



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nunakput)

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(Great Slave)

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Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, December 15, 2011****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Before we get started I'd like to welcome Mr. Tony Whitford, former Commissioner, Speaker, Minister, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Honourary Table Clerk here in the House. Welcome back, Tony.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 24-17(1):
MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, Members of this Assembly set out a vision of strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Strengthening and diversifying our economy is one of the ways we can help to realize that vision, and Members noted the need for strategic infrastructure investments and for support in the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline as part of this.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has long supported the Mackenzie Gas Project. In 2004 Members of the 15th Legislative Assembly passed a motion in support of the project and our support continues to this day. It is our position that a well-managed project can create substantial benefits for the people of the Northwest Territories while ensuring any potential impacts are mitigated.

The pipeline will create unprecedented economic activity during the construction and operation phases, lead to an immediate doubling of the Northwest Territories gross domestic product for up to 25 years, and provide over 208,000 person years of employment. In addition, this will be a basin-opening project that would provide a \$100 billion increase in Canada's gross domestic product. With the implementation of a final Devolution Agreement, the Government of the Northwest Territories will secure a share of the resource royalties from this

and other resource development projects in the Northwest Territories.

The benefits of the Mackenzie Gas Project will not only be economic. The Mackenzie Gas Project will also offer the opportunity for some communities in the Northwest Territories to convert to natural gas for heating and power generation. Usage of natural gas means displacement of dirtier coal- and diesel-powered electricity generation. Converting to natural gas in the Northwest Territories will be more economical. Perhaps more important, we anticipate that conversion to natural gas will mean a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Mackenzie Gas Project is ready to go. The major regulatory and environmental assessment reviews have been completed. The Government of Canada also approved the project in March 2011, and as a result, the National Energy Board issued a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

The project proponents – Imperial Oil, the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, ConocoPhillips, Shell Canada and ExxonMobil Canada – have the necessary authorization to start construction of the pipeline. They have until December 2013 to provide updated cost estimates and a decision to proceed with the Mackenzie Gas Project. The next step is for the federal government and the project proponents to negotiate a fiscal package. The Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to urge the federal government to come up with a fiscal package to support the Mackenzie Gas Project. We have confirmed that discussions on a fiscal framework are underway between project leader, Imperial Oil, and the Canadian government.

The Aboriginal Pipeline Group is a business created and owned by Aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories and has secured a right to own one-third of the Mackenzie Valley Natural Gas Pipeline. This is the first time that Aboriginal groups in Canada will participate as an owner in a major multi-billion dollar project. By being part of the Mackenzie Gas Project the Aboriginal Pipeline Group is making history. The path blazed by the Aboriginal Pipeline Group has set the bar for a new model of Aboriginal participation in the economy through its shared ownership in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. The project is expected to pay out millions of dollars in dividends to the Aboriginal

Pipeline Group and Aboriginal owners in the Northwest Territories over the lifetime of the project.

We waited for six years for the Mackenzie Gas Project to work its way through the environmental and regulatory review process and it has now been approved by the federal government. In those six years there were investments made by this government, business owners and individuals to prepare for the pipeline. I believe those investments will see a significant return.

We are closer now than we have ever been to finalizing this basin-opening project. In its recent report on Canada's Energy Future, the National Energy Board stated that by 2020 the price of natural gas will be high enough to make the project economically feasible. With the cooperation of the proponents and the federal government, we expect to see construction of the pipeline start in 2015. The Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to support the Mackenzie Gas Project and looks forward to the benefits that will accrue to our residents from its development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 25-17(1):
OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S LAWYER

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to update Members about the new office within the Department of Justice: the office of the children's lawyer.

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, which Canada ratified in 1991, children have the right to be heard in proceedings affecting them. Canada has a legal obligation to ensure the provisions of the convention are met, yet very few jurisdictions in Canada have a system to offer independent counsel to children in legal proceedings affecting them to ensure that their voices are heard.

In October of this year the Department of Justice opened the first office of the children's lawyer, working under the public trustee. The office delivers quality legal services for children in child protection proceedings, custody and access disputes. These legal services will provide support to children in emotionally stressful and intimidating settings.

The office of the children's lawyer is establishing a roster of family lawyers who will represent children. The office is coordinating training for these lawyers to ensure children are receiving the specialized quality representation that they deserve. Last month the office received its first clients, and by month's end 10 children were being represented in situations ranging from custody disputes to permanent custody applications by the director of child and family services.

In the new fiscal year we will be evaluating the possibility of providing professional assessments for children and families to assist the courts in making decisions about the best interests of children.

The children's lawyer will be travelling to the NWT communities to meet with children, attend court and make communities aware of these new services.

We are pleased with the progress of this office and support taking concrete steps to ensure the children's best interest will be properly represented. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 26-17(1):
MY VOICE, MY CHOICE

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In setting the priorities for this new government, we have placed an emphasis on education and prevention, and on mental health and addictions. I am pleased to report that we are already moving forward with a new campaign in this area.

This morning we launched the My Voice, My Choice campaign to help young people and those who support them to speak up about addictions in the Northwest Territories. We all know addictions are a destructive force in our territory that reaches beyond the individuals who are struggling with this problem. We see the effects in our communities, in increased strain on our health and social services and justice systems, and through lost opportunities at work and at home. The legacy of addiction is not something that we want to leave with our future generations.

This campaign is about empowering young people to speak up about how addictions in their homes and their communities affect them. It is about providing them with healthy choices and information about where to go for help. It is also about messages of hope and working to inspire each other so we can stop the cycle of addiction.

The My Voice, My Choice campaign is a part of the Healthy Choices framework and our government's Choose brand, and builds on the community-based Not Us! campaign. Where Not Us! funds community-led projects, this new campaign facilitates discussion and messages at a personal level.

This project was developed through research about how to prevent addictions in youth, and reflects current best practices. Part of our launch celebration was the release of a number of strong videos that are already being created through workshops in Deline and Fort Simpson. At the launch we were joined by some of the youth who have bravely offered their perspective, as well as

Godson, who has taken on an existing role to spread the My Voice, My Choice message.

As leaders in our communities we have an important role to play in speaking up about addictions and promoting healthier choices. I thank the youth that added their voices to My Voice, My Choice. Their messages are important for all NWT residents to hear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 27-17(1):
DISTRACTED DRIVING

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As 2011, the Year of Road Safety, comes to a close, I would like to highlight our continuing success in improving road safety in the Northwest Territories. We have made improvements in our laws and regulations that should help reduce distracted driving, a key factor in preventable vehicle collisions.

Beginning January 1st, the use of hand-held electronic devices while driving will be banned in the Northwest Territories. Drivers will face fines and demerit points if they use hand-held electronic devices such as cell phones, music players and Global Positioning System devices while driving.

Many drivers tend to view operating a vehicle, especially in a familiar environment, as a simple everyday task requiring minimal attention. In fact, driving is complex and requires full attention at all times. When behind the wheel, you are operating a heavy piece of machinery at high speed. At the same time you are navigating changing terrain, checking your speed, glancing at road signs, watching for obstacles ahead and responding to other drivers.

If you take two or three seconds to read a text message, dial a cell phone or find your favourite music, you are basically driving blind for the period your eyes are not on the road. A one-second distraction at 45 kilometres per hour leaves you driving blind for 12 meters, about the length of an intersection where pedestrians could be crossing.

We know that young people are most vulnerable to making errors that lead to collisions. I would like to applaud Top of the World Travel and Students Against Drunk Driving for partnering with the Drive Alive Program. They are encouraging young drivers in Northwest Territories high schools to pledge to leave the phone and other hand-held electronic devices alone while driving. The young people who take this pledge are to be commended for taking a positive step that will reduce their own risk of collision, injury and death.

The Drive Alive Program is a made-in-the-NWT education and public awareness program that promotes road safety. This is the third full year this

program has been in place, and we have seen a consistent decrease in the number of collisions, injuries and fatalities on our roads. Mr. Speaker, I hope this trend continues.

As we approach the holiday season, I encourage each of you – my colleagues, as well as our residents and visitors – to have a safe holiday. When you are driving, put your cell phone and other electronic devices away. Drive at a safe speed, drive alert, drive sober, use your seatbelt and be prepared for the unexpected. Let's drive alive, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE 17TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to thank the Members, Ministers and you, Mr. Speaker, for time spent on important issues. Sitting in session so close to the holidays enables us to focus on 2012 and to better serve the people of the Northwest Territories.

We have so much business to tend to. We as a government need to humble ourselves when we are faced with challenges. We need to stay positive and work directly with and for a stronger territory. As we break for the holiday season and go back to our ridings, keep in mind the day-to-day business we still have to resolve when we come back in the new year.

All of our ideas, suggestions and comments will come together and we will agree on important issues we are dealt with. I want to remind the Members that many of our traditional communities in the past were people who would gather in the nearest village, and feast and dance to celebrate the holidays. Children would receive clothing as gifts and treasured memories were shared.

Today I would like to acknowledge the people of Fort McPherson. They continue the tradition. The chief and his wife on New Year's morning will gather as many people as they can and welcome the New Year by walking door to door and shaking hands and best wishes for 2012.

I want to wish my colleagues a safe and happy holiday season. To spend time with families is so precious. Take time to visit the elders, say hello to everyone and keep in mind the less fortunate. I pray that everyone in the territory will have a joyful and spiritual Christmas. All the best for 2012. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE 17TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is meant to provide an update, as a new Member, on what has happened in the last few days and few months in this Assembly.

I'd like to thank all my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly for the first couple of months. It has been an exciting experience so far. I look forward to the New Year and the rest of our term.

As all of us came here as 19 Members, we came to the 17th Assembly as community leaders. Now we have become Speaker, Premier, Cabinet Ministers, chairpersons, assistant chairpersons and committee members. With all these roles we have begun to work for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I look forward to continuing to work for the people of Hay River as one of their MLAs. I have begun to work on many of the issues that have come forward from the election. In the New Year I will work on issues for Hay River: the need for permanent doctors, the improvement of the economy for Hay River, look to get dredging of the Hay River. To improve and to continue Hay River as a major shipping area in the North, dredging will also help the safety of the Hay River during the spring break-up and will also help access to the local fishing industry.

In the coming years I want to continue to work with my community and such groups as the town council, chamber, DEA, community groups and all residents of Hay River.

I would like to commend the Speaker, Mr. Premier, the Cabinet Ministers and all Members for taking on a great start to the 17th Assembly.

As the Christmas season is now here, we need to be thankful for what we have. I want to wish all the people in the Northwest Territories a happy holiday and I hope to have a great year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CHRISTMAS VERSE – TWAS THE NIGHT
BEFORE CHRISTMAS
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to do my best with a verse here that we worked out this morning.

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through this House

Not a Member was stirring, not even a mouse.
The coffers were built in warehouses with care,
In hopes the Finance Minister soon would be there.

The Members were comfy, all snug in their chairs,
While visions of schoolhouses danced in their heads.

And I in my moose hide, and Jane in her wrap,
Had just steadied our brains, for a whole new load...

Oh, and just a moment, Mr. Speaker. That's a whole new load of promises, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

I'll go on.

While outside the Assembly there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my seat to see what was the matter.

Away to the foyer I flew like a flash,
Not even a pause for a snack or some mash.

Then what to my wandering eyes should construe

But a tiny little sled, and eight frisky caribou.

They'd escaped from their herd, so lively and quick,

Enlisted by Milty for a capital flick.

The crafty old driver was a man in his prime,

I knew then it was Bob, turning on a dime.

More rapid than bison his Ministers they came,

And he whistled and shouted, and called them by name.

Now Robert! Now Glen! Now Jackson and Milty!

On Tom! On Dave! And don't look so guilty!

---Laughter

Pass Committee Room A! And the Caucus Room too!

Now dash away! Dash away! Don't leave 'em a sou!

The Members were reeling, their jaws had gone slack,

The outrageous slight was a downright attack.

What about Colville, and toilets that flush?

And more cops, and houses – Clearly, no rush!

The potholes still deep on old Highway 7,

And the dollars were building a bridge close to heaven.

The chipseal still crumbling, the fracking went on,

And Members were rumbling, "This is just not on!"

But Bob was so wily, and his Ministers too,

They had a few goodies, and a little good news.

Here, a health centre, there, bits of gravel,

A highway to Tuk for year-round travel.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,
Guffawing and laughing, "Oh! What a spoof!"
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Out of the chimney our Premier did bound.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his
work,

And filled our coffers, then turned with a jerk.

He sprang to his sled, to his team gave a
whistle,

And away they all flew, like the down on a
thistle.

But I heard him exclaim, as he dashed out of
sight,

"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, for your
patience with my humble verse.

---Applause

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STATE OF THE ECONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not
even going to try to match that. I'd like to follow up
on recent statements regarding the state of the
mineral industry and our economy. A message of
hope, I think fitting with the season.

Recent numbers and figures are used to compare
NWT mineral activity to our sister territories, often
painting a dim picture of prosperity. All troubles are
laid at the feet of a supposedly dysfunctional
regulatory regime. I offer a different viewpoint.

First, our economy is booming and growing. NWT
rates of GDP growth in the past decade have
consistently been among the highest in Canada.
The Conference Board of Canada predicts a
sizzling 51 percent growth from 2010-2020
compared to 32 percent and 23 percent in Yukon
and Nunavut.

In 1999 we exported about \$700 million in goods to
other countries; in 2009 about \$2.4 billion. Between
2001 and 2009, with a stable population, the
number of employed grew by 700. Territorial GDP
is twice that of Yukon and three times that of
Nunavut. Our economy, our ability to train capable
workers, our ability to provide housing,
infrastructure and social services all are tasked to
the max.

What about the regulatory regime? Critics
repeatedly point to cumbersome processes,
uncertainty and delays, all scaring away
development. In reality, we have a regulatory
regime designed for residents to control the pace
and scale of development but unable to meet
demands due to inconsistent underfunding.

On Tuesday the federal Environment
Commissioner warned that Environment Canada is
short dollars to meet its responsibilities and the
same is obviously true of AANDC. Board
appointments languish unfilled and land use plans
critical to planned development and regulatory
certainty are chronically uncompleted. Endless
McCrank, Pollard and other reports simply duplicate
the environmental audits yet yield no action on
basic necessities. Despite that, we see Gahcho
Kue, Prairie Creek, Avalon, Tyhee, Nico,
Tamerlane and other developments in the wings.
The highest average income, lower unemployment
rates, the highest GDP growth, new mines lining
up... How economically deprived are we?

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my
statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: What are in fact our real
economic challenges? Employment remains
disproportionately higher in major centres.
Diversification of small community economies
remains stalled. We accept unreasonable
environmental costs for ever more of the almighty
dollars. We underappreciate our domestic
economy.

However, opportunities abound for development of
our forests, fisheries, agriculture, arts and
renewable energy resources that will lower
operating and living costs. They await our focus.

There is work to be done, but a roaring economy is
not a healthy economy. Merry Christmas to all.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The
honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr.
Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MY VOICE, MY CHOICE YOUTH ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were
fortunate enough and very privileged enough to see
the launch of a new campaign, a unique campaign
to combat the alcohol and drug problems that we
have in our communities. The My Voice, My Choice
campaign that was launched today in the Great Hall
was something that was very interesting, and I was
really happy to see that launch and be part of
something in the whole scope of things that the
departments and government have been working
on for years, and that's in the area of prevention
and working to educate our youth and our
community members on making healthy choices.

One of my programs, when I first got into the
workforce, I was asked to do a keynote address to
a bunch of youth. I was only about 23 at the time.
My keynote address was on the power of choice. I
was speaking to about 300 youth and I told them
the best choices that they can make are their own.

Everybody has a very unique power and that power is the power of choice. Don't ever let anybody make those choices for you. Stand up and make your own decisions and make sure that they're positive, healthy choices. Today in the Great Hall I was really fortunate and very happy to see that the youth across the NWT stood up and are making the choices on their own merits.

Earlier this week I made a Member's statement reassuring the youth that the government has not given up on them. Today the youth reassured me that they're working in the best interest for themselves and the future of the Northwest Territories and becoming leaders of tomorrow today. That's one of the statements that one of them said, was we have to start today and not tomorrow. Very strong words coming from youth and something that this government should follow in the next four years so that we can move forward for the people of the Northwest Territories.

At this time I would like to thank and commend all the departments that had something to do with this, all the hardworking staff that you guys oversee and support, and all the hard work that they have been doing over the last few years to make sure the government runs very smoothly and works for the best interest of the people of the Northwest Territories; more importantly, the hardworking staff and volunteers and community members that implement these programs. Just as importantly, the youth for embracing these programs and moving forward with it.

Speaking of youth, I'd like to commend all the hard work of our Pages from Inuvik Boot Lake: Vanessa Lennie and Karly King Simpson.

I, too, would like to wish the people of the Northwest Territories a safe and very happy and merry Christmas.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROSPECTORS GRUBSTAKE PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to use my Member's statement to talk about the Prospectors Grubstake Program. Decades ago, as many of us will know, there were hundreds of little-known prospectors wandering through the Northwest Territories looking for that special find. Some of those prospectors used every single resource that they could scrounge together and find their special stake that would strike them rich.

In the '30s we remember Gilbert Labine and C.E. St. Paul who discovered uranium in the Great Bear Lake area, as well as in 1934 many of us have heard of the name of Johnny Baker and Herb Dixon who discovered gold in the Yellowknife area. Even

as recently as 1991 when Charles Fipke and Stewart Blusson discovered diamonds in Lac de Gras which has forever changed the North and the course that we've been travelling in the mineral history before us.

Prospectors make a significant contribution to the Northwest Territories, and with that said, they also make a contribution to the world. They create jobs and help stimulate our local economy, but it also reminds us how the Northwest Territories is an element and key player in the world economy.

Today's economy has been built on mining and we can't forget that at any chance we can, to pause and recognize that. At one time northern maps were dotted everywhere with little stakes and claims. That's starting to fall by the wayside and many people have called for the re-establishment of the Prospectors Grubstake Program. I think this is something in one small way that the Department of ITI can get behind and help stimulate the economy. As we know, these are small businesspeople who are out there making a difference and certainly helping keep people employed.

The program was cancelled in 2008-2009 and at the time of its cancellation it was worth about \$50,000. It may seem small, but it made a great difference to those folks prospecting. At the same time there were contributions to the NWT Geoscience Office that helped administer the program and training. At one time they even trained up to 30 courses within a year to ensure that people were out there learning how to get out and prospect.

In closing, the diamond rush may not be a thing of the past yet. A gold rush is certainly something that we have seen gone by. There are many yet untold stories before us and I think that ITI needs to start playing a significant role here to help our depressed economy when it comes to mineral exploration.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of ITI regarding the Prospectors Grubstake Program and let's see if we can bring it back to support our mining industry.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EXPANDING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An important decision has been made about phone services in the Northwest Territories. The Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission has decided to allow local competition. I hope this will result in better and more services in our smaller communities.

For example, Fort Providence is in a pivotal location on our highway system but we have no cell phone service. Apparently it would not make a huge investment. A couple of years ago there was an estimate that it would cost \$6 million to erect cell towers in all 25 communities lacking cell phone service.

Expanding cell phone service is not just a business opportunity, it is a crucial piece of infrastructure for other businesses and our economy in general. In most of Canada cell service is considered a necessity. At the very least it is a key convenience and a safety feature.

Those of us who live in small communities don't want the future to pass us by. It is high time that companies serving our communities invest in the future. Let's step beyond projects with fast three-year paybacks. This attitude is holding up our growth.

It may be that big companies don't think much about opportunities in our smaller communities, but I hope that this government will help change that and offer some assistance when it is the right thing to do. Competition in the northern telephone business is a step in the right direction.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SPORT AND RECREATION COUNCIL

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to provide some comments to a Minister's statement made on Monday by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Members probably know that I'm interested in sport – sport in general, sport in the North. I was a founding member of Sport North many years ago and I have followed the ups and downs of the administration of sport in the NWT. I was intrigued and somewhat concerned by some of the comments in the Minister's statement on Monday.

The Sport and Recreation Council of which he spoke was established in 2005 as an umbrella organization for NWT bodies providing sport and recreation to NWT residents. As indicated by the Minister in his statement, there were "some challenges with the process" – I believe those were his words – the last few years have not been smooth sailing. The Minister's statement indicated that he recently met with the Sport and Recreation Council executive. I have to wonder if the SRC executive and the board are adequately representing the views of the five member organizations that make up the NWT Sport and Recreation Council.

The Minister also indicated an upcoming meeting early in 2012 at which he, the Department of MACA and the SRC member organizations will discuss

governance; governance, and roles and responsibilities related to the Sport and Recreation Council members as mandated by the Department of MACA. As I heard those words I had to wonder if the member organizations have had input into their mandates and roles.

If the department is setting direction, setting expectations, outlining goals and objectives to Sport and Recreation Council members on behalf of or for the SRC, I have to wonder why we even need the Sport and Recreation Council. Is it a pseudo-government body? A mouthpiece for the government or department, or a stand-alone authority in its own right?

I have no fault with the Assembly's goals related to health and physical activity. I believe, as the government does, that they will improve the well-being of NWT residents. I do wonder if the government and the Minister of MACA are giving the proper due to the five member organizations of the Sport and Recreation Council. Is he asking for and welcoming their input? Is he working with them as opposed to talking at them? I'm not so sure the answers to those questions are yes.

I will have some questions for the Minister of MACA at the appropriate time.

I, too, would like to wish you, Mr. Speaker, and all Members and all staff a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO 2011 NORTHERN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR, MR. JEFFREY PHILIPP OF SSI GROUP OF COMPANIES

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to signal and celebrate the accomplishments of one of my Range Lake constituents and whose business is also located in the riding. I'm referring to none other than Mr. Jeffrey Philipp, founder and CEO of SSI Group of Companies.

Some of you have already seen the December issue of Up Here magazine. The cover and main story featured Jeff, who, as the North's rebel tech geek, has been named the 2011 Entrepreneur of the Year. This is an accomplishment that is well deserved and that I believe deserves recognition by the Legislative Assembly here today.

SSI's origins are in Jeff's hometown of Fort Providence, where he spent most of his life, where in 1965 his parents opened the Snowshoe Inn. For some 25 years now, Jeff and his wife, Stefanie, have been the second-generation owners of Snowshoe, which has continued to grow and branched into various operations, along the way

generating new investment, creating jobs and delivering opportunities for the considerable number of Northerners.

SSI was founded in 1990, providing computer software and training for Fort Providence. Five years later they became an Internet service provider, and in the following decade deployed voice data and Internet systems in Canada but also in Africa, South Pacific and South Asia, including Indonesia, immediately after the 2004 tsunami. Then things started to become really interesting.

In 2004 SSI became the first company to build its own network to compete with NorthwesTel when they launched a high-speed wireless service in Yellowknife. From 2005 the build-out continued with QINIQ and Airware networks that now provide affordable broadband across Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. These networks have improved the lives of residents by providing access to services that did not exist before, including on-line banking, education and health services via broadband. Some \$30 million of investment later, SSI has deployed in even the smallest of northern settlements. The goal is commendable; and that is to give all Northerners equal access to quality communication services regardless of where they live.

Despite certain CRTC restrictions early this year, SSI launched the QINIQ "ChatBox" service to all satellite service communities in Nunavut. With this, consumers have an inexpensive alternative for long distance calling and for placing calls to and from each other. SSI is also putting the finishing touches on Northern Space Link, a space teleport in Ottawa that delivers quality and robust communication services to the North and provides a valuable source of diversity. What is perhaps a lesson for us in the NWT is knowing a key beneficiary of SSI's latest investments...

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: ...is a new network built for communications of the Government of Nunavut that is providing increased efficiency while at the same time showing significant cost savings over older legacy systems.

Going forward, SSI already has a new investment worth tens of millions of dollars underway, working on the principle that benefits of innovation and competition should not be denied in the North, and where these investments will allow improvement to current services and introduce innovative new technologies to the North.

Members of the Assembly, thank you, and please join me in congratulating Mr. Philipp, the North's Entrepreneur of the Year.

At this time, I would like to say seasons greetings and healthy holidays to all the residents of Range Lake and to all residents throughout the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS
OF THE LATE MRS. BERTHA MCBRYAN

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to share a few reflections of a Hay River elder and matriarch who passed away this week.

Bertha McBryan was very much a part of the fabric of Hay River. She was predeceased by her husband, Red, less than six months ago. I'm told that Red first laid eyes on Bertha when she was a young operator of a water taxi here in Yellowknife. Eight children and a lifetime later, the mark that she left on Hay River, the North and her family is truly amazing.

Bertha was a survivor. It had been about 25 years ago that her heart was failing and a "do not resuscitate" order had been placed on her medical chart at the end of her bed in the Hay River Hospital. In spite of her struggles with diabetes and having had both legs amputated, instead of slowing down it seemed that she became more active. There was not a community event, tradeshow, craft fair, Mother's Day tea, Christmas bazaar, seniors' event or a Saturday at the fisherman's wharf that she did not attend. She kept her driver, Dave Jourdenais, very busy with the handivan.

She was outspoken, opinionated and followed politics very closely. Everyone assumed that Red was the only politician in the family, but Bertha followed the goings-on of the community and the territory even at the age of 87, and not much got past her. She would regularly critique the performance of MLAs in this House. Although she was a constituent of Hay River North, I had the benefit of her feedback for many years. My new colleague of Hay River North assures me that he was the recipient of Bertha's feedback as a kid growing up in the same crescent as the McBryans, but of course, I can't imagine Mr. Bouchard was anything but a little angel.

After Red passed, of course she missed him, but she told me that she really missed the evenings at the kitchen table talking over the events and issues of the day. She was never shy or held back her opinion. Red fondly called her Bert – the only one that I ever heard call her Bert – and they supported each other through the trials and triumphs of life and their medical challenges that come with age. She always answered the phone and just when you

were expecting the usual exchange of pleasant greetings, "Bertha, how are you doing?" I would be caught off guard with, "No change," which I always took as a good thing.

She was a very attractive woman with her jet black hair which had never been dyed. She was a proud mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother. She was predeceased by her son Michael in a motor vehicle accident in the early '70s. The legacy that she leaves behind is evident in her children: Mary, Joe, Maureen, Pauline, Darlene, Ronnie and Matthew. An amazing lady and an amazing life.

Her funeral will take place at the Hay River Catholic Church on December 21st at 2:00 p.m. I would ask the Assembly to join me in extending our sincere condolences to the McBryan family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF THEBACHA PAGES
AND SEASONS GREETINGS

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank two of the Pages that have been working with us this week, and waiting on and responding to our every whim, and passing every note and looking after us: Jenni Watts and Katelynn Holtorf, from Fort Smith. Two fine young ladies that are going to be around for a good long time and have been great ambassadors for the community. I'd like to thank them and their mother Rene Watts.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to wish the constituents of Thebacha a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year, as well to the people of the Northwest Territories and to my colleagues present here. As we go home to our families, no matter what happens in this House and the trials and tribulations we have, as you look at what's happening in the world around us, we know we can go home to our families and, hopefully, a very good time enjoying the families and all the good things that our communities have to offer. It would also be a time I would ask people to count their blessings and think of how many good things we have, especially compared to some of the less fortunate people in the world. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF
YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH PAGES
AND SEASONS GREETINGS

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize the good work being done by the Pages here. Also, specifically, two Pages from Yellowknife South: Emma Tutton and Ethan Phypers. They're from Yellowknife South and I want to thank them.

I also want to take this opportunity to wish a merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all the Members here, all the constituents of Yellowknife South and all the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Abernethy.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two people: Wendy Uhlenberg, who is the negotiations advisor for the Alberta and Northwest Territories Aboriginal Policing Directorate; and Harley Crowshoe, who is the regional manager of the Alberta and Northwest Territories Aboriginal Policing Directorate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my wife, Carolyn Smith, in the gallery as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mr. Scott Messenger from my alma mater, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also acknowledge a Page originally from Tsiigehtchic in the Mackenzie Delta, Vanessa Blake-Lennie, also my niece. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unusual, I know, to recognize a table officer, but I'd like to. I know everybody will join me in recognizing my constituent, the wonderful Mr. Tony Whitford.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'd like to recognize anyone that has not been recognized already. Thank you for joining us today to take in

the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. It's always great to have an audience.

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

Acknowledgements

3-17(1):

THE HONOURABLE
JUDGE SHANNON SMALLWOOD -
APPOINTMENT TO THE SUPREME COURT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the honourable Judge Shannon Smallwood, the first female Aboriginal appointed to the Supreme Court in the Northwest Territories in history.

Judge Smallwood is originally from Fort Good Hope, as an only child of her late mother, Mary Jane Elvey, and father, Ted Elvey, who is currently living in Calgary.

Ms. Smallwood worked previously as the Crown prosecutor where she was admitted to the Bar in 2000. She moved south to get her law degree, but eventually moved back to the North to pursue her career. On behalf of the Sahtu region and the community of Fort Good Hope, I'm proud to acknowledge Judge Shannon Smallwood who is a Sahtu Dene from our spiritual north. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 8, oral questions. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 75-17(1):

DISTRACTED DRIVING LEGISLATION

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. In his Minister's statement he talked about distracted driving laws that are being implemented. I'm just wondering if the government is going to continue to promote this new law and make sure that everybody knows about it.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is the case. We are going to continue to communicate that message to the public here in the Northwest Territories. Obviously the new law comes into place January 1st. So again, I'd encourage everybody to adhere to that new law, and over the holiday season especially if you could take the pledge to leave the phone alone, that would also help. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I only have one more question. In the new law will the Minister commit or at least encourage some of the enforcement to be a little bit

softened on some of us that are not all trained on the new laws?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I can't speak for my colleague, the Minister of Justice, or the RCMP for that matter, and other enforcement agencies around the territory that would enforce the new law. Being that it's new, though, I would imagine there'd be some period of more or an education type of enforcement that would take place so that people know that the law is in place. Certainly I think working with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, we can ensure that that happens. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 76-17(1):

DENTAL SERVICES IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services on the dental services in the Sahtu region. Last month the dentist was in Tulita. They were booked from morning to nighttime and one person wanted to see the dentist, but because it was so booked they put the person on the cancellation list, and the cancellation list was so long that this person had to wait until 19 people had cancelled their appointment before she could get in and see the dentist. I want to ask the Minister what type of plans does his department have to see if they can have a full-time dentist in the Sahtu and maybe Norman Wells, that type of service like we have in the other regional centres where dentists are situated permanently in the community? We need dental care in the Sahtu.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Health, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finding dentists in the Northwest Territories is a difficult task. We have great dental care in some of the regional centres; that is a fact. It is difficult to get dentists in other areas and that's the reason for the huge backlog, because even offering out tenders... The various authorities at the regional level put out tenders and we're not getting a good response. When we do get a response, people come in. That's exactly the type of work that the dentists are doing. They're trying to play catch-up. It's very difficult for dentists to put together a good plan with one specific client because they're so busy doing things like fillings and extractions and so on. It's just a game of catch-up at this point; I recognize that. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister has made some very valuable points that are noted here. Finding a dentist can be a very difficult task; however, we're talking about lives that are so important that we need to have the dentists in our community. We're

playing with people's lives if we don't have the proper care.

I want to ask the Minister what plans... If during this difficult task of finding great dentists, is he working with some northern dentists where the prices may be somewhat higher but we have the services in the Sahtu?

People need them. It's not like putting a bridge across the Mackenzie River. These are people; these are human beings that need these essential services. What is the Minister doing?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The model that we talked about today, this morning in fact, meeting with the Tlicho Community Services Agency where they have a dental therapist on staff, and the dental therapist works at the school and works in the community, and in that way just a little higher level than just a dental hygienist which will work in advance of the dentist. That dental therapist does do some of the dental work but not the work of a full dentist. The goal would be to move in that direction, try to get dental therapists into the communities and that should alleviate those backlogs at the community level. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I want to share with the Minister my written questions here. So that was leading up to my second question. Can the Minister tell me when can the Sahtu see such a program like a dental therapist coming into our communities that can do prevention? Otherwise, we're going to have this come up in the House again in February. So when can the Minister advise me and the people in the Sahtu that there is going to be some plans in place to look at dental therapists in our communities, in our schools? Then I can say, "Good government."

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Although I can't come up with an exact, specific date, I can say that because we are moving into prevention, and one of the keys to health prevention of illnesses is having good teeth to be able to chew your food properly and that is very important. The department sees that as one of the essential services that are needed at the community level. So we're moving onto that as quickly as possible. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to as soon as possible looking at some of the plans that will ensure they increase the services of dentists in the Sahtu, or any type of program that takes care of the peoples' teeth.

I want to ask the Minister what type of support is he giving to people who have emergencies in cases such as the ones we have been dealing with in the past, the ones that we're looking at to support people. If they cannot wait, they need to be flown out to the larger centres to have their teeth fixed.

Sometimes it has to come out of their own pocket to pay for the travel, and for the hotels and meals. What type of support is given to people who need to see a dentist as soon as possible on an emergency basis?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: At this point we're using a referral through the health and social services authorities across the regions to have the individual approach them and then them going through the system. In cases where individuals are coming directly to find their own dental services, like driving into a community where there are good dentists or when they arrive in the communities where they know there are good dentists and approach them themselves, they have not sorted that specific issue out at this time, but we're working on sorting out those issues as well.

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

QUESTION 77-17(1):

PROSPECTORS GRUBSTAKE PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the importance of the Prospectors Grubstake Program and I certainly would like to see it come back. During the Geoscience Forum that happened a number of weeks ago here in Yellowknife, different people talked about how important that contribution to the Grubstake Program was to help stimulate the work out there for prospecting.

Finally, you don't have to look too far; you can look to the left of the NWT or to the right of the NWT to see how important mineral exploration can be to a particular territory's economy. That brings me to my question. Would the Minister of ITI be willing to look at bringing back the Grubstake Program in its old form to help prospectors get out there prospecting, which is really one of the backbones of the economy of the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I appreciate the Member's concern over the Prospectors Grubstake Program, a program that was cut loose back in 2009. Today I believe we really need to send a message to folks that are out there prospecting, that the Government of the Northwest Territories is interested in the work that prospectors provide. The program historically was oversubscribed and I would certainly be interested in working with committee. I know the Member chairs the Economic Development and Infrastructure committee. I would certainly be interested in working with the committee to ensure that a program like the Prospectors Grubstake

Program is brought back so that we can keep the momentum going.

We just had an announcement on the additional geoscience money and I agree with the Member that it's the foundation of finding economically viable mineral deposits is through geoscience work and prospecting that that happens. It's an important initiative.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the answer from the Minister. I'd say what better way to show the industry, the prospectors and largely the mining industry that we're committed to a mining future here. This issue is not singularly sung by myself. Is the Minister getting feedback from many of those in the mineral development community saying that this is something that will help kick-start further exploration in the Territories and, if so, what hurdles or challenges does the Minister see in bringing this policy forward so that we can help seed the Grubstake Program again?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: During the recently held Geoscience Conference here in Yellowknife I had the opportunity to speak to a number of folks who attended that conference and this was an issue that was brought to my attention. I have already instructed the department to come up with some ways in which we can bring this program back. When those options do materialize, I will certainly be happy to share them with the Member and the committee so that we can move forward with it.

MR. HAWKINS: As I mentioned in my Member's statement, I mentioned that training is an important component of this. Training isn't just for the prospector, it also works for the communities so that when people do show up on their doorstep and want to do mineral development, people are a little further educated along as to what this will do. The reason I raise this is it has to go hand in hand with the development of the Grubstake Program. Would the Minister be looking at the same time bringing a training component back into the program to ensure that prospectors have training as well as communities have training as to what to expect?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe as we move this forward, we get to the business plans and we get to discuss the priorities of the department and where we are moving forward, I think a training component to this is something that's important to the Members of this House. I believe there's some value to it. We could certainly look at that further down the road.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Short, final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: For my final question, and it's really built around to where do we go next. If we can get this Grubstake Program in place, tie it to a training program and initiative, it only makes sense if it follows suit with a resource development policy. I think that's a critical component to make sure that

this three-legged stool stands or else it will tip over. It's all linked together in a broader, longer term vision. What does the Minister see in tying these three things together to make sure that we do have a future that's open for business, just like our territories to the right and left of us, showing the world that we're ready to do business and we want an economy running on all cylinders because we're excited to do business and keep people employed?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I share the Member's enthusiasm. We do need to find a way forward. We have to, as I mentioned earlier, keep the momentum going, keep that positive attitude going in the area of looking for mineral development in our territory, both on the mineral side and oil and gas side. Certainly the three things that the Member talks about are interconnected. I have instructed the department to come back with a way and a means in which a program like the Prospector Grubstake Program can be re-established, and I look forward to again working with the Member and working with this committee to move this initiative forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 78-17(1):
EXPANSION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I made a statement on the CRTC loosening up its regulations here in the Northwest Territories to allow more infrastructure communication. My question is directed at the Minister of Finance. As part of the extension of the Mackenzie Highway to the north, is the Minister committed to assist in ways of expanding cell services to Fort Providence and other small communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are two things of interest to the Member, of course: the fibre optic line that's being proposed to go up the valley hooking Inuvik in as a remote sensing site and then coming down the valley, which would allow us to lateral off and hook into all the communities to provide fibre optic services which would include cell phone services. That is a project that is underway.

The other thing of interest in the CRTC ruling is not only that they opened the door to competition but they took NorthwesTel to task for lack of investment in their aging infrastructure, they refused to grant them their request for a \$2 per month rate increase, and they also put them on notice that they have two years to come together with a plan that's going to

lay out how they're going to invest and modernize what they described as their aging infrastructure.

MR. NADLI: I think the Minister has clearly indicated a clear commitment for ensuring that the fibre optics line is completed and becomes a reality. At the same time we're faced with increasing competition, which is, overall, good for the Northwest Territories. I want to ask the Minister again if there has been any preliminary analysis or any kind of studies to indicate that there is a need for perhaps expansion of cellular service in small communities including Fort Providence for the general public safety.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This is a business decision and I can let the Member know that in Fort Smith, for example, it took us years and years of lobbying to convince NorthwesTel to invest, and they brought in an old cell phone tower from somewhere else even though they knew when they asked for a minimum of 250 subscribers. If you went to Fort Smith now, as we told them would happen, they probably have close to 500 or 600 or 700.

Every man, woman and child in the community has a cell phone. This is a business issue. The reason we're looking at the fibre optic line is because it makes good sense for us as a government to provide that infrastructure and allow that business development to occur. NorthwesTel, as I've indicated, has just been taken to task. There are opportunities for them in the communities, and CRTC has told them to go in and modernize and invest in their infrastructure, which to me would mean cell phone service.

MR. NADLI: Just a final question to the Minister, perhaps just again to see if there's any formal commitment to consider small communities in terms of their access to cellular service. We all know that once they expand communication infrastructure to all communities, then obviously there's also a business interest for small communities and give them an equal opportunity equal to all communities in the North.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: That is one of our interests and one of the reasons that we, when we looked at the fibre optic line, rather than going laterally north or west, sorry, to the Yukon, we looked at the plan to run the fibre optic line down the valley to hook in down by Fort Simpson so that we would be able to in fact provide those services and infrastructure improvements to the communities up and down the valley.

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

MR. NADLI: Just a final question. Has the Department of Finance or any other department considered perhaps a report or an analysis of the possibility of expanding cell service to the smaller

communities such as Fort Providence? We all know and recognize that the bridge becoming a reality perhaps within a year or so there will be an increase in public traffic and more likely an increased need for public safety to ensure that communication infrastructure is properly set in place, especially for a community like Fort Providence.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The fibre optic proposal is at the stage where there's a business case being put together to look at and quantify the business benefits up and down the valley, other than the Inuvik component which is very clearly a business case that has already been made. To put that infrastructure into the communities up and down the valley, that work is being done and we expect that report to be concluded in March of this coming year.

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

QUESTION 79-17(1):

SPORT AND RECREATION COUNCIL

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I want to follow up on my statement. I referred to the Minister's statement made on Monday of this week. The Minister, in his statement, said, "We will talk to them about their governance role as mandated by the department." My first question to the Minister is if he could explain to me and to the public and to this House what is meant by that.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sport and Recreation Council was formed as a result of a review that they had performed in 2005. It was formed out of the Legislative Assembly, and seeing as we mandate our departments, then we can I think fairly say that their mandate is one that is mandated by the Legislative Assembly.

MS. BISARO: Thank you to the Minister, I think; I'm not sure. I'd like to ask the Minister in terms of the Sport and Recreation Council and the member organizations within that council, that organization – there are five of them – and if we are basically telling them their mandate, have those five member organizations had any opportunity to provide input to the Minister and/or to MACA or SRC with regard to their roles and responsibilities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have had some discussions with the five partner organizations. I've had an opportunity to meet with all of them. I've met with Sport North on a number of occasions and I've met with the Sport and Recreation Council. What

we're trying to do is iron out the whole situation here.

Our intent here is to take more of the politics out of the sport and get sport to the front line, on the ground to the people that most need it. I think we're moving in that direction. We've seen a lot of good work done by all the partner organizations and I think in the last Arctic Winter Games in Grande Prairie we saw a good result of it, having 27 of the 33 communities represented at the Arctic Winter Games.

This is a bit of a learning process. There are high administration fees throughout all the partner organizations that we're trying to bring down and we're trying to use that money and invest it back into sports. Our intention is to try to streamline the whole process. Everyone has a role to play in the delivery of sport across the Northwest Territories. Whether some accept their roles as others do, that remains to be seen, but we have to get the politics out of sports.

MS. BISARO: To the Minister, you mentioned you've consulted with Sport North. I hope you've consulted with the other four member organizations as well. The Minister also stated in his statement that we will outline plans for implementing the SRC's goals and objectives. I struggle to understand the relationship of the Sport and Recreation Council to MACA and the member organizations to the Sport and Recreation Council to MACA. Can the Minister give me a bit of an explanation?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Sport and Recreation Council, as I said, was formed out of a review that was done. They're brand new. They've only been in operation since 2005. It's been within I think the last three years that they've taken on the role of being our funding agent to all partner organizations. We see ourselves as supporting MACA.

The other organization likes to say that they've been in the business for 35 years and they've done a lot of good work in that time. I'm sure 33 years from now the Sport and Rec Council will have that process down to a T, too, but it is early in the process right now.

We see ourselves as supporting the Sport and Rec Council through this situation and then they'd be able to pretty well take care of the rest of it themselves, and I think they're moving in that direction. I've had some positive meetings with them and I think they're moving in that direction. They're starting to understand their role and I think they're going to take it and run with it, and at the end of the day it's the athletes across the Northwest Territories that are going to benefit from this whole set-up. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I don't disagree that I think our youth and our athletes in the NWT are going to benefit at the end of it. It's interesting that the Minister seems to think I'm talking about one organization. But I'm not; I'm talking about all the member organizations of SRC. I guess I am struggling with the paternalistic attitude of MACA that I hear in his statement. Just a comment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 80-17(1):
RESPONSE TO NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD
REPORT ON ARCTIC EXPLORATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The National Energy Board has released today its Arctic review report as well as a National Energy Board filing requirements for offshore drilling in the Canadian Arctic.

I understand with this National Energy Board release, this could fundamentally affect the future requirements for applications to drill and Canadian Arctic offshore developments. My question is for the Minister of ITI. I know this release has just been a couple hours old. Is there any initial response from this government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we're confident with the work that the National Energy Board has been doing and we support the work that they continue to do. The key thing for us is that Northerners want to provide input into decision-making about future offshore drilling and they also want to be prepared in developing plans for future drilling projects. I think those are some things that we can take away from it. We're pleased with the extensive engagement, as well, that Northerners had with the NEB to produce the Arctic review that was released earlier today. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thanks for the Minister's initial response. Even in its early stages we are hearing from certain groups saying they weren't consulted during this Arctic review process. Can I ask the Minister of ITI why that was so? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The objective of the Arctic review was to gather information and knowledge through meaningful engagement and dialogue. The NEB did extensive consultation across the three northern territories, including more than 40 meetings in 11 communities, again, across all three territories. The review concluded with a week-long roundtable held in Inuvik during this past

September so participants could engage in face-to-face dialogue on offshore drilling. Nearly 200 people attended the meetings that were held in Inuvik. Another 300 people logged onto the session via computer to listen to the live Web broadcast that was played. That was also translated into Inuvialuktun, Inuktitut, Gwich'in and French.

We're pleased with the extensive engagement with Northerners that took place to produce the Arctic review and are confident that everyone had an opportunity to participate in that review.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you to the Minister for going into detail. Fundamentally, we would never want this to happen, but should we have an oil spill in the Arctic offshore similar to what we've experienced and seen that affected the world with the Gulf of Mexico, what does this review today mean to this government and to the people of the Northwest Territories?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the prevention of an oil spill in the Canadian Arctic offshore is the primary goal. We've got to prevent that from happening. Again, we're confident with the NEB's response, that the regulatory regime has the tools needed to protect the safety of northern residents, workers and the environment.

In their application, applicants must submit a contingency plan that outlines what measures they will use to respond to an out-of-control well. A relief well is one contingency measure. Obviously, projects that are occurring in the Beaufort Sea would operate in significantly isolated and under different conditions compared to those in the Gulf of Mexico. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 81-17(1):
PATTERSON SAWMILL IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my questions to the government today on behalf of the Patterson Sawmill in Hay River. This sawmill has been in existence for a number of years. It is not a huge company. It is a family-based business. They employ six full-time people. They have the ups and downs with issues with the size of the allowable timber cut being reduced, operating costs and, of course, the market price for the product that they harvest.

Pattersons want to stay in business. They're the only business of this type in the Northwest Territories. We're in the middle of a forest here in our part of the North and we would like to keep this business operational in Hay River. It's extremely important to us. There are bright things on the horizon that may improve the fortunes of this company. How much money would we as a government spend to entice and induce a company

like this to come and set up in the North, and yet here's a company that's been here many, many years. They are asking for a postponement or abatement of the stumpage fees which they owe this government.

I would like to ask whoever wants to answer the question; I'm not sure if it's the Minister of ENR or if it's the Minister of ITI, but I would like to ask this government today. They're ready to go to work. It's the time of year when they can go out and cut. What is this government prepared to do to allow this company to continue to operate in Hay River? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been working closely with the Patterson's operation for the last number of years. We had meetings again yesterday trying to come to some agreement to allow this process to proceed and the operation that the Member talked to about to remain in business. There is still some work to be done, but clearly there are challenges in terms of the revenue that they can generate, the costs that they are incurring and the simple things like stumpage fees and such that they have difficulty generating enough revenue to cover. But we are still at work trying to see if something can be salvaged. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The time frame within which this company can go out on roads that are suitable for winter travel to get to the timber that they can harvest is very time sensitive. The clock is ticking. If they do not get in and out and harvest this product within a certain time frame, the option will be to close the sawmill. Tomorrow morning I will be receiving a briefing from a Hay River businessman that hopes to have a business opportunity developed that would make use of waste for biomass for a pellet and briquette mill in Hay River as well. This could potentially enhance the business enterprise of the Pattersons. This is very much on the horizon and very much a possibility to become a reality.

Again, we have written off, forgiven, supported in every kind of way with expensive studies and all kinds of expenditures of this government much more money than this relatively small amount of money that it would take to keep this very long time, established business in operation in Hay River. Time is of the essence. I appreciate the Minister is working on it and I know that his departmental officials did meet with Mr. Patterson yesterday, but I would like to hopefully get some kind of a commitment here on the floor of the House today that would give the Pattersons a signal that they are going to stay in business. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the officials continue to meet to try to find alternatives, there were arrangements made a year or so ago that were not successful, and we have, over the years, written off sums of money as well as deferred payments, reduced payments, any number of things that we could try to think of to allow both interests to have their needs met in terms of the business and the role and responsibility of government and as the administrators of the public purse. So the commitment is that we're still looking at trying to find a way to do this. I will commit to the Member that when I'm finished in the House today, I've already indicated to the deputy minister that I would be calling him at the rise of the House and this will be one of the things on my list to talk about. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: We do greatly appreciate all of those efforts that the Minister refers to in what they have been able to do. This is not an easy business and strangely, after all these years, it's still in a lot of ways a fledgling business, but we do hope that the other prospects for the waste material will come to fruition, that this will add additional revenue potential to this company and that we can do something in the short term. They're not asking for a handout. They're asking for a postponement or an abatement of the stumpage fees and it is six jobs. The work that they're involved in in cutting firewood is in keeping with this government's efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption in the North and, Mr. Speaker, it is six jobs that are very important to our community. So I would ask the Minister if he would, I'm going to be heading back to Hay River this afternoon, but if he would keep the Pattersons and myself apprised of the outcome of anything they can do to help resolve this issue. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I acknowledge, as well, that the Member has been an impassioned advocate on behalf of the Pattersons over the years and to no small way that's part of the reason that we're still having these discussions. I appreciate that interest, and I've heard her concerns, and I will be following up and I will commit to keep her and her constituents informed. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 82-17(1):

EXPANSION OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I'd like to follow up, this seems to be a bit of a theme today, but I'm wondering what work does the Minister have underway with his

colleagues, the Ministers of MACA and ENR, to free up agricultural land in our South Slave breadbasket, and I suppose the Deh Cho as well, to expand our agricultural industry towards the diversification of our economy away from one industrial sector? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of ITI, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That discussion has to take place with my colleagues on the accessibility of land, but certainly the agricultural component is something that's of value here. We need to ensure that we're getting programming dollars out to the various communities around the Northwest Territories. Under the Growing Forward Fund that we have from the federal government, we've put that program into 29 communities across the Northwest Territories, mostly small vegetable garden plots, but we are working with the money that we have to get programs out there for people to avail themselves of. Just a couple of weeks ago I was in Norman Wells. I had an opportunity to sample some Sahtu potatoes, a Sahtu chicken, as well as some processed Sahtu moose meat, which is very good.

It's programs from ITI that are enabling local producers to continue to pursue locally provided fish, meat and agricultural products to not just the local community but they're looking at perhaps even exporting those out of the Sahtu at some point in time to other communities. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. The Sahtu, of course, is a clear leader in this area, along with some other areas of the NWT. So hats off there, but seriously, the biggest issue is access to land. Studies by the Territorial Farmers' Association have indicated it would be very easy to provide a very large proportion of the food we need in terms of vegetables and even domestic meat with a modicum of support, but land is the biggest issue. So I'll look forward to progress on that issue.

My second question, briefly, is: What work does the Minister have underway with his colleague, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, to complete the forest inventories essential to the sustainable development of our forest resources, again, the diversification of our economy? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Obviously the potential in the area of forestry is immense here in the Northwest Territories, especially in the southwest corner of the territory and south of Great Slave Lake. Definitely we need to be looking towards devolution as a way and a means and the settlement of both the Akaitcho land claim and the Dehcho land claim to advance forestry and that sector here in the Northwest Territories, and that discussion will take place with ENR on ways that both ITI and ENR can work together, as we move forward toward devolution on getting the most we

can and maximizing the benefits of our forestry industry here. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you again for that response from the Minister. My third question along the line of diversification is Avalon Minerals has long been on record of offering secondary processing industry development if a deal can be made on economic electricity rates. What work does the Minister have underway with his colleague, again the Minister responsible for NTPC, to take advantage of this opportunity? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Obviously the opportunity at Avalon, not just for the mine but for the processing and the value added, a component to that is of great value to the economy here in the Northwest Territories and those discussions certainly are taking place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is I just want to start by noting that a constituent recently returned from Edmonton, to report that Great Slave Lake pickerel was being sold at a shop for \$32 a pound. I suppose that's, what, \$75 a kilogram or something like that? So I'm wondering again, what work does the Minister have underway to promote this world-class product and expand markets and production within sustainable limits, of course. Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Our hands are somewhat tied because of our participation or the commercial fishermen's participation in the FMCC and there are no plans currently underway for us to withdraw from that. Certainly as a department we can look at making strategic investments in a place like Kakisa, where we're looking at a new fish holding and processing unit there in Kakisa for the pickerel. We're also looking at possible portable fish processing equipment that could be used in areas like the Sahtu. So it's strategic initiatives like that and investments like that in communities, especially in small communities, that are going to make a big difference in getting that produce out and to market. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 83-17(1):
HEALTH CARE ASSESSMENT
IN SAHTU COMMUNITIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services about the health care assessment that could be done in the Sahtu communities, specifically in Fort Good Hope where an increase of cancers are being diagnosed by the physicians either in Yellowknife or Edmonton or even in the Inuvik area. Can the Minister let the people know in Good Hope that

there will be proper testing of the people who are afraid that they may be getting sick or they may have some other illness that they should be aware of and getting it treated right away?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Health, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had indicated previously in questions about the cancer rates in Fort Good Hope, our attention is to pay attention to that, as well as other communities which have come forward as a result of questionings from the Member as you hear in the House, and we're working with the chief public health officer within the department to develop some sort of strategy to address the issue.

Now, in as far as the actual testing goes, I'm familiar with how that process works, but if there is testing to be done in Fort Good Hope about cancer, we'll do it.

MR. YAKELEYA: Exactly what the Minister has indicated is what the people in Fort Good Hope want. They want to know if there's some sort of proper testing that can be set up in the community because of the increase of cancer recently by the health care on our residents. It was done in Aklavik several years ago. Certainly it can be done now in Fort Good Hope. So I would ask the Minister if he would begin working with our health board and the staff, to start implementing some guidelines to the health centre so people then can be assured when they go to the health centre, if they request a test that this test could be carried out in Good Hope or another hospital.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I think that anyone who wishes to go for testing through a lab and through the physician, the physician essentially fills out a form, and individuals going to the lab get all the tests necessary that get fed back to the doctor. In the case where we go into a community to do testing, I'm not 100 percent sure that we do that specific type of testing, which I will check into. I know that the one method, for sure, is for individuals to go to the doctor, then to the lab and then get the results back to the patient that way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: A number of my community constituents talked to me while I was in Fort Good Hope. They said when they go to the health centre and they complain about a sore back or sore stomach, the nurse usually refers them to Tylenol, Extra Strength Tylenol. She says, here, take this and come back. Usually when they come back, it's serious. It's sore and she again gives them Tylenol. I want to ask the Minister if this method can be stopped and the Minister can ask the health centres if they ask for testing, because we don't have doctors all the time in the health centres, that they could go for further testing if it's a sore stomach or

back and people know there is something that is possibly there.

People know their bodies really well. They know they need to get tested. We need to get support from the department. Can the Minister give directions to the health centres where physicians are not always there on a 24-hour basis?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Clinical decisions are generally made by medical practitioners such as nurses and so on. However, if there are cases where individuals are sick, and they're coming to the health centre and they are being treated for pain and sent home, then I think that the message has to go out from us to the health authorities, that that type of practice should not be continued. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly applaud the Minister's messages to the health centres. Too often people in my communities go to the health centre, they're given some mediation and then they're sent home. I'd ask again if the Minister would let the health centres know that when people come in and they are requesting some further testing, that that can be done as soon as possible so that the people then can know that they can catch the disease or whatever they have earlier so it can be treated.

Right now in Good Hope there's a cancer scare and that's not good for people. I ask the Minister if he would give specific, special attention to people of Good Hope that they will start looking at the cancer testing of all the people.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The testing that occurred in another community that the Member refers to was testing for something else that may have been easy to test at the community level. I'm not sure how easy it is to test for cancer, but what we can do is have the department make it very clear to the health authorities and health centres that catching cancer at stage 1 is the most efficient way, has the greatest possibility of curing the individual and the least expense to the public purse when we are able to catch cancer at the first stage and not the fifth stage. So that message can be sent to the health authorities and the health centres that we try to do as early detection as possible. So if people are coming in sick and suspect they have cancer, the health centre and the health authorities should respond to that urgently.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Colleagues, I'd like to recognize the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Ms. Elaine Keenan Bengts was here today for the tabling of her annual report. Welcome to the House.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 84-17(1):
NOMINEE PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question will be to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment regarding the Nominee Program. Last night, as every night, of course, I was watching, with great interest, Northbeat. I watch it every weeknight, with Randy Henderson at 6:00. That promotion was free, by the way.

I really enjoyed the coverage on the Nominee Program in the Yukon Territory. It reminded me of how I supported the establishment of the program here in the Northwest Territories. I think it's very important to acknowledge that the work was being done quite significantly to bring this program here and to get people working and employed in sectors that were not being picked up by the local population, which brings me to the question, Mr. Speaker. It's been quite some time since we've heard anything out of the Education Minister regarding what's happening with the Nominee Program. I'm wondering if the Minister could provide an update as to its accomplishments at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Nominee Program was agreed upon in 2009 and then implemented from there. We are into a three-year program now. In 2010-2011 we've had just over 30 applicants, I do believe – just under 50 and we are entitled to 150 per year. So we are earmarking 2012 again for another 150 nominations from CIBC. So it's been quiet in this area, but there are applications that are coming in, and 28 have been approved for the critical impact worker category and seven for the skilled workers category. So there are 35 nominee applications that have been approved and are in the system. We are also open for other nominees as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the update from the Minister regarding how many people have applied. Maybe he could repeat it for the House, to be clear. In the last two years how many people have actually applied at the program and how many people have been successful through the program and been supported by the Nominee Program? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I don't have the actual number of who all applied, but I do have the 35 who were approved. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: I would hope the Minister would be able to get that information to me so I can help with others. As I say, help with others. Many people wonder how to access the program. One of the issues that constantly come to me is what type of advertisement or promotion does the department

do to indicate it's open for business and is willing to help process applications on the Nominee Program? People need to know where to go and what to do. What does the Minister have to say about accessibility?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I'm sure, as the Member indicated, he watches Northbeat, and I'm sure he reads the newspaper as well. It's all over the newspaper as well. We also promote that on our website. We advertise across the Northwest Territories newspapers. We provide presentations to the general public and special interest groups. There have been promotional items being presented to the general public on the Nominee Program since 2009. We're not into the second year. There has been some uptake in this program. We'll continue to monitor it.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister be willing to commit to getting me those numbers I asked about earlier, and at the same time would he be willing to provide me with a complete package of what people would use to fill out, whether it's an application process or a package? Would he be able to provide that to me? Finally, if he could update the House as to do the staff at ECE actually support employers in filling out this probably lengthy package of information.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We do assist through our Department of Education, Culture and Employment those individuals who walk in the door. If there are questions, we assist with them in that respect. I will definitely provide that information that we can provide to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 85-17(1):

STATUS OF DEVOLUTION NEGOTIATIONS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the election process there were a lot of questions in terms of the timeliness and concerns regarding devolution. My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Can the Minister give us an update in terms of the progress of the devolution negotiations?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we started out in this Caucus reaching out to Aboriginal governments to develop a better working relationship in order to find common ground on a number of issues including devolution, we are still engaged in that process and looking to have another follow-up meeting to Detah sometime early in the new year.

With regard to actual devolution negotiations, the Government of Canada just recently announced or appointed a new federal negotiator for devolution and we're in the process of feeling him out. I think there are some official meetings that will be happening sometime soon; if not, early in the new year.

MR. NADLI: I just wanted to see if the Minister could provide perhaps just a vision in terms of where he sees this relationship building with First Nations going.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Right now in our discussions with the Aboriginal governments we've had a wide spectrum of points of view as to how we could proceed or try to find common ground on devolution. My expectation is that sometime soon, before we have a follow-up meeting to Detah, that we would be putting forward some government position as to how we can try to find a way forward.

MR. NADLI: I just wanted to ask maybe my final question to see if perhaps there will be some form of a forum. I understand there will be perhaps another forum such as Detah, which was fairly significant. Perhaps the Minister will look at convening another session of a forum that could have a venue of maybe a semblance of perhaps a protocol agreement of some sort with First Nations.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: That is our intention. Most of the leaders have indicated that before we have a follow-up session, that we have something tangible that we can discuss. At least one of them has said they weren't prepared to share their ideas; they prefer to wait and see what the government was proposing. So with regard to some sort of agreement, I guess we see it as something that we could do through Section 6. That offer has always been there where we could work out an arrangement through that section. We'd be quite prepared to pursue that angle as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Nadli. Okay. Thank you, colleagues. Item 9, written questions. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 8, oral questions, on the Order Paper.

---Unanimous consent granted

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 86-17(1): SEASONS GREETINGS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's any debate that there's a holiday season coming up very shortly. I suspect I have a table officer that would back me up on that statement. My question is for the Premier. Noting that I wish all my

constituents in Weledeh a very merry Christmas and the same to all the residents of the Northwest Territories, what are the wishes of the Premier today?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish the constituents of Yellowknife South and all the people of the Northwest Territories and everybody here a very merry Christmas and happy and prosperous New Year.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that response. One of my favourite activities is to go out and get the Christmas tree with my wife, in snowshoes, and bring it back. I enjoy the smell in the house. I'm wondering what is one of the favourite activities that the Premier engages in over the holiday season.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. That has nothing to do with the Minister's portfolios of what he has to do in the House. Do you have any other questions?

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I have no further questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 15-17(1):
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTERIM
REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
MARCH 31, 2011

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories Interim Report for the Year Ended March 31, 2011."

TABLED DOCUMENT 16-17(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
POWER CORPORATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

TABLED DOCUMENT 17-17(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HYDRO CORPORATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

TABLED DOCUMENT 18-17(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
POWER CORPORATION
STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2014

I wish to table the following three documents, entitled "Northwest Territories Power Corporation Annual Report 2010-2011," "Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Annual Report 2010-2011," and "Northwest Territories Power Corporation Strategic Plan 2012-2014."

TABLED DOCUMENT 19-17(1):
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES
FOR THE PERIOD
OCTOBER 27, 2011, TO DECEMBER 6, 2011

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Pursuant to Section 5 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Summary of Members' Absences for the Period of October 27, 2011, to December 6, 2011.

---Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

---Laughter

TABLED DOCUMENT 20-17(1):
STATUTORY DECLARATIONS OF RESIDENCY

Pursuant to Section 14 of the Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council Act, I hereby table the Statutory Declarations of Residence of the following Members of the Legislative Assembly:

- Mr. Michael M. Nadli, Member for Deh Cho, declaration dated December 14, 2011;
- Mr. Robert Bouchard, Member for Hay River North, declaration dated December 12, 2011;
- Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Member for Hay River South, declaration dated December 13, 2011;
- Mr. Alfred Moses, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, declaration dated December 13, 2011;
- Mr. Robert C. McLeod, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, declaration dated November 22, 2011;
- Mr. Frederick "Sonny" Blake, Member for Mackenzie Delta, declaration dated December 7, 2011;

- Mr. Kevin Menicoche, Member for Nahendeh, declaration dated December 8, 2011;
- Mr. Gary Warner Jackie Jacobson, Member for Nunakput, declaration dated December 12, 2011;
- Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, declaration dated December 12, 2011; and
- Mr. Michael J. Miltenberger, Member for Thebacha, declaration dated November 22, 2011.

Members, at this time I see that we'll take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

TABLED DOCUMENT 21-17(1):
INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to call the House back to order. Pursuant to Section 68 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I wish to table the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with First Reading of Bill 1, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2012-2013. Thank you.

---Consent granted

First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2012-2013, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had first reading. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2012-2013, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make infrastructure expenditures for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had second reading. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2012-2013, be read for the third time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had third reading.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Members, I will now give my ruling on the two points of order raised last week. The first one was raised by Mr. Miltenberger on December 8th about something Mr. Bromley said. The second was raised by Mr. Bromley on December 9th about comments made by the Premier and Mr. Miltenberger. I don't want to repeat any of these comments today because it has taken too much of the time of the House already.

I allowed discussion on both points of order. Two comments stuck out to me in talking to Mr. Bromley on his point of order. The Premier said, "...if you are

going to use inflammatory phrases like he did, I guess he should expect that he will get the same kind." Mr. Bromley responded by asking, "Do two wrongs make a right?"

All the Members involved here are experienced Members. Experienced Members should be setting a good example for all other Members, not showing them what not to do. They have to be respectful in language and not make bad situations worse. Last week one Member used strong language to make his point that was important to him. Some Members took real offence to Mr. Bromley's choice of words. Rather than try to tone things down, Minister Miltenberger and Premier McLeod turned it up with more strong language. They gave strong meaning to Mr. Bromley's comments that I don't think he intended.

Colleagues, two wrongs don't make a right. I'll repeat what I said in the House following the second point of order. The people elected us here and want us to work for the people, not throw insults back and forth to each other. I considered ruling both against Mr. Bromley and Mr. McLeod. I don't think that would do anything to change the direction we have taken so far. This is our last sitting day of the year. I want all Members to think about why we were sent here and why we are here to represent our people. I know we care about their issues. That doesn't mean we should be disrespectful to each other in the language we use. Members need to think before they speak, thicken their skin and find ways to solve problems together.

Therefore, there are no points of order.

Speaker's Closing Remarks

As we prepare to conclude the First Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly, I'd like to thank you for your hard work you have done in this short time. You have appointed your committees, received and given briefings on a variety of issues of importance to the NWT, made statements, answered questions, and considered and adopted the capital budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

During this sitting we also had the pleasure of welcoming Their Excellencies the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, and Mrs. Sharon Johnston on their first official visit to the Northwest Territories. This was the first time a Governor General has addressed the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly during a formal sitting of the House.

Another first, colleagues, was the invitation you issued to the Aboriginal leaders to join us on the floor of the House to hear what the Governor General's address was. As I said earlier, a short but very busy two weeks.

On behalf of all Members, I'd like to thank all of the Pages who helped us in the last two weeks. We had Pages from the following schools: William

McDonald School in Yellowknife, P.W. Kaeser High School in Fort Smith and Samuel Hearne Secondary School in Inuvik. Our sincere thanks to you all for your hard work.

---Applause

Colleagues, now I want to wish each of you, and your families and loved ones, the very best of the holiday season and to all your family and friends. I'd also like to take this opportunity to extend best wishes to my constituents in Nunakput and, indeed, to all residents of the NWT. I look forward to returning home to Tuk and taking part in the community celebrations that are happening all across the North. Enjoying Christmas concerts, the excitement and special visits with family and friends and I'm really looking forward to going to Aklavik.

I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday and a happy and healthy New Year. Colleagues, I wish you all safe travels as we leave here today and I look forward seeing you back in this House in the new year.

Mr. Clerk, please ascertain if the Commissioner, the Honourable George Tuccaro, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills and prorogue the First Session of the 17th Assembly.

Prorogation

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. George Tuccaro): Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. I am pleased to be with you again in the Chamber today.

As the holiday season draws near, this is the perfect opportunity to wish each and every one of you a joyous and safe holiday season filled with hope, good health, inspiration and holiday time with your families and friends as we enter into the coming new year.

We look forward to the New Year as we continue to work together in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation for a more caring Northwest Territories.

ASSENT TO BILLS

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bill: Bill 1, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2012-2013.

Prior to proroguing this First Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly, I wish to announce that the Second Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly will convene on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, at 1:30 in the afternoon.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the First Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, mahsi cho,
quannamiik.

---PROROGATION

The House prorogued at 3:47 p.m.

