understand what we were getting at that day? That's what I'd like to ask.

Hon. Floyd Roland: I guess I'll have to apologize. No, I didn't get the gist of what was happening. I was basking in the glow of just being named the tenth Premier of the Northwest Territories. I wasn't expecting any questions that would require a lot of background detail. In fact, I stood here — and I didn't have the updated notes from all the departments — and responded to all the questions that were put before me. I think we used up almost a whole question period, in fact.

I had Members saying good job for not being given an opportunity to know where Members were coming from or to get the background. I responded to questions with information that I had off the top of my head as to where things were, still in, I guess, the limelight of being named Premier of the Northwest Territories.

So for the record, I did not look at the fact that "Okay, they're looking for what the previous government had signed off days before the election." No, I didn't. It's very clear now, as has been pointed out, that it is a very big concern.

I've tried to state, for the record, the information — the critical information that we needed as the Legislative Assembly, even this Assembly — was out there in the public, because questions had been asked about that of the previous government.

Once I knew exactly what Members wanted, I committed to it, and I've delivered upon it. Thank you.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, two motions were passed in the 15th Assembly. I believe they were unanimously passed by the Regular Members of this House.

The Premier had to have known that there were concerns on this side of the House with the Deh Cho Bridge project. It has been widely publicized that there were questions and concerns.

The fact that he'd had a chance to think, for I don't know how many months, he might be the Premier,

and with headlines written for months in advance that he was going to be the Premier, I can't help it if he didn't assign that cabinet portfolio. But that was his choice.

Let's go on to another serious beef. Let's go on to December 31st. December 31st was the date by which the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation had to comply with certain things that needed to be done. The equity and different pieces of their side of the commitment had to be put in place by December 31st.

Somebody made a decision to extend that deadline to January 31st. Who made that decision? Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the deadline of December 31st was in place. The loan guarantee was put in place, with our government backstopping that loan guarantee with TD Bank — TD Securities, to be correct.

They had a 30-day provision before calling that loan. The concession agreement, as I was informed by department officials, also had a 30-day provision built into it. That's what we were waiting for, to see if the bridge corporation would come up with the equity and come up with a lending agreement and all of the pieces that needed to be put in place for this to proceed.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Just to confirm: even in light of the fact that the Premier knew how many concerns there were about this process and this project, a significant deadline of December 31st came and went. And a decision was made on that side of the House to extend that deadline to January 31st without any consultation or awareness on this side of the House.

Again, after the fact, we got a phone call. After January 31st had passed, we get a phone call. We were told that shareholders have changed and that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation has met their requirements.

Somebody made a decision in spite of.... There was an opportunity on December 31st to change the course of this project, but the Premier made an extension to January 31st. Did he alone make that decision?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, once again, we have to be careful of what we say in this House.

For the record, I committed to Members that before we made a decision to extend, alter or change anything, as Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly, I would get hold of Members. I did that on two occasions, going to Members or making

phone calls to Members, before the deadline. Not after the 31st. Before the deadline. So let's get that correct.

Mr. Speaker: Item 8, written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

Written Questions

QUESTION 8-16(2) AURORA COLLEGE PROGRAM REVIEW

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, my written questions today are directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

- 1) Will the Minister supply a copy of the terms of reference to the program review that he has referenced is taking place at the Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith?
- 2) Will the Minister provide the details as to when this college program review started and when it is expected to be completed? And what are the Minister's intentions for the program report generated in this review?
- 3) Will the Minister provide the details as to when this college program review started and when it is expected to be completed? What are the Minister's intentions for the program report generated in this review?
- 4) Will the Minister supply any background work that has been done related to the initiation of the process?
- 5) Will the Minister supply a copy of his project work plan that has been agreed to, along with the names of the person or persons doing this review and the questions they are asking?
- 6) Will the Minister supply the cost or expected cost of this review?

Mr. Speaker: If I could, please, Mr. Hawkins, remind Members of the rule on written questions. The rule is a written question must be one written, carefully worded question. I would ask you to please bring your written question back and in a proper format.

Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. McLeod.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 3 AN ACT TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

Mr. McLeod: I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, and wishes to report that Bill 3 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member from Frame Lake, that Bill 3 be moved into the Committee of the Whole for today.

Motion carried; Bill 3 referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration today.

Mr. Speaker: Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled *Framework for Action 2005-2008: Status Report to November 30, 2007*.

Document 22-16(2), *Framework for Action 2005-2008: Status Report to November 30, 2007*, tabled.

Hon. Bob McLeod: I wish to table the following document, entitled *2007 Annual Report for the Public Utilities Board of the Northwest Territories*.

Document 23-16(2), *2007 Annual Report for the Public Utilities Board of the Northwest Territories*, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Krutko.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 5-16(2) RECONSIDERATION OF POWER RATE STRUCTURE

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, February 20, 2008, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend that the government initiate the necessary policy changes and bring forward the necessary legislative amendments to make possible the consideration of levelized power rates for the Northwest Territories at the time of the NWT Power Corporation's next

general rate application; and furthermore, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend that these legislative amendments include, if necessary, changes to the Public Utilities Act which would give the government authority to provide direction to the Public Utilities Board; and furthermore, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend that the government instruct the NWT Power Corporation to base its next general rate application on a levelized rate structure; and furthermore, that the Legislative Assembly recommend the government provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker: Motion 2-16(2), Motion 4-16(2). These motions have been called once, but will stay on this Order Paper for one more day.

Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills, Mr. Lafferty.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 4 MISCELLANEOUS STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Range Lake, that Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008, be read for the first time. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 4, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008, has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 4 read a first time.

BILL 5 AN ACT TO AMEND THE MAINTENANCE ORDERS ENFORCEMENT ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member from Thebacha, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 5 read a first time.

BILL 6 AN ACT TO AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member from Sahtu, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 6 read a first time.

BILL 7
SECURITIES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member from Yellowknife South, that Bill 7, Securities Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 7, Securities Act, has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 7 read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statements 1-16(2) and 9-16(2), Bill 1 and Bill 3 with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

**Consideration in
Committee of the Whole
of Bills and Other Matters**

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. In consideration of the Committee of the Whole are Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2), Bill 1, Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act. What is the wish of the committee?

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, we would like to consider Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We will continue after a short break.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'll call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We are dealing with the Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009.

BILL 1
INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT,
2008-2009

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if he'll be bringing in witnesses.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree to the Minister bringing in his witnesses?

Some honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister Roland, for the record could you introduce your witnesses, please.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Joining me at the table to my right is the secretary to the FMB, Ms. Kathleen LeClair. To my left is the Director of Budget Evaluation, Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Welcome, witnesses.

We left off on page 6, item 4, Health and Social Services.

Mr. Ramsay: I'd like to seek unanimous consent to return to item No. 3, Public Works and Services.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Member has asked to go back to item No. 3, Public Works and Services.

Unanimous consent granted.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Item 3, Public Works and Services: \$6,534,000.

COMMITTEE MOTION 1-16(2)
TO DELETE \$155,000 FOR VITAL RECORDS
PROCESSING AND STORAGE FACILITY — PWS
COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Ramsay: I move that \$115,000 be deleted from the Interim Appropriation Detail book — that amount set out in Schedule 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, item No. 3, Public Works and Services, on page 6, for the project Final Records Processing and Storage Facility.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): A motion is on the floor. To the motion.

Some honourable Members: Question.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called.

Committee motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Public Works and Services: \$6,419,000.

Mr. Bromley: I just note that we are spending \$4 million to \$5 million here — possibly more — on establishing and maintaining and replacing tank farms. This is a very costly procedure; the petroleum stored there is toxic and so on, so there are stringent regulations for how we store fuel. It's a very costly process. I believe this is handled by the petroleum products division of Public Works. I think there's a real opportunity here for savings if we can switch to non-toxic forms of fuel, which also have other benefits. I think in particular it's been demonstrated in the North.

We heard discussion from the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs the other day that we can do things quite a bit differently in ways that save both on our capital costs and with environmental and socio-economic benefits, local economic

benefits. So I'm wondering whether there has been serious consideration, rather than pouring all this money, tens of millions of dollars annually, into these assets to store possible fuel and so on, if in fact we've been looking at other ways of doing it — particularly, perhaps, changing the petroleum products division to the pellets products division, or something like that, and really getting at these savings that are waiting there for us. I recognize that we are taking advantage of those in a number of cases, but here's another opportunity.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, we do realize, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, that further steps need to be taken in reducing the footprint we leave in this land that we live in, with the recognition that much of our communities need this because of supplies and a limited amount of time to get supplies into the communities. The majority is either home heating oil or vehicles that are running in the community that require this amount to be stored for meeting the year-round shipment.

As we move forward as a government to look at other initiatives — whether it's heating our businesses or buildings or facilities — there will be opportunities for savings in the future. These are addressing either an upgrade that needs to be done to meet code requirements, or expansion of a facility because there's not enough capacity in those facilities at this time to allow for enough supply to go through for a whole season.

Mr. Bromley: Certainly I recognize the truth of what the Minister says. It does not address the opportunities we have, though. Of course, we need to be really progressive about this and stop this cycle somewhere. Obviously things are needed, but there are also huge opportunities to do things differently. Again, I say this as much for economic reasons, recognizing our financial situation as much or more than the environmental situation.

There's an opportunity I see here for win-win. Again, I think, having looked at how quickly these things can be done, it can happen within the lifetime of this Assembly in spades. So I do recognize the truth of what the Premier said, but I want to stress that our opportunities are there. I wish I could be that relaxed about the time frame, but in fact it's now recognized scientifically around the world that we are under the time gun here. The changes are happening at an unbelievable pace, and our costs are accruing at an unbelievable pace. So I'm looking for that same recognition from this government.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we are seriously looking at how we do business as a government, if there are areas where we can effect a cost-saving by going to new technologies.

We also are looking at the fact that we may have to invest a little more up front to get a longer lifespan from some of the equipment and facilities that we operate. As well as doing as much as we can to mitigate the impact we have on the environment, there are a number of factors there that we're working on. We have an energy committee through cabinet to begin looking at that and take the work that's been done and continue to expand on it.

Public Works and Services, \$6,419,000 approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Health and Social Services, appropriation authority required: \$27,562,000.

COMMITTEE MOTION 2-16(2)
TO DELETE \$500,000 FOR
FORT SMITH HEALTH CENTRE — HSS
COMMITTEE MOTION NOT CARRIED

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I move that \$500,000 be deleted from the Interim Appropriation Detail booklet amount set out in Schedule 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, item No. 4, Health and Social Services, page 6, for the project Health Care Centre, Fort Smith.

Interjections.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The motion is being disputed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, sadly, the only function we have on this side of the House in these particular cases is to delete. I would much rather put a motion forward to defer it, although that is not a function of this House.

My issue here is that we're running out with \$500,000 of more planning money. I think this should be an item in the potential budget that will be brought forward in the May-June session. Mr. Chairman, really, the issue is about how this is being fed to Members. As far as I'm concerned, there needs to be further coordination between other facilities that are being beefed up in that community at the same time.

It's not that we have them here to read for all Members, but if one looks closely at the details, this project is linked to another one — and they're actually linked quite closely. We have to have another facility ready for them before the renovations and have people moved out of this project at the health centre. So I don't think it's going to be the death of this project; it's just asking for some delay as well as some coordination that I think needs to be made.

On the same note I'm convinced that we're creating mini centres in almost every community that I start to question it. You know, we have Stanton

Territorial Hospital, and that should be our centre of expertise for the Territory as a whole. I think each region should define itself in that way. But that being said, we have the Fort Smith Health Centre that's going to require multi-multi-millions of dollars. Then we're going to be turning around in short order, and the Hay River hospital is going to be looking for multi-millions of dollars. I think we have to speak to the broader picture as to how much money we're going to spend on these projects, why are we're spending money on these specific projects, in what community and how they're serving the Territory as a whole.

I'm concerned that... I think good investment needs to happen in every community. I certainly believe that every community needs to have a health centre. I'm just kind of wondering, when we're duplicating programs when money is supposed to be very tight, as has been said many times by our good Premier.... The fact is, I'm not suggesting we shouldn't spend money in Fort Smith, and I was not alluding in any way that we shouldn't spend money in Hay River. It's just that I think we should be very cautious about how we build our programs. Maybe the town of Fort Smith can offer something very specific, and you know, other communities can do that as well. The issue really is coordination and buy-in into the bigger collective system.

Mr. Chair, it's not a "delete" in my position; unfortunately that's the way the motion has to read. It's more of a "deferred" until these weave together a little nicer. At this time, other committee members may have some comments.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with an interim appropriation here; this is not the normal kind of appropriation process that we would undertake. When the items were identified for capital in the interim appropriation, we were very clear in wanting to understand, I guess, as Regular Members, why they needed to be introduced in an interim appropriation.

So I guess to the point of this particular allocation, I have a few questions. I'd like to know, for the public record, why this particular capital project needed to be advanced in interim appropriation. I'd like to know what the substantiation is for the need of a \$20 million renovation. We're only voting on a small piece of that. Ultimately this is leading to a major retrofit to this facility. I'd like to know what's wrong with it now. Is the utilization of that facility such that this kind of investment is warranted?

I'm also curious as to what's with the fast-tracking of this? I mean, Hay River was ahead of Fort Smith for a major capital retrofit. We know that capital dollars are scarce, and I understand that Hay River's turn will come, but I'm just curious about the

timing on this one. If I could pose that question to somebody?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I just want to offer some answers to the questions raised.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's really important that when we delete a capital project, it's a serious matter, and it warrants a full debate. I would encourage Members to reconsider the vote and take a vote with all the information.

I'm happy to have the opportunity, first of all, to answer some of the questions that the Members may have. We should also note that while this is an interim appropriation, we have agreed that the capital budget will be a full budget, because we know that you can't approve a quarter of a building. When you approve a project, it's for a full year. The business of the government has to go on. When in budgets, we could do it by interim budget and approve a quarter of upcoming appropriations, because we understand that we haven't done the full planning and full business plan process. As a new government and a new Legislature, we want to have full input into that.

But I think it's important to note that we have agreed to do a different process for capital planning, and we have agreed that for certain projects we would approve for the full year. So I don't think we should be applying that same rule about interim appropriation now.

There are questions about why this was fast-tracked. The answer is that this was not fast-tracked. This is part of a ten-year plan; this is the second year of the ten-year plan. The building that we have in Fort Smith was built in 1978, and it needs major, major renovations to do the work, to be able to offer the services there.

It's also a part of the integrated service delivery model, which is the operating principle of our delivery of care of Health and Social Services in the Northwest Territories. Simply put, it's about being able to offer a combined service of health and social services in the same building. That's what the Fort Smith Health Centre is wanting to do, as is the case in many other facilities.

I've visited Fort Smith, and the renovations have been going on for quite a while. This didn't come about at the last minute or anything like that. This is part of a ten-year master plan. The work that needs to be done is to renovate a wing of the hospital so that we can accommodate midwifery services there, which is an important service that this government wants to do more of. It needs space to do more diagnostic imaging in the facility. Also, it has a lot of

safety and upgrades and renovations that need to happen. And these facilities have to get the work done in the regular course of business.

This is the result of a technical status evaluation that was done already, and work has been going on for a long time. The Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority board has approved a master development plan, and the department is working with the authority to do that work.

There's a question about why Hay River is not in the plan whereas Fort Smith is. The answer to that is.... And I agree the Hay River facility is also in need of either a major mid-life retrofit or a new building. The question there is that there has not been an agreement from the local authority as to what kind of plan that should have. All that disagreement happened before I came into this office. So we did not have an agreement on the capacity or number of beds or levels of services that the facility should provide until last November, when the public administrator submitted a report to me that speaks to the master plan. That part of the work is in the works. Fort Smith did not in any way jump the queue ahead of Hay River. There is work going on for Stanton as well.

The need for technical upgrade and renovations and for making sure we use what money we have to accommodate spaces and facilities to deliver those services that people have to go on.... That is why we need to move on to the second phase of this renovation process.

One more piece to this is there's another item coming up later on where Northern Lights facility is being renovated. That is part and parcel of wanting to maximize space we have. We make the best use of the spaces we have so we don't have a long-term care patient who could be taken care of elsewhere and so we're not using a very expensive hospital setting. They can be taken care of and not be in need of medical services. I urge the Members to think of this as the regular course of doing business in this government.

While we are talking about doing other initiatives, the work of the government has to go on, and this project has been on the books for a very long time.

Mr. Ramsay: I didn't hear the Minister talk about — and this is a big part of it for me — what the \$863,000 that was already approved was spent on. I haven't heard an explanation on that, but I'll keep going. Maybe we can get some detail about that later.

The Minister also talks about a master development plan there, but looking through the capital plan and looking at the capital expenditure that is going to be necessary in Hay River, as well, leads me to wonder if the government has an overall health care facility plan. Why would we look at duplicating

an effort in one community and then a couple of years later, duplicate that effort in another community in close proximity? I think that's the question I have on it. It's a difficult one.

I wanted to have a little bit more information, because I can understand and appreciate if the \$863,000 has already been spent and the work is already started, then it's something I could look at supporting. I just wanted some more detail on that.

Mr. Menicoche: I won't be supporting the motion to delete. I believe that providing services to the communities in the region are an important aspect of delivering our programs and services to the residents of the Northwest Territories. That's something that we should continue to focus on and continue to champion.

Our constituents and our people in the North want that service. They don't want to be centralizing everything and moving education and health services back to Yellowknife, and that's not the purpose of any central government, I believe. We're on this path of devolving programs and services, and I think we should continue it. As an MLA from small communities and regions, I will certainly support any expenditures in our region.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Premier Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, as the Minister stated, in making this motion and needing some more information.... I would encourage the Members, before we read the next motion if there is more to follow, let's have that clarity or ask about the detail before we actually make the motion, because now we only speak to the motion.

Speaking to the motion, we can't support this action, as the Minister stated earlier. The integrated services delivery model has been in the works for many years. The department had worked on how it would deliver health care across the Northwest Territories, with Stanton being a Territorial facility and then, for example, Inuvik being another major facility and Fort Smith and Hay River also fitting into that integrated services delivery model — and Fort Simpson as well. It has all been part of the plan.

We've heard Members say, for example, when we talk about the dementia facility here in Yellowknife, that we're now keeping patients in the hospital here at a higher cost per bed. Well, the same scenario has been worked out with this facility — working with the community, moving some of those seniors out of that facility and going back north to the program that was developed for it and run it.

This has been many years in discussion. This isn't just as a result of last year's budget exercise. This was even a few years before then.

So for the record, I just wanted to inform Members that this process has been in the works for quite a number of years. It addresses a plan that's been put in place and adopted by the Department of Health and Social Services. From there, the department has worked with each authority in this area as part of this master development plan for that community and region. That's been put in place.

A number of communities did not get agreement, so they were deferred in a number of areas until that agreement can be put in place.

This time the agreement has been signed off by the authority, and the department has advanced this to the stage where we're now ready to do the work that's required. It's already existing — some work has been done — and this would continue on with that effort.

I would encourage Members to support moving forward with this, as the work has been done. It's part of a plan. The Department of Health and Social Services can provide Members with a briefing, at some point, on the integrated services delivery model, as it has been discussed in previous governments as well.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, the Member from Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Chairman, I too, along with others in the House, do not support the motion to delete. This was one of the greatest concerns in my riding as we talked about health and social services — people's desire to keep people in their communities for as long as possible. This is what this one community is doing. It could be a model for the rest of the communities to be able to keep their elders in their own community for their entire life if they don't wish to be moved. I know of no elders who have been centralized, once they hit a certain age, because services cannot be provided in the communities.

The only question is, when it comes time for the department to look at the integrated service in the communities, they should look at all of the communities to ensure that people can be kept in their communities as long as possible.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, the Member from Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am firmly planted on the fence in regard to this motion.

I understand fully why this project should go forward, and I do believe that through the master plan of renovating this facility and the long-term care facility in Fort Smith, it will be of benefit.

My concern has to do with the timing. We were given to understand that the things in this particular appropriation were things which were required from a safety point of view, from a contract-in-place point of view — and I've forgotten the other one. My understanding is — and again it goes to the question of what the \$853,000 has been spent on — that I don't believe there's a contract in place with this particular project.

My other concern has to do with — and I think it was raised by Mr. Hawkins — the concept of a regional hospital. Yellowknife has a territorial centre, Inuvik has a fairly large hospital, which could be considered territorial, and we need one south of the lake. Prior to reductions in the budget the question for me is: why are we approving this particular project as going forward prior to knowing what reductions need to be put in place to meet our target of \$135 million in reductions?

I don't doubt that the facility needs work, but I think that if possible, we should do an analysis of the Hay River and Fort Smith health centre capabilities and determine that there will be a fairly large either regional or territorial centre in one or the other of those two communities. I'm on both sides of the fence here. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, this is obviously a very big project, and with the seven-bed dementia facility we're talking, you know, \$25 million. I certainly recognize the need for those facilities. I, again, would like to know sort of where this fits in the plan. Is there a regional centre? Is Hay River — not having a history here — intended to be the regional centre, or is Fort Smith meant to be the regional centre? Perspectives on that would help me on this decision. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Chairman, I could provide some information, since I was involved in this going right back to 2000 or thereabouts. With the integrated service delivery model there is one territorial facility, which is Stanton. There is one regional hospital, which is Inuvik, and it services mainly the Mackenzie Delta area. They can do a more minor level of surgery and do C-sections and that type of surgery.

All the other health centres in the Northwest Territories are level C or less. Hay River and Fort Smith are what are considered level C facilities. We provide community care beds, where people are brought back to recover or they're diagnosed and are shipped to Yellowknife. Both Fort Smith and Hay River are within an hour of Yellowknife, so there is no need for nor is it affordable to have

another regional hospital. The priority is Stanton, Inuvik and the level C communities, which are Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River.

Fort Smith services the catchment area around the community, which is about 2,500 or 2,700 people, depending on when the schools are in session. Hay River services between 3,000 and 4,000 people in the catchment area that they are in the centre of: some of the folks from Deninu Ku'e, some of the folks from the reserve, some folks from Kakisa, Enterprise, in that area. There is no overlap. Both those facilities are in need of repair. The big difference is, as was pointed out, that there has been a master development plan agreed to in Fort Smith. I understand Hay River has agreed to theirs, yet surprisingly Stanton hasn't. So Stanton is under some difficulty as well.

This project has been in the works. I've been an MLA for 12 years. This thing has been in the works for over ten years. There is nothing new here. This is a major issue, but the integrated service delivery plan, which was agreed to by this Assembly, by the government, is what is driving all these developments.

Therefore, I hope that information helps. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mrs. Groenewegen, a point of order?

Point of Order

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order. Is Mr. Miltenberger speaking to this as a Minister of the cabinet, or he is speaking to this as the MLA for Thebacha?

I know there's a motion on the floor, but I've got to tell you that I don't think I've ever heard a Minister in this House speak to a capital project in his or her riding in this kind of a forum. I understand why Ms. Lee answered the question; she's the Minister of Health. I understand why the Premier spoke to it; he brought forward the bill. I am not understanding in what capacity Mr. Miltenberger is speaking to this. Not that I'm trying to deny him, but it's a process question I have. I've never seen it before.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mrs. Groenewegen, you do not have a point of order, since you didn't specifically state your order. But to be fair to all Members, this motion is before the House, and every Member has the right to speak to the motion. To be fair to everyone, everyone has had the right to speak to the motion.

Committee motion not carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Health and Social Services, appropriation authority requested: \$27,562,000.

Health and Social Services, \$27,562,000 approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Justice, appropriation authority required: \$1,610,000. We're on Justice, page 6, supplementary appropriation. Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about a couple of the expenditures planned and most particularly the fencing projects. I wasn't too clear on the reasoning for it. I know that the North Slave adult facility perimeter fencing and the North Slave young offender security fencing are planned here in the appropriation. I'd just like to know more about why it's got to be in this appropriation and what the urgency is of expending it in this appropriation.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, it's perimeter fencing to ensure that the design work can be completed and that tenders of construction allow for summer completion. In both cases Minister Lafferty may have more detail to provide as to why this should proceed at this time. Thank you.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chairman, on the question of the perimeter fencing, at both the NSCC and also the young offenders facility at the present time the property is deficient at the current stage. We have incomplete or inadequate fencing currently at both facilities. As the Premier indicated, the requirement is to provide safety for the offenders, the staff and the public. That's part of the reason we're bringing this forward, so that the construction can happen this summer and then proceed with the fencing of both facilities. Mahsi.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Chairman, thank you to the Ministers for answering that. This didn't really answer the why question, I suppose, because I'm still uncertain. I know there may be some safety issues, but I'm not really convinced that there are really deficiency issues here. If the Minister, I suppose, can give further detail on that, because I'm not convinced that it has to be in this appropriation. Once again, I'm just unclear about the purpose of the expenditures right now.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, for those who have had an opportunity to visit anyone in that facility, whether it be the young offenders or the adult facility, when you drive up, you realize there are no barriers to getting to the main facility itself. There are no gates, no fencing leading to the public area. If anything were to happen or someone were to manage to get out of the facility itself proper, there would be no barriers for them finding their way within the city. That is one of the concerns of

addressing the fencing around both facilities. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Justice.... Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to address a couple of the items relative to Community Justice and Corrections as well.

Two items are listed: Inuvik Young Offender Facility foundation issues and North Slave correctional centre all-erosion drainage modification. From the title of those two projects I'm guessing that there's some urgency, that with one the foundation of the building is at issue and that with the other it's an erosion and a drainage problem in and around the facility, but there is no information that tells me that. I'm simply given to understand that the work has to take place this spring. If I could get an explanation from the Finance Minister, that would be helpful.

Hon Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, with the young offenders facility in Inuvik, the foundation issues have been there, unfortunately, almost since the construction of the facility was completed. There's a portion of the building that is still settling — I guess that is the term that is used — that is causing other problems within the facility itself. This is one of the buildings in that community that is on-grade; that is the term that's used. It's not with the piling foundation. It's on a passive refrigerant system.

Unfortunately, the area they've built on didn't allow for the freezing to occur — that's some of the discussion that's happened — and whether it's going to be used for that or re-profiled, whatever, that's an asset that cost a bit of money and still needs to be maintained.

On the North Slave Correctional Facility, the information provided is that without the work being done before spring run-off, it will cause more damage from erosion around that facility.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you for the explanation.

Mr. Chairman, just a general comment about a number of items in this appropriation. It's really helpful if we could have some sort of an explanation, other than the fact that it needs to be done, in order for us to determine whether or not these things are urgent.

I have difficulty with all of the items under Community Justice and Corrections. They all indicate, or we're given to understand, that work has to go ahead this summer, but it doesn't tell us why.

I'd particularly like to ask about the aboriginal healing and spiritual program area. If I could get an explanation of what this area is intended for.

Hon Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I'll have to defer that to the Minister of Justice. I believe he has

more accurate information than I could provide or even had provided the other day, so I'll go to the Minister of Justice for that.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, it is the outdoor spiritual and recreation program area that's been highlighted here. It has been discussed, as has the need to have this area for this summer as the start of the project.

The specific area has been requested by the NSCC, the coordinator of the facility. A primary needs assessment has clearly identified the need for outdoors programs to address the spiritual, physical and recreational needs of the offenders. The intent of the program is to provide an expansion to these traditional recreation programs.

Currently, we do not have a facility — an area — specifically for aboriginal cultural and religious healing programs, so this is one area the department and Corrections want to utilize. That includes a trapper's cabin, drying and stretching racks, elders' cabin, tent, sweat lodge, feeding-the-fire structure and so forth. There are all these different projects within the time frame that has been outlined for the specific area.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Chair, I need to go back to the premise under which I had understood that items were in this appropriation. It doesn't seem to be a safety issue. It doesn't seem to be an already-in-progress contract issue. I question whether we should go ahead with the \$225,000 expense when we have yet to determine how we are going to save \$135 million. I would simply make that as a comment.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chair, my questions on the Justice expenditures are similar. I still don't understand why we have to build a perimeter fence. The \$540,000 is a lot of money. I know the Premier tried to explain that, but why do we need a perimeter fence around North Slave Correctional Centre?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the request from the Department of Justice is because right now anyone visiting those facilities has open access to the facilities. There are no gates or fencing that would stop people from entering or leaving, besides the actual structure. That is why it was brought forward in this manner. The Minister of Justice may have additional information to provide on these two projects.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, we are trying to stay in line with other jurisdictions, to have secure premises for the safety of the public — just a security fence with a completely climb-proof upper section design, to prevent breaches of the security perimeter. This is one area that has been identified by Corrections as needed to prevent incidents such as escapes. Going to the facility, there are no gates

or anything similar, so it's a safety aspect for the public at large. Mahsi.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chair, is this perimeter fencing to keep the people in or to keep the people out? Is it to keep the public out or to keep the inmates in? The correctional centre has been operating for quite a while now, and I'd like to suggest we should probably have a better system in place than a chain-link fence.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I think this is a matter of both scenarios: containing those who are incarcerated in the facility and, in some cases, keeping people away from those who are in the facility. Part of their mandate is the safety of both inmates as well as the public. What they have provided for information is to secure the environment around those facilities.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chair, I can't support it, not when we're looking for 135 million ways to save money. I can't support \$540,000 for a fence, but I will vote when the time comes.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chair, this capital is in my riding. I agree with some of the previous speakers. The jail has been in operation now for a number of years, and I haven't heard of anybody escaping from the young offenders unit or the North Slave Correctional Centre any time lately.

Maybe I could ask the Justice Minister: how many escapees have we had from the North Slave Correctional Centre? Or I could ask the Premier: how many escapees have we had from the North Slave Correctional Centre and the young offenders unit since they opened?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I don't have that detail. I have to go to the Minister of Justice for that.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the specific detailed information on the escapees, I guess you could call them, but I can certainly provide that information at a later time. Mahsi.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, I've had a tour of the North Slave Correctional Centre. It's in my riding. It's not Bowden and it's not Drumheller. You know, we've gone to more of a holistic approach with Corrections. I don't know if having a fence built around the young offenders unit and the North Slave Correctional Centre is necessary. Somebody might be able to convince me of that at some point, but not today; not when we're faced with the reductions going on.

I would be interested to hear how many people have escaped from the North Slave Correctional Centre and the young offenders unit, because when something like that happens, you usually hear it on

the radio, and I just haven't, probably going back about ten or 12 years to when the old YCC was there in the corner of Kam Lake and Old Airport Road. Somebody escaped from there, but that was a long time ago.

Mr. Bromley: I also would be interested in that information, but I'd be even more interested in the number of attempted break-ins into the jail facility.

This is certainly an expenditure that could be postponed, at least, if not deleted. My understanding is that the people who are incarcerated are those with sentences of less than two years, so I don't think we are dealing with maximum security or anything like that. I have to agree with my colleague Mr. Ramsay. In a long-term sense it might be something to think about, but given our fiscal situation, I would have trouble supporting this.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, you'd be surprised to see how many repeat offenders end up going back into the facility at different times of the year.

Probably more important is the fact that with such an open environment, items can be exchanged between those who might consider helping their friends or associates, and those who are now incarcerated. That is something that one must look at as part of the scenario that must be reviewed.

The department has put it in here as needing to be done, but we will respect the wishes of the Assembly. Thank you.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, I have one other question. I know the facility was fraught with cost overruns, but if you are going to look at perimeter fencing of a facility, that should have been included upfront in the initial capital investment cost.

I'm wondering if it was taken out at some point because of the cost overruns, and the Department of Justice said, "Well, maybe we can do the fencing another day" and now they're back, looking for the money for the fencing.

This is just a continual expenditure, so I'd like to ask that question.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I don't have that detail with me. That could be a reality, but I don't know if the Minister of Justice has that level of detail with him now.

The Member is right. When this facility was being constructed, there was quite a concern about the cost, and cost overruns. Some steps had to be taken to try to mitigate those cost overruns when it was being constructed, but I don't have the detail as to whether the fencing was a piece of that, or

whether some of the aboriginal healing and spiritual programs were also a result of that.

COMMITTEE MOTION 3-16(2)
TO DELETE \$540,000 FOR NORTH SLAVE
JUSTICE FACILITIES PERIMETER
SECURITY — JUSTICE
COMMITTEE MOTION NOT CARRIED

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, I move that \$540,000 be deleted from the Interim Appropriation Detail booklet amount set out in schedule 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, item No. 5, Justice, on page 6, for the project North Slave Adult Facility Perimeter Security in North Slave, Young Offenders Perimeter Security Service Entrance.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion is being circulated. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion?

Some honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Opposed?

Some honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Dissentions?

The vote is eight to eight. Since the Chair gets to make the deciding vote, I vote against the motion to allow due process. You will have another opportunity to make this motion at another time.

Committee motion not carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Justice, appropriation authority required: \$1,610,000. Mr. McLeod.

COMMITTEE MOTION 4-16(2)
TO DELETE \$225,000 FOR NORTH SLAVE
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE — ABORIGINAL
HEALING AND SPIRITUAL PROGRAM
AREA — JUSTICE
COMMITTEE MOTION NOT CARRIED

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Chair, I move that \$225,000 be deleted from the Interim Appropriation Detail booklet amount set out in Schedule 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, item No. 5, Justice, on page 6, for the project North Slave Correctional Centre — Aboriginal Healing and Spiritual Program Area. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion is being distributed. Motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod, the mover of the motion.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Chair, we're faced with a situation where we've got cuts that we're hoping to make. And I'm all about rehabilitation. The fact that I'm going to put up some infrastructure.... Is that an infrastructure area? Is that going to help the matter?

In my opinion, the aboriginal healing and spiritual program area should be right here. That's why I want to move the motion to delete the \$225,000. We're facing cuts all over the place. And there might be some cuts to programs where it actually helps the victims of crime, and \$225,000 can go a long way toward doing something like that.

If it's a program that is really required and needs to be brought in, in another Assembly, then I'm all for it. I've always spoken for the victims of crime, and I said I believe in rehabilitation. And I say again, it starts right here, not in some piece of infrastructure. I would be glad to move the motion and support it.

Mr. Ramsay: This is another capital investment in my riding — it's at North Slave Correctional Centre.

I guess I am, by default, the MLA for a lot of the inmates at that centre. I do receive a number of calls from inmates that are incarcerated there. One of the things they always talk to me about is the fact they don't have enough in terms of programming on the rehabilitation side, and they could use more work in that area.

The majority of the inmates at North Slave Correctional Centre are of aboriginal descent. I believe we should be doing more to try to rehabilitate them, to give them the necessary tools as to why they are incarcerated so they don't end up back at North Slave Correctional Centre and phoning me about programs that aren't there and help that's not there when they need it.

I do appreciate what my colleague Mr. McLeod is saying and others who are looking at deleting this amount. But for me, it's an important area. It's one I think we should be spending more time and effort. It's going to take some resources as well to do this. This is a start, and we'll have to see.

I'm going to have to vote against the motion.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: This particular program has been addressed by inmates, of course. There's been some discussion among the inmates and the guards that was brought to our attention. There is a healing program needed at the correction centre and outside the environment of the centre. This is part of rehabilitation that we talked about. I see it as a healing path, coming back to society after what's been done.

We are putting this forward based on the call of the inmates. That's why we're here providing more information that I didn't share earlier. What we're

doing his is providing a rehabilitation program for inmates. I feel it's a worthwhile program, especially when we have elders coming into the facility to conduct a spiritual healing, putting them on the right path to go back to the general society at large.

Mrs. Groenewegen: This is an extremely elaborate facility to be built. I don't know what it topped out at — \$50 million or so. There were things designed into the building for meeting together. I definitely know there was an aboriginal healing meeting room component. I toured the facility; I saw it.

If you've got this kind of money to throw around, I would rather see it go into some kind of programming. It isn't about the stones and the bricks and mortar. That isn't what's going to heal people. If you want to bring people in and have elders come and talk to the people, put the money into programming.

SMCC in Hay River has an area out back of the facility. We were just there; we had a tour of it. The Minister was just down there. The Minister of Public Works was there too.

They have an aboriginal healing and spiritual program area. Just about everything in there was donated. They have a tent frame, furniture, a big wood stove and different little cabins and stuff. People actually became resourceful and put some materials together. They built a very interesting area where the inmates were involved in actually building this, and they take some pride of ownership in this.

I don't think we need to put this kind of capital money into something like this. There are all kinds of different ways of accomplishing some infrastructure, if that's what they need. There's nothing stopping them from getting materials and building something that they want. That's entirely what they did in Hay River. There's a tent frame, a tipi, a cabin, and a coordinator. They take road trips; they go to communities. They do all kinds of things. It's all about programming.

So to spend over \$200,000 on infrastructure, no, I can't support the expenditure. I'll be voting in favour of the motion to delete.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, those comments Mrs. Groenewegen put forward were essentially what I was going to say. The spiritual program area.... I was getting a little confused there and finally realized that we're really talking about an area, not a program.

I think programming does deal with issues of the heart and healing and so on. So that's where I'd sooner see the resources put. If we want to build something, it would probably be healing for our inmates to do the building and save some there.

Yes, I also am having strong second thoughts on this one.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Chair, I don't know whether it's the female perspective that Mr. Bromley referenced in his Member's statement or whether we're just smarter than everybody else, but I was going to say what Jane was saying, and then I was going to say what Mr. Bromley has said.

I have difficulty with \$225,000 on a structure. This is a capital investment; it's not operations. I have no problem with a program. I believe the programs are necessary, and they ought to be there. The construction of this particular area could be a program in and of itself. Having the inmates build this area would probably be as valuable to them as somebody else building it and them going there. I do have difficulty with the fact that we're going to build this area.

I will support the motion.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to request a recorded vote. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): A request was made for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

Deputy Clerk of the House (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Robert C. McLeod, Mr. Jacobson, Mister.... Help me, now.

Laughter.

Deputy Clerk of the House (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Menicoche, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): All those opposed, please rise.

Deputy Clerk of the House (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Roland, Mr. M. McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. B. McLeod, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Ramsay.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Any abstentions? The motion is defeated. Seven in favour of the motion, ten against, no abstentions.

Committee motion not carried.

We're dealing with Justice, appropriations authority required: \$1,610,000.

Justice, \$1,610 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Education, Culture and Employment, appropriation authority required: \$21,626,000.

Mr. McLeod: In the proposed main estimates last year there were supposed to be \$19.5 million for the new school in Inuvik. Now I notice it is down to

\$9 million. It is a concern to residents in Inuvik that this whole program is going to be pushed back for a year. The field has been torn up. It's poor planning. No piles are going in now until next fall. We were all expecting the bulk of this project to be started this summer — piles this winter and the actual building starting this summer.

I see the numbers have all changed. Am I to assume that by approving this appropriation for capital, I would be basically saying to the people of Inuvik that I have supported moving back the school project for another year when we were all under the impression that we were going to have the bulk of our school started this year? We are talking about a school for children, not \$225,000 for inmates — and that we put through.

I'd like to ask the Minister: what I will tell the people in Inuvik who thought that the bulk of the work was going to be...? Because that's the way I read it. Maybe I am reading it wrong, but I see in the '09-'10 estimates that we are looking at \$35 million. We've got \$9 million for this year, whereas we had \$19.5 million that we approved in last year's main estimates for the '08-'09 spending.

I look at it as me approving the push-back of our school project for another year. I can't do that.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the project is scheduled to continue. The piles are scheduled for the fall of 2008, with panel construction to be completed by 2012. That's on both facilities. The complex facilities are both adjoining each other.

The work or the review... .The cash flow has changed, as the Member stated, from '08-'09 to '09-'10, because that is a reflection of the work that they will be able to get completed. So the work is still proceeding. But from where they are today, they would not be able to complete as much of the work as they had scheduled.

The construction is continuing. It has not been delayed for a year, and nothing happened. They are still going to be working on the project, but it is taking a little longer to get the work done.

Mr. McLeod: I would like to ask the Minister. My understanding was that construction was supposed to start this summer. I think that was the understanding of the residents of Inuvik. I would like to ask him: why it was delayed for so long? Is it because of the planning?

I think the people of Inuvik have done their part. They put in their input.

Is it because we're faced with a \$135 million shortfall that we move it into next year? We all had the understanding that the piles would be in this winter for construction to begin this summer. That's the reason our whole recreational area for children

and adults alike was torn up. Now, if they're doing the piles next fall, then we live a whole summer with a torn-up recreational area. I'd like to ask the Minister: why was it delayed to have the piles laid this fall?

Hon. Floyd Roland: As to the work, there have been ongoing meetings between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the consultant they've hired, as well as the District Education Council and the authority, along with other parties within the community, about the work that is progressing. For the actual detail I can have Minister Lafferty, as the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.... Maybe he'll give more detail than I can provide at this time.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The work is still continuing. As the Member indicated, we are still at the planning stages. The design development is scheduled for March 2008. That's in the works. Site grading, drainage and ball-field work will continue in the spring and summer of 2008. So there is work scheduled for this summer and fall. The site work is scheduled to be complete in the summer of 2008.

The Member indicated it had something to do with an announcement. No, it doesn't. The announcement of the \$135 million that he referred to.... These two projects have been on the books. We are continuing with the project. Both our department and the community have met with PWS as well, in Inuvik on January 24. We did a presentation to them on the actual current status of where we're at.

We are making progress to move forward on this. We certainly wouldn't want to see this project on hold. We are making progress and proceeding with it. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Abernethy: Given the reality of the budget reductions we're facing and all of those types of things, when I look at Education, Culture and Employment, I wonder why the government is moving forward with renovations on Lahm Ridge Tower. That building had over \$900,000 worth of renovations done to it since 2002–2003. Given that we are facing these budget reductions, I'm not quite sure why we have to do another renovation to a building that appears to have been renovated on a fairly regular basis. I've been into a lot of the different buildings, a lot of different times, and I was always struck by how nice Lahm Ridge Tower looked inside and how well put-together it was.

My question is: why are we renovating a building that seems to be renovated on a fairly regular basis?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I would have to go to the Minister of EC&E for detail on the plans for this facility.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, this particular item we're referring to is a renovation to the existing building we're in. ECE has occupied that building for almost 20 years without any significant renovations.

The renovations are to meet the immediate needs of the staff. That has been identified by the department, and construction is scheduled for summer of 2008. So with '08-09, \$80,000 been requested to upgrade the facility that we currently occupy. Mahsi.

Mr. Abernethy: I guess I don't quite understand what the definition of significant renovations is. I mean, in 2002-2003 they redid that entire basement. It's quite nice. It's got one of the largest boardrooms in it, completely rigged out: nice tables, everything. It looks fantastic. I think that cost about \$300,000 and some.

I know they've done a lot of work on the second floor. You go into the main floor where the student financial assistance is. It's quite nice in there. They've got all the fancy new desks, and they've got a whole new area set up for their computer people. It looks pretty good every time I go in there. It's put together quite nicely. The third floor was renovated a couple of years ago, as well. They've put over \$900,000 in renovations into that building since 2002-2003, so I'm kind of surprised by the comment that it has had no significant renovations.

I'd be curious about what it is they're doing and why in times of cuts we need to keep moving forward and buying fancy new desks and making buildings look fantastic and pretty, when all they have to be is functional and usable. It seems a little odd, so I guess my question is: what do they have to do that is different than what they've done since 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and on and on and on? They've done renovations in that building almost every year.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, I don't have the specific details of all the previous renovations that have taken place. Our department would have that information, but I don't have that detailed information in front of me.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): No comments? I have Mr. Ramsay on the list.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk a little bit about École St. Joseph and the renovation project.

In prior years we approved \$9.2 million, and I see that it's off the books. It's not included in the proposed Infrastructure Acquisition Plan. I have some issue with that.

We've talked a lot about our acquisition planning process and how that's messed up. There's a cabinet committee now struck to try to look into revamping that capital acquisition planning process. I think that's a good thing. If there was ever a reason why, this is it. I feel quite strongly about this one. Because it's one thing if our planning process is a mess, but when that mess impacts other people, that's where I have a big issue with that. This just was not right.

I've met with the school board officials, and they were under one impression. Obviously it wasn't the right impression, and there's no money in '08-09 for that school. I'm just curious to know when the department was going to let them know. The communication on this has just been terrible.

Again, that's a question for the Minister. I'd like to know when they told them there was no money in '08-'09. They had told them subsequently to that. Initially they went out and did the work. I think that's part of what the \$9.2 million was spent on: going out and doing the work that was needed to be done to look at the renovation project. They came back with a figure. I'm not going to get into the figures right now, but the figure was too high. The department comes back to them and says: "Well, you've got to do it for this much." They go out, and they're scurrying around trying to make the project fit into what the department said they had. They go out and do that work, and surprise, surprise: it's out of the budget in '08-09.

Maybe a question to the Minister on the communication side: how did they communicate that to school boards when they yanked projects out for a year?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I'll give you some background to this, and then I'll pass it on to Minister Lafferty for some additional information.

This project, as the Member has pointed out, has been on the books. Some work was started on some of the schematic design, and the work between the department and the authority involved in this specific area. There was a fire in August 2006, and work was undertaken between the department and the authority at that time. They came up with a fix that has relieved some of the pressures for the time being, and the department has looked at dealing with the project in '09-'10, instead of in '08-'09. Minister Lafferty may have more detail as to that communication process.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, that particular item has been discussed, not in detail, but the general discussion was that the Catholic school board.... I was invited from the department's perspective, met with them and talked about St. Joe's, where it's heading. At that time I couldn't share the detailed information, because we were still discussing it as a cabinet.

But the Catholic school board is willing to come back to the table and work with our department. If the cost is higher than what the Member has just indicated, then the board is willing to work with us to identify a consultant to pursue other options. That is currently being discussed by our department with the school board — the particular item. It is still an ongoing discussion between both parties. Mahsi.

Mr. Ramsay: I'm just wondering, in this process we have, how we would arrive at a figure of \$41.5 million for the renovations at École St. Joseph. Is that just a number we pull out of thin air, or who does the estimation for that? Do we work with the school board in trying to determine what that number is, what it should be, how you get there? To me, it's like you might as well just reach into the sky and yank a number out and put it on paper, because this number is nowhere near what was proposed before, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I just want to ask: how do we arrive at these numbers?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the process that has been used in coming up with our estimates is the one that has been in practice for many years. The client department would list the project on its needs assessment. As it came due for putting it onto the plan, they would work with Public Works and Services to do a technical review as to what would be required, and supplementary estimates would be done.

We have to realize, as these are put on the books.... They could be five years in the making from when they first get onto the books to when they are actually voted on. As we've found over the last number of years, we've had to adjust projects that have been on the books by an almost 20 per cent markup from one year to the other, just because of the cost of labour, as well as construction materials. So it has had a big impact.

The whole capital plan has been adjusted over the years. The original amount for this project was in the neighbourhood of \$22 million. It has been adjusted with the estimates that we now use and the updates on an annual basis.

As well, when we get closer to actual development, the Finance Department, as well as Public Works and Services, works with the appropriate authorities in giving further detail on what is being requested and what is needed in a new facility. That also can

affect the price that is being looked at. The Member also discussed the fact that the work we're doing on the whole area of infrastructure planning and timing is something that needs to be addressed, and we agree with that. We have instructed a committee to begin that work as to the overall planning that is used and what needs to be done to bring our prices back in line with what is considered affordable.

Mr. Ramsay: Again, I just think somebody has some explaining to do. This has been on the books for a while. There is a fire at that school, they've got insurance money, and they've got \$9.2 million approved in prior years. They think they're going to move forward with renovations at that school. So they go out and do the work, and it comes back. The Minister says it was \$22 million; it was much higher than that, Mr. Chairman. So they were under the assumption that they could start the work this year and it would be included this year. So they go back, and they're trying to do their work to try to arrive at a figure that's half this much — \$41.5 million. They were working on those terms, but within weeks or days, the carpet was pulled out from underneath them, and there's no money in '08-'09 for this school. To me, it all happened just like that.

I've known for some time that there is no money in '08-'09, but you can't discuss that — it's not public. This is the first opportunity that I've had to raise this issue, but I'm not too happy with the way that this has worked out. You can't set somebody up and then yank the carpet out from underneath them, not when it's a school and it's a necessary piece of infrastructure. That school is 30 years old, it had a fire, there's insurance money.... There are a lot of reasons why the renovations there should proceed.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, this project has been on the books for some time. Work has been done with the school board along with the department. When the fire happened, there was insurance money, but the Government of the Northwest Territories topped that up significantly to get additional portables put into that facility. By doing that, it has given them more breathing room for the number of students in that facility.

When we looked at our overall capital plan and its existing situation, we had to go back to our departments to request that they review their plans to see what could be deferred or re-cash-flowed in a number of areas. On that basis, the department has done its work and come back, and now you see the plan as it is.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Chair, I'd like to echo the comments of the previous speaker in regard to the École St. Joseph School project. The school is not in my riding, but many students who live in my riding go to that school, which happens to be next door. I do believe that the Catholic School Board

shouldn't be expected to take the delay in the construction of this particular renovation.

My question for the Minister is: what has been accomplished by the \$9.2 million in total or the prior year's expenditures? Or if that money is sitting as a carryover, will it be available to the school board for them to start some kind of construction or finalized design and move toward awarding a construction contract in this next fiscal year?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding they will be carrying or requesting a carryover. I'm not sure of the exact amount, but they will be carrying over some of the money they haven't expended in prior years, and that money will be available to them to continue the work they are involved in at this point. There will be some carryover that can still be used as we proceed with this plan.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Chair, just a follow-up. How much of that \$9.2 million has been expended and is not available? Do we have any idea of the carryover amount that will be available to the board?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, they are still using some of those funds, as our year progresses. Until we have the year-end, to look at what the carryover is, we wouldn't be able to give that detail. We could probably go back to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to work with the school board to come up with what is remaining, a snapshot of a certain day and point in time. As for the actual amount of carryover, that will have to wait until year-end, when we do our final sup of the year.

**COMMITTEE MOTION 5-16(2)
TO DELETE \$80,000 FOR THE
LAHM RIDGE TOWER RENOVATIONS — ECE
COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Chair, I move that \$80,000 be deleted from the Interim Appropriation Detail booklet amount set out in Schedule 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, item No. 6, Education, Culture and Employment, on page 6, for the project Lahm Ridge Tower renovations.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion is being circulated. Question is being called. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called.

Committee motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chairman, I noticed we have at least three school boilers being replaced at a cost of \$2 million. There's some energy efficiency in there that's going to save, hopefully, fuel and greenhouse gas emissions and reduce our operational costs. I'm wondering whether or not

we've looked at pellet boilers, given that we've got some examples of great savings.

I'd like to point out, in the most recent example, Sir John Franklin High School, right here in Yellowknife, in the most recent contract, they were paying \$1.07 a litre. They are now purchasing heat or will shortly be purchasing heat at \$0.80 a litre, without any capital costs for that pellet boiler. That is none.

We're spending \$2 million here. I see huge opportunities to pay no dollars on capital. Simply purchase heat at reduced cost and essentially zero emissions. This is the sort of thinking I'm hoping to see here. Once these systems are in place and we've spent \$2 million on them, we're stuck with them. Can I be assured that this has happened or that we'll take full advantage of the window of time left to see if we can't replace those high-efficiency but conventionally-fuelled boilers with pellet boilers that will eventually, undoubtedly, be fuelled with local biomass providing considerable local employment.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the boilers identified for replacement, as the Member highlighted, are to use a more efficient system. The one fortunate thing to point out is when we can capture the market — that is, take advantage of the lower-cost products as well as companies that are willing to enter into agreements where you can replace the existing unit and just pay the O&M, in a sense — that is a benefit. In a number of areas, we are unable to continue with that type of practice because it's just not available. As well, I've been informed that the cost of the materials — the pellets — to run these units.... The further we get away from the capital, the pricier the product gets. I believe the Minister of Public Works may be able to give some more detail on that.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of projects underway to replace boilers at different locations throughout the Territories. Most of the boilers are in need of replacement because of their age. The one in Fort Simpson — Deh Cho Hall, scheduled for demolition — was on a steam boiler heating system that was over 50 years old. We will be incorporating a new boiler system into the schools.

Also, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School is in need of another boiler. That is the one community we have targeted to replace the existing boiler with a pellet stove system.

We have been looking to see what we can do at other locations. It becomes very difficult to determine the viability or the economics of what it would take to put in boilers in some of the isolated communities. It doesn't seem to be feasible, but we are looking at more work in that area.

Of course, we have looked at the other facilities that we can convert to biomass or wood pellet boilers. We're looking at a DOT maintenance shop in Hay River; we're looking at the River Ridge Correctional Centre; the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre in Fort Smith; and the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre in Hay River. Those are the ones that are targeted.

We are meeting and working with the City of Yellowknife to install wood pellet boilers at the Yellowknife pool, the arena, and the curling rink. They are looking at Sir John Franklin High School, to investigate the possibility of doing that.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chairman, that is excellent news about Behchoko and Chief Jimmy Bruneau. It will be great for our youth to be exposed to this. I really hope that we can put some extra effort into establishing these in the regional centres, at least.

I'd like to point out that both Fort Simpson and Behchoko are closer than Yellowknife to the source of the pellets. And in fact, Fort Simpson is closer to a high-BTU pellet and, in fact, considerably cheaper than Yellowknife pays. But I'll take those comments, and thank you very much again just highlighting the need to be really progressive there for big savings. Thank you.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the boiler systems, in Fort Simpson there's been some debate and discussion over the last couple of years about the fate of Deh Cho Hall, et cetera. But now what we're actually talking about, with two new boilers, we're talking about the fate of our central heating system.

It's been my contention in terms of reducing emissions and saving our environment.... Europe has been using central heating systems for decades now. For the most part, when we installed that in Fort Simpson and several other communities, the cost savings are there, the efficiencies are there, and that's something our government should explore more.

I would go one further and ask the government to examine keeping the central heating system in Fort Simpson or replacing or refurbishing it. The existing system is 50 years old and must be replaced, but it's far better that we look at alternatives and create a new central heating system that would serve the needs of the two schools and any other new buildings that are going up there.

I don't know if the government has looked at that. I don't know if the Premier can answer that, or perhaps the Minister of Public Works can answer the assessment of a central heating system. It really makes sense, especially in this day and age.

With respect to the boiler system, I know they're going in there. Having a look at an ultimately a

more efficient boiler system is, of course, something that this side of the House has been urging government to do. Assessments are currently going on to install a new boiler system into the new unit.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, again, the Minister of Public Works and Services probably has more detail on this project.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the central heating plant in Simpson has been there for quite a long time and it heated four facilities: the recreation complex, the Thomas Simpson Secondary School, the Bompas Elementary School and the Deh Cho Hall. It has been studied on a number of occasions for economic viability. However, no decisions have been made on it. The situation that we are in now, to remove the Deh Cho Hall from the system.... This will change the dynamics of it and sort of make it something to require us to conduct another review to make the appropriate decisions.

Last year in March we hired an engineering firm to look at the alternatives for upgrading or replacing the central heating system from the present options. Last July we got a report, and the report recommends that we change the steam boilers for the new hydraulic boilers with the associated infrastructure. This option will provide the lowest life-cycle cost. It is the best option with most flexibility for future changes to alternate fuel sources, such as wood pellet technology. So that is the rush now and the reason we are going with this new system.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion that we report progress.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ministers and witnesses.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Can I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted.

I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member from Nunavut, Mr. Jacobson.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, item 23, Orders of the Day.

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning will convene a meeting at the rise of the House in Committee Room A.

Orders of the Day

Orders of the Day for Tuesday, February 19, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Returns to Oral Questions
- 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 6) Acknowledgements
- 7) Oral Questions
- 8) Written Questions
- 9) Returns to Written Questions
- 10) Replies to Opening Address
- 11) Petitions
- 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

17) Motions

Motion 3-16(2): Transfer of Responsibility for Social Housing (Menicoche)

Motion 4-16(2): United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Menicoche)

18) First Reading of Bills

19) Second Reading of Bills

Bill 4: Miscellaneous Statues Amendment Act, 2008

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act

Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act

Bill 7: Securities Act

20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

MS 1-16(2): Sessional Statement

MS 9-16(2): Public Housing Rental Subsidy Survey Results and Plans for the Future

Bill 1: Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009

Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act

21) Report of Committee of the Whole

22) Third Reading of Bills

23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 19, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

