



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 29

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, February 16, 2007

Pages 945 - 976

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Hon. Brendan Bell
(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Industry, Tourism
and Investment

Mr. Bill Braden
(Great Slave)

Hon. Charles Dent
(Frame Lake)
Government House Leader
Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment
Minister of Human Resources
Minister responsible for the
Status of Women
Minister responsible for Persons
with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Hon. Joe Handley
(Weledeh)
Premier
Minister of the Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and
Intergovernmental Relations
Minister responsible for the
NWT Housing Corporation

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. David Krutko
(Mackenzie-Delta)
Minister of Public Works and Services
Minister responsible for the
Workers' Compensation Board
Minister responsible for the
NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Ms. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Environment and Natural
Resources
Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs
Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Robert McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Hon. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)
Minister of Transportation
Minister responsible for the
Public Utilities Board

Mr. J. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)

Mr. Calvin Pokiak
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Minister responsible for the Financial
Management Board Secretariat
Minister of Health and Social Services

Mr. Robert Villeneuve
(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk
Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees
Ms. Gail Bennett

Assistant Clerk
Vacant

Law Clerks
Mr. Glen Boyd
Ms. Kelly Payne

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	945
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	945
70-15(5) - RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS INTERAGENCY MEETING	945
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	945
MR. YAKELEYA ON TULITA UNITY ACCORD CELEBRATION	945
MR. MILTENBERGER ON TAMERLANE VENTURES PROJECT PROPOSAL	945
MR. VILLENEUVE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS AT SPORT EVENTS	946
MR. LAFFERTY ON CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF ELDERS' HOMES.....	946
MR. BRADEN ON INCLUSION OF ELECTRONIC WASTE IN RECYCLING PROGRAMS	947
MR. RAMSAY ON ISSUES IDENTIFIED AT KAM LAKE CONSTITUENCY MEETING	947
MR. ROBERT MCLEOD ON NWT PARTICIPATION AT NATIONAL CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS	947
MR. POKIAK ON ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF NUNAKPUT RESIDENTS.....	948
MR. HAWKINS ON CAPITAL PROJECT COST OVERRUNS	948
MS. LEE ON TANK FARM CONTRACTING CONCERNS	949
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON TAMERLANE VENTURES PROJECT PROPOSAL	949
HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ ON NWT WINTER GAMES.....	949
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	961, 974
ORAL QUESTIONS	949
REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS	961
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES.....	962
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	965
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.....	974
ORDERS OF THE DAY	974

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Members Present

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Hon. Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Hon. Kevin Menicoche, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, Members. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 70-15(5): Residential Schools Interagency Meeting

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. The Residential Schools Interagency Committee met in Yellowknife on January 15, 16 and 17, 2007. This committee consists of representatives from the Northwest Territories residential school survivor groups, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the RCMP, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, the Dene Nation, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the NWT Seniors' Society, the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The committee was formed under the lead of the Government of the Northwest Territories to coordinate the efforts of the GNWT and other stakeholders in providing support services to NWT residents who will be seeking and receiving compensation from the federal government. The committee made significant progress at the meeting. Key priorities were set for assisting former residential school students on their healing journey. These key priorities included: developing commitment and support from all levels of leadership; improving coordination and communications; further development of the interagency committee; and, development of community-based services. Mr. Chairman, co-chairs were also established for the groups. A support group of Government of the Northwest Territories social envelope departments will help the committee to achieve these priorities.

A smaller interagency support group was also established. This smaller support group will be meeting regularly to help work progress.

The response from participants at this meeting was positive. I look forward to reporting further results as the committee continues its important work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past few days, there's been a big celebration happening in my region in the Sahtu which happens to be in my community of Tulita, my home town. Mr. Speaker, it's reported in the CBC News that the Hollywood legend, Leslie Neilson, also known as Mr. McGoo, also as a big star in Hollywood comedies such as Airplane and Naked Gun and Naked Gun Two and a Half, Airplane.

Mr. Speaker, the celebration signifies the importance of community members working together under the Sahtu Land Claims Agreement that was the spirit and intent of having the control and the ownership of lands and resources in the lives of our people in our region to celebrate the significant contribution by elders and past leaders in our region and in the whole Northwest Territories to come together to work together. The unity accord is a celebration. They brought up the Honourable Tom Siddon and other dignitaries across the Northwest Territories and they brought up a fellow who grew up in Tulita who now lives in Fort Lauderdale in the States, Leslie Neilson. When he was growing up there, my grandmother and my mother spoke of him growing up in Tulita. My grandmother and some other ladies up in Tulita used to babysit him. This signifies a strong sense of a small community like this that have strong visions to work together, but also to show the rest of the Northwest Territories that this type of work can get done. Sometimes it starts in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, also the community of Yellowknife will be hosting Mr. Nielsen who will be coming here and spending a day with the people in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, the Tulita Unity Accord is something that should be congratulated by all the people in the Sahtu, but also to the people in Tulita for hosting such an event and having such a legend come from Tulita and making it big in the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement On Tamerlane Ventures Project Proposal

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a proposed development in the old Pine Point mine site to extract lead and zinc and it gives me some concern. It was interesting to note that Tamerlane Resources, Tamerlane, when you look it up on Google or in the dictionary, under one of the most notorious death

spots in the world that looted, pillaged, murdered and raped his way from India through Asia and died on his way to China, is the name of this company.

I understand the principal from Giant Mine, who also left us with what Giant Mine is today, is the principal in this company. They want to go back into a mine site that has never been remediated, that has enormous pits left to fill with water, a tailings pond as big as a small lake, so there is going to be an issue for us of cumulative impacts which is going to be very significant. It's right on the edge of the lake. So we will have Giant Mine with 300,000 tons of arsenic trioxide and on the other side, we have the old Pine Point mine site with an enormous tailings pond, which I personally went to look at because I used to work there when I was a young guy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Young guy!

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, there is also the issue that they've identified a rich ore body which they want to access under a pilot project. They tell us they've made significant strides in how you extract lead and zinc and that it would be, for the most part, benign. It would not be like the old days of open pits. They would have shafts and as they extracted, they would put the waste back into the shafts. These shafts would go down a considerable distance and there is a lot of groundwater issues, environmental issues combined with what is already happening there.

The one concern I have with that particular issue, Mr. Speaker, is while they talk pilot project, what crosses my mind is high grading. That they identified something rich that they get access to under a pilot basis, they will extract it all and then they will tell us it's not worth looking at the rest of the reserves that are there and they will walk away leaving us with even a further mess on the South Slave. So as we review this process and this project proposal and before we all give our seal of approval and accept it as a way to make some money, we have to be very careful. We have a history there and we have to take the right steps and I am not convinced that this is in the best interest of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On The Importance Of Volunteers At Sporting Events

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, myself and some of my colleagues in the House, including yourself, had an opportunity to travel to Fort Simpson last night to attend the opening ceremonies of the 2007 NWT Winter Games being held over this weekend. It was great, once again, to see the level of excitement in all the eyes of the youth who were able to participate in such a fun-filled weekend of sport and recreation that is geared towards fair play, fun and friendships.

Mr. Speaker, raising the level of participation at this event has always been a challenge for the various organizations that partner up and make it a success and a memorable event for all the youth attending. I commend them for all their hard work in ensuring that every community has an

opportunity to participate without worrying about the financial or logistical nightmare such a large gathering presents, especially here in the North.

What we don't see, Mr. Speaker, is the disappointment in the eyes of the youth in the communities that could not attend simply due to the fact of finding one or two chaperones or volunteers to accompany their contingent of participants at this event. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is a very sad and selfish excuse which cannot wipe away the many tears of despair in the youth that have received such news of cancellation.

I hope that the communities that could not send their youth for something that seems like the least of their worries does not hinder the enthusiasm of all the potential athletes in our small remote communities for future events of this nature, and that all NWT communities embrace this type of opportunity which allows the youth to grow both socially and physically in a positive sport and friendship environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

MR. LAFFERTY: (Translation) Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about the importance of seniors' care in our communities across the NWT and especially in the community of Behchoko. In our communities, we have many needs that are not always addressed in the most timely and appropriate manner. Senior housing in Behchoko requires programming that is dedicated to the needs of our elders and assisting them with household issues which need professional assistance. In Behchoko, we need a local contractor to assist specifically with these needs; fixing up furnaces and servicing them. Later on, I will ask the Minister questions. (Translation ends)

In our communities, we have many needs that are not always addressed in the most timely and appropriate manner. Mr. Speaker, senior housing in Behchoko requires programming that is dedicated to the needs of our elders; assisting them with household issues, which need professional assistance. In Behchoko, we need a local contractor to assist specifically with these needs; fixing up furnaces, servicing them, cleaning out water tanks and conducting minor home repairs are just a few examples, Mr. Speaker, on what can be done to assist the elders in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that it will come as no surprise to you that a major concern of the people of Behchoko is that there is no local contractor specifically available for all seniors at this community level. This issue has been raised in this House and there was a commitment from the Minister to follow through prior to changes in Cabinet. I am beginning to wonder if we will ever address this concern, Mr. Speaker.

Our elders need assistance to make their lives simple and hassle free. Our elders who have these issues arise should not have to wait to deal with service providers that are not available locally. Mr. Speaker, in Behchoko, we have a qualified red seal journeyman in the community

that can also be made available to the three outlying Tlicho communities on a contractor basis. This issue is about assisting with the minor repairs and minor challenges elders are faced with. These are important and require immediate attention before they become serious problems. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Polls tell us that our environment is the primary concern of Canadians these days and here in the NWT, we are striving to do our best to deal with this. In the last Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we did. We passed legislation to create a recycling program and mechanism in the NWT. After a bit of a slow start, Mr. Speaker, this has been declared a runaway success. We now have 26 licensed recycling depots. A bit of information that I have is that in about a five-month period, we recycle enough aluminium cans to build two 737 jets. How's that for trivia? Sixty-two percent of containers are in the recycling stream. That's almost seven million containers, Mr. Speaker.

We have built up a surplus in this environmental fund, in the recycling deposit fund that as of last March was almost three-quarters of a million dollars, Mr. Speaker.

I think the area we would all like to explore is where are we going to go next. Recyclable containers are a good start. There are many, many other things that we use and dispose of in our society in a very wasteful manner. Some of these things are, for instance, building materials, tires, vehicles, metals. The one that should be very much at the front of our concern is what's called e-waste, Mr. Speaker. These are the computers, television sets, electronic gadgets that we love so much in our society but we are so quick to dispose of when they get obsolete or when they break down.

Mr. Speaker, the average older style television set or computer monitor can contain up to five pounds of lead plus other heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium and chromium. Where we are going to take our recycling initiative next, Mr. Speaker, should be in this area. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Issues Identified At Kam Lake Constituency Meeting

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last evening, I had the opportunity to host a Kam Lake constituency meeting in the Great Hall. I wanted to speak today about some of what I heard during discussions with constituents.

The riding of Kam Lake has an interesting mix of residential areas, two schools, Ecole St. Joseph and N.J. McPherson, the Multiplex and is also home to the largest

industrial park in the Northwest Territories. This industrial park is the economic engine of our capital city and requires some much needed attention from both the City of Yellowknife and from our government.

I have spoken many times in this House of the need for a secondary access road into the city from Highway No. 3. We cannot afford to compromise public safety any longer. Constituents at my meeting are saying build the access road and again today I will say it once again. Work with the city and build this much needed access road.

The issue of service in Kam Lake Industrial Park was also high on constituents' minds. There has been much talk of the city and the Government of the Northwest Territories working together on an agreement to bring services to the Yellowknife Airport. This, Mr. Speaker, would be a fantastic undertaking for the city of Yellowknife. An airport as busy as YZF and an industrial park the size of Kam Lake Industrial Park should not be on trucked service. There will be some cost sharing needed and involved in getting services included as part of the access road construction and to the airport and, Mr. Speaker, as a government we need to be as flexible a partner as we can be.

Constituents also had concerns over the lack of bus service to the industrial park. Hundreds of people work there every day and public transit would be much welcomed. Also, there is inadequate street lighting and no garbage pick-up for residents. Mr. Speaker, I want my constituents to know that I'll take the next opportunity to raise these issues with city officials.

At the meeting we also discussed other items such as housing, sports funding and legislative initiatives that I'll bring up with the appropriate Ministers at a later date. I also shared with my constituents a map which shows that the boundaries are changing in the riding of Kam Lake, as well as in the rest of the Yellowknife ridings, for the next territorial election, which will take place this fall. Mr. Speaker, this was done in an effort to balance the seven Yellowknife ridings and I hope to have a map indicating the changes to the riding on my website early next week for constituents to have a look at. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On NWT Participation At National Curling Championships

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend in Lethbridge, Alberta, some of the best female curlers in the country and probably the world, because Canada has the best curlers in the world, are gathering to play in the Scottish Tournament of Hearts. Mr. Speaker, we're represented this year by a real territorial team. Four members are from all parts of the Northwest Territories. We have Kerry Koe, who's the skip of the team; she's from Yellowknife. Monique Gagnier, who, I understand, inherited her skill from her father; she's from Hay River. Kelli Turpin curls out of Inuvik. Dawn Moses curls out of Fort Simpson, and Nicole Baldwin, the fifth player, is from Whitehorse. We expect, Mr. Speaker, big things from these girls this year as a lot of us curlers know it's a hard road to get there and they have to be

commended for their achievement, and I believe they will do well. There's a website that we can send greetings and best wishes and I encourage everyone to get on there and send them their best wishes.

Mr. Speaker, also in a couple of weeks the Briar playdowns are being held in Hamilton, Ontario. The team this year representing the Northwest Territories is made up of Jamie Koe from Yellowknife. This is a Yellowknife team. Brad Whitehead, Mark Whitehead, and Brad Chorokowski. The fifth player is Randy Turpin living in Inuvik. Last year, Mr. Speaker, the men went six and five and they had a good opportunity to get into the playoffs, so we're expecting big things from our curlers this year. These are some of the best curlers in the country and we are not lagging far behind as far as skill goes.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of the curling that goes on is helped along by volunteers. These curlers had to start somewhere and I commend MACA for being involved in the winter games. It gives these kids a chance to get started somewhere and if it starts there, someday they may end up at the pinnacle of their sport. As my colleague from Tu Nedhe said, a lot of the communities have to volunteer, escort these kids. It's called volunteer, Mr. Speaker. You volunteer your time; you don't get paid for it. I encourage everybody to get out there and help these kids along so some day they may end up at the top of their sport also. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Acknowledgement Of Achievements Of Nunakput Residents

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd just like to, I understand that yesterday the NWT Winter Games were held in Fort Simpson, opening up in Fort Simpson yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend this big event, but I understand that looking at the numbers from Nunakput there was a total of 37 athletes and chaperones included in this big event here. I'd just like to wish them good luck in their sports that they're taking.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I understand that in late January, Sarah Anderson and Annie Felix of Tuktoyaktuk were recognized for long-term service awards in education. Ms. Anderson has been teaching the Inuvialuit language for the last 30 years or so and I applaud her dedication for the benefit of our Inuvialuit people and speaking their language.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I understand the Eli Nasogaluak, Randy Sibbeston, and John Sabourin, Team NWT, took first place in the snow sculpture Winterlude in Ottawa last week.

---Applause

Also, Mr. Speaker, Eli Nasogaluak is a long-term resident of Tuktoyaktuk, but he resides in Yellowknife here. From looking at the newspaper, I understand that he will now further his expertise and will go international. So I wish him very well in his endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Capital Project Cost Overruns

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address a serious budget problem that we have been facing for several years. It has become normal practice that capital projects continue to come in over budget by the time of completion. On several occasions, the Minister has been questioned about what can be done to spend our money more wisely, to use the money for projects that compete for capital funding instead of using it for overruns. The Minister explained that the process takes several years of planning from business plan proposals, to design, to tendering and final realization. The problem is that projects have been approved in the capital year that are not being realized in that year. When they get rolled over into the next year, there is the problem that the rollover now, because the costs have increased by 10 percent or even more sometimes. Then the Minister will give us many reasons why they cost so much and why the capital costs are as they are.

One concern that I have with this is the reasoning that nobody in government seems to be responsible or is held accountable for this problem. However, as always, I'd like to take a positive step and approach this situation with some suggestions on how we can improve our capital planning process.

In the new year, we, as Members, vote on projects. We need concrete figures that are based on realistic business cases, including breakdowns for designs, materials, shipping and labour costs. The total price tag should always include cost variations. We need a price tag that reflects the true costs of the project. The approach of tendering always requires some attention. Tendering for building contracts have to be timed with construction season in mind, Mr. Speaker. Building materials have to be ready for construction in spring, using the long summer days and warm temperatures to save costs. I'm convinced we could save a lot of money by not starting construction projects in the middle of winter.

If projects are delayed or deferred in the new fiscal year, we should be voting on them on the updated business case showing the true cost for that year. This would require new debate, resulting in new votes, instead of coming back when the project is half finished with the budget eaten up entirely, requesting adjustments that hardly anyone in this House can truly deny, because a half finished project does not help anyone.

Mr. Speaker, I will pause here with my suggestions to improve our approach to realizing capital projects and I will have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Tank Farm Contracting Concerns

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity today to share with the Members in this House a situation my constituents are experiencing. They are a very well-established business, 100 percent northern and aboriginal owned. They employ over 35 people, many of them from small communities around Yellowknife. They have established an excellent record as a supplier of geosynthetic material in the North. They have done subcontract work to Tahera Diamonds, Jericho project, Diavik Diamonds, De Beers Snap Lake. In fact, they have been privately and publicly acknowledged for their professionalism and innovative ways in which they work to adapt their material and they know how to best meet the northern climate and the harsh environment. They have also in the past provided materials to the government departments until this latest project on a tank farm.

Mr. Speaker, I think it should be made clear that they're not looking for any special consideration. What they're only asking for is a fair and sensible process. Mr. Speaker, instead, what they have been encountering is what appears to be an orientation set on one specific product by name, although it says equivalent, that their competitor supplies in the North, but a company that employs a lot less northern labour.

Mr. Speaker, the department has admitted that their specs are quite outdated, it may be going back as far as 2000, and that it will be renewed soon. But every step of the way of this subcontracting process, new requirements and new questions are being asked, even after the main contract was tendered. The latest thing is that the department is asking for a 30 to 40-year guarantee for the use of this product from the manufacturer. That was something never done before, even though the supplier of the opposition side, or the competitor, would be producing that from the same supplier.

Mr. Speaker, I'm in discussion with the Minister on this issue, but I am bringing this up in the hope that the Minister and department officials will be open minded in looking at how the tendering process has gone about and whether or not we are living up to the commitment of supporting our northern businesses. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Tamerlane Ventures Project Proposal

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the initiative that has been recently taken by Tamerlane Ventures to look at the ore bodies around Pine Point area and to undertake to invest some money to check out the viability and the feasibility of going back into this mining activity just 60 short miles from Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, some 20-odd years ago, Hay River was seriously and severely impacted when the Pine Point Mine closed down. That was a community of almost 2,000 people that did a lot of business in Hay River and

supported a lot of economic activity in our community. Now Tamerlane Ventures is looking at those reserves again, world prices have changed on some of the products that they're looking at mining, and it may be a viable thing again.

Representatives of Tamerlane Ventures have taken the opportunity to come and brief our town council and talk to representatives in our communities, explain to us in great detail what their plans are, and we appreciate that. I believe that they've also visited with the other South Slave communities. So we're looking forward to what they might be able to do and some of the spin-offs and benefits this might create for not just Hay River, but for the South Slave in general.

Thankfully, today we have better environmental review processes in place than we did at the time that the Giant Mine went into operation and was constructed, and even when the Pine Point Mine went into place. We have, I believe, significantly modernized our environmental review processes and with these in place I am extremely hopeful that a venture of this type could be undertaken that will benefit the North and also respect our environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On NWT Winter Games

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak about the NWT Winter Games that are being hosted in Fort Simpson. I attended the opening ceremonies there yesterday and I'd like to thank all of the MLAs that attended the opening there.

I'd just like to commend Fort Simpson for hosting this event and it's a signal of all our smaller communities that can host an event of this significance. It goes a long way in development of all our communities as we develop our youth through the sporting venues.

Once again, I'd just like to commend all the volunteers and chaperones who are there and the staff that's there to organize and have these very significant NWT games that's impacting all our communities. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to welcome our visitor in the gallery today, welcome to the House. It's nice to have an audience.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I had a constituency meeting last night and some of

the issues we were talking about was service to the Kam Lake Industrial Park. In addition to that, we talked about the possibility of service being run out to the Yellowknife Airport. My question to the Minister of Transportation: Is there any negotiations underway with the City of Yellowknife to in fact have service brought out to YZF? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly our department has had many discussions with the City of Yellowknife for a lot of the shared infrastructure that we do have, and discussions will continue throughout this year, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to get a clarification from the Minister what he means by "discussions." I want to get a clearer answer than that. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Menicoche.

Further Return To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. By discussions means actual meetings with the City of Yellowknife.

---Laughter

---Applause

All the discussions are of the future development that is going to happen around the Yellowknife Airport and the Yellowknife Airport development plan. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if those discussions not only include the provision for service to the Yellowknife Airport, but also provision for service along that new access road that's going to go from Highway No. 3 into Kam Lake Industrial Park. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Menicoche.

Further Return To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, the Cadillac plan for the bypass road would be to include a provision of services out to the airport through the, I believe they call it the Airport Road.

Sorry, the DOT road bypass behind the airport will include that in the discussions that are happening. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to again today ask the Minister where one might find, and I know the GNWT's going to have to be a partner in this and its shared cost to this access road. How is the Minister proposing that the government come up with the funding to get this done, this much needed road? How is it going to happen? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Menicoche.

Further Return To Question 338-15(5): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure And Services

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Senior officials of our government and the City of Yellowknife continue to discuss the financing arrangements and there's many different options out there up to and including support from our government. But all this is in the preliminary discussions right now, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke about the problem about cost overruns on our capital projects and I made some suggestions how we can address the situation. So my question for the Minister of Finance is, acknowledging the fiscal year, why can't we start the tendering process for capital projects earlier in the fiscal year prior to the new one beginning? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take it the question is directed because of the budget process we get into. In fact, the previous governments, I believe in the 12th Assembly or up to the 12th Assembly, did have two budgeting cycles, one for the O and M budget and one for the capital budget, to try and deal with the issue of construction during the best time of year, that being the summer season. What we found or what was looked at was that it wasn't necessarily being done. It didn't help things. So we brought it to a one budgetary process which reduced the time for Members as well in the House. It is something that can be looked at to see if in fact by changing cycles it would make things smoother. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Mr. Speaker, one process that could speed up the planning and more efficiency on this problem is we could start releasing tender documents in January, February or March with the proviso that until the Assembly approves it, the project is not a go. Could we consider that approach? Therefore, we would not formally have to change our process of any cycle. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland

Further Return To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that approach would add too much uncertainty to the process of actually going out through advertising and putting out an RFP to find out the project was not proceeded with for a number of reasons. So that would add too much uncertainty to the industry. Our process would be one of looking at the actual capital process itself and when a project comes in on that three-year business and if that's the most up-to-date number or the year before it comes into the main estimates, should it be revised at that point. Those are some of the areas we probably should concentrate on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two years ago the eight-plex was approved, disabilities eight-plex in my riding was approved by this House and it took almost a year for that project to get started so, Mr. Speaker, by that time we never knew what the final construction cost would be and the project is still ongoing. So, Mr. Speaker, the process is flawed, as I see it. I'd like to see him speed it up. Does the Minister have any better ideas how we can solve this problem?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, part of the issue as well in a heated economy, most projects, whether they be through the government or through private sector, are finding impacts when it comes to the costing of projects being proceeded with as well as just pure volume of projects being done. At one point the government was seen as the prime for many of the contracts when it came to what was being issued. I recall in Inuvik where you'd have 10 contractors bidding on a \$30,000 contract. Now we have difficulty having one bid on a \$200,000 contract. So that's some of the issues we face in a heated economy. I think we do have to look at our process and start from that section. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think a heated economy is the issue because that's going to happen all year long, all 12 months. Mr. Speaker, with the uncertainty problem, the fact is if we tender these things in February or March, we haven't changed anything because a lot of these projects have been planned for almost a full year in advance. All it needs is the stamp of approval of this Assembly. So my last question to the Minister is, will he look at seriously adjusting the tendering process to speed it up by a couple months? Therefore, we can have construction start in the summer season. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 339-15(5): Capital Project Cost Overruns

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there may be initiatives undertaken internally from within the departments. This is not just one department alone, it's all departments and the work they do with the Department of Public Works and Services, ensuring we have the up-to-date information. So once the budget is approved, RFPs can be let out. So that work may be undertaken internally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the matter of resource development we often hear a lot of anecdotal information about how long it takes to process applications to do things in the Northwest Territories compared to Alberta, for example. One of the other things that we hear is that, or that we know, is our environmental review process panels are appointed, to a large extent, by the federal government and there have been instances recently where positions have been left vacant by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and this could become a contributing factor to delays in incumbents as people wanting to undertake resource companies, wanting to undertake resource development in the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the appropriate Minister, and I'm not sure who that is, what is the status right now of the membership of qualified northerners on these review panels as appointed by the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a fairly broad question and I'd have to get the information on where there are vacancies on the various boards, but I'll undertake to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: When there are vacancies, Mr. Speaker, and it is our role to suggest or nominate candidates to sit on those boards but it is ultimately the federal government's responsibility to appoint them, would the Premier commit to undertake that that would be done in an expeditious manner so that we do not leave boards with vacancies that would affect their ability to get a quorum to consider applications in a timely manner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Ministers are telling me that we have all our nominations in, so we've done our share of it. Mr. Speaker, I will have our people find out from the appropriate Minister the status of appointments from there, where it is the federal government's appointment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also recently there was word from the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs that when it came to board appointments, they were looking for individuals with certain qualifications. This is a bit of a change from previous Ministers, federal Ministers, and I want to ask the Premier, then, if he would, to avoid again delays, ensure that the communication is clear with the federal government so that we know what kind of credentials they're looking for so that we don't end up suggesting or nominating people that they will ultimately find unacceptable? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we've had that discussion in Cabinet. We're looking at our own processes for who we nominate and so on. I have been told by the federal Minister that he wants to have people who are going to facilitate the process. He's frustrated with our complex regulatory process, for example, and how long it takes to get things done. He wants people who will be able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I know the federal government does criminal record checks and so on. We want to get more information on that. But if there's a way for us to streamline ours, we're ready to do that and we've had that discussion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quite often these appointments can be a political overtone to them and quite often MLAs are requested to submit names of people they would like to see serve on some of these boards. In the interest of attracting the kind of qualified people the federal government may be looking for, would the Premier agree that it may be time to expand that, search somewhat by going to an advertising process as well as soliciting input from agencies and Members of this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 340-15(5): Vacancies On Environmental Review Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In some cases we do that, and I don't see any downside of expanding it and getting people who can do the job in the federal Minister's eyes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Handley. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask Mr. Handley, the Premier, in terms of the event that's happening in Tulita on the Tulita Unity Accord. I want to ask the Premier, this type of an event that's happening takes a lot of work with this community working together. Would the Premier look at something like this? I know he's working on something like that that would have the whole Northwest Territories on sort of a unity accord that would work with all Members that would work on larger issues with Ottawa and some of the things we're going to have in the Northwest Territories. Has the Premier given that some thought or has he already started working on a type of unity accord for the northern people? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am looking very much forward to going to Tulita tomorrow and taking part in some of the unity celebrations that are happening. This is the first time that I'm aware of a region doing it this way and I think it's a great exercise to build consensus. Mr. Speaker, we tried the same thing and continue to try with the Circle of Northern Leaders is one way. The best unity celebrations, statements, are from the ground up, but I like the Sahtu one because it came from the Sahtu, not from the top down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu experience through this unity accord has taken a lot of effort by a lot of good leaders, a lot of past leaders who have left us, and the purpose of it is to work together on larger issues. I appreciate the comments from the Premier in terms of the efforts put by the Sahtu people. Would the Premier look at this experience in terms of I know he's working hard, we have given some direction to him on this side in terms that seeing that this type of unity accord can be used on a larger scale within the Northwest Territories for all northern people so that we could have a strong united front when we go to Ottawa for getting what is ours rightly? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will and at the same time I certainly hope that leaders from other regions who attend the unity accord celebrations, events, would also consider how they might, from their regions, sponsor the same kind of events. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The unity accord, again, is a huge celebration. I'd certainly like to see something like that on a larger scale within this government. I'm not too sure that's possible, but I think this government here is working hard to see if we can have a united northern accord in terms of this type of celebration. Does the Premier see any time frame or any types of vision that we can have within the life of this government in terms of having this type of celebration for all northern people? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will take that into consideration. We've got a pretty busy schedule over the next few months. I will talk to other Members. If there is time, then certainly I'm in favour of it. But as I say, our schedules are pretty busy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, would Mr. Premier consider looking at bringing up Mr. Leslie Neilson to this discussion which we'll be having in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 341-15(5): Tulita Unity Accord Celebration

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly we'll consider it. We don't want to play him out if we're going to bring him up too often. But I look forward to meeting him in Tulita and I look forward to meeting him in Yellowknife, and any people like that are certainly very popular with northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier in my Member's statement, providing necessary care and maintenance for our elders' homes is something we need to take more seriously at the community level. I have a question for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corp, the Honourable Mr. Handley. What is the Housing Corporation's mandate to meet the needs of our elders in the communities of the Northwest Territories with respect to basic services? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As with all people in the Territories, we have an obligation to help those with needs to have affordable, good quality housing. That is true for seniors, as well. In addition to that, we have special programs for seniors. I won't go into detail on all of those now, but we have an obligation either through public housing units or through homeownership units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho Government is willing and ready to work with the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation to find a fast solution to this issue that we're faced with in the community. I'd like to know from the Premier, as the Minister of the Housing Corporation, what is the department's action plan for '07-08 to help make this vision a reality to service the elders' needs? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the work that the Tlicho Government has done with us cooperatively, particularly in the area of lands and identifying land. That has worked very well in 2006-07 and I think things are working very well towards 2007-08. So that one is important.

Second, Mr. Speaker, we do a lot of the delivery of services through the local housing organizations or authorities, and again I appreciate the support from them. We have liaison officer positions or money available to help liaise between the housing needs and the clients in our housing. That one is important.

There is a workshop coming up on the 22nd that our people are attending to figure out how we could be more effective in the work we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, we want to work closely with the Tlicho Government and with the local organizations to have that effective delivery. One of the problems we've run into is finding skilled tradespeople. Again, we are looking at and trying to find ways that we can get more apprentices into the business as well so we have more tradespeople at the community level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I highlighted, we do have a qualified journeyman in the community of Behchoko, a red sealed maintenance journeyman. Can the Minister possibly consider a similar contract to the one they offer the housing authority to a local skilled journeyman to assist with the needs of our elders in the community of Behchoko and surrounding Tlicho communities? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we will do that. We have, in the past, gone out for RFP. I would hope that we do that again and if the individual with the skills would submit their proposal, their application to do that kind of work.

Mr. Speaker, I know the LHOs, our local education authorities, are very busy. So if there's ways that the private sector can help us, then certainly we'll do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister indicated, on February 22nd there is a public forum on Housing and ECE as a combined forum. At the same time, can we expedite this process, because that will be an issue on February 22nd, for a fact, from the elders. What can the department do to expedite the process so something is shown on the 22nd of February?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 342-15(5): Care And Maintenance Of Elders' Homes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, as referred to before, there's \$825

allocated per unit for seniors and I'm ready to look at that again. I want to do an assessment of where we're at in terms of maintaining those kind of ongoing maintenance and servicing of furnaces and so on from that fund. Mr. Speaker, if there are problems with it, we want to identify them before the 22nd and hopefully on the 22nd have some responses that will be beneficial for the seniors to take part in that meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 343-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources to follow up yesterday's line of questioning in regards to the 40 million litres or so of fuel stored in single-hulled barges around Hay River on Great Slave Lake and the Hay River. There are many unanswered questions: how often they dip the tanks, can they reconcile the amount that was put in this fall with what is currently there, the type of spill plan and containment plan that they do have. Given the seriousness and potential extreme hazard to this situation, I'd like to ask the Minister whether he would commit to sending down the director of environmental services here for the department, down to Hay River personally to take a look and review what is there, look at all the barges and make an on-the-ground inspection? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 343-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that's very serious to this government and the people of the Northwest Territories. We've met with the federal Department of Transportation regarding this issue as it's their responsibility to do the monitoring. We've also met with the president of NTCL to voice our concerns. They have assured us that they have spill contingency plans and clean-up plans, and they have also provided us with some of the testing that they do on a daily basis and a weekly basis. We have had our own people travel to Hay River and accompany them on some of their testing. I certainly will commit to doing more. We'd like to see this whole process of using barges for storage in the winter changed and we're working towards that, but we'll certainly commit to having our people travel to Hay River and take part in the inspections. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 343-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. The final question would be could I get the Minister to commit to being able to report back to this House before we rise to adjourn on March 16th with the results of the review and assurances that can be made, hopefully, to the people of the Northwest Territories on this issue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 343-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I think we can meet that time frame and we'll commit to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 344-15(5): Power Corporation General Rate Application

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Honourable Kevin Menicoche, Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board, just in relation to the general rate application that the Power Corporation filed with the Public Utilities Board a little while back about the increase of 16 percent or three cents per kilowatt hour for the power rates in Yellowknife and roughly \$20 for everybody else in the NWT.

I know that the application is based on the need for immediate rate increases. The process, I know, the general rate application is long and lengthy and could take up to a year to get the application pushed through. Already the rates have gone up, Mr. Speaker, and the Power Corporation has implemented power rate increases already in the \$12 and \$13 range per NWT resident. It's an interim refundable rate and I am just wondering if the Public Utilities Board has ever refused a general rate application form that's been filed by the Power Corporation in the past. It seems like...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I will allow the Minister to answer that question. The honourable Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 344-15(5): Power Corporation General Rate Application

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Public Utilities Board is responsible for looking at any general rate applications by any of the utilities that are under its responsibilities. The Public Utilities Board has received a phase one general rate application by the NWT Power Corporation and there was a significant increase, like the Member had indicated. Part of the process of the Public Utilities Board and part of the request by NWT Power Corporation was to institute an interim rate increase as we deliberate the merit of the phase one general rate application. Typically what happens there, Mr. Speaker, is the interim increase is so that there is not a shock to the consumers once there is final approval to that application, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 344-15(5): Power Corporation General Rate Application

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, let me ask the Minister, has the Public Utilities Board ever refused a general rate application increase from the Power Corp in the past? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Menicoche.

Further Return To Question 344-15(5): Power Corporation General Rate Application

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to my knowledge. I am going to have to take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources and in that portfolio carries the responsibility for our recycling programs. Mr. Speaker, the problems and the hazards associated with disposing of gadgets and electronic appliances is becoming more and more apparent in our society, especially because of the dangerous substances that some of these appliances cause in the environment.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta, for instance, has a \$15 to \$45 deposit required when televisions or similar appliances are purchased and these go into funds to assist in the proper recycling of these. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, is e-garbage something that we can potentially deal with as our recycling program advances and expands?

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

Return To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raised a lot of good examples of where the successes are in this program when he made his Member's statement and we have certainly been quite happy with the response from the communities around this program and I think it has resulted in saving a lot of material that would have gone into our landfills are either being recycled or transported south for recycling. Now that we've come to this stage in this program, we are looking at a second portion of it or a new phase. We are now in the process of drafting a discussion paper. We would like to see where we go next. There are a number of areas that we have targeted; tires, and e-garbage is an area we certainly want to explore and have more discussion on. Some communities have also come forward and started discussions amongst themselves in the regions and with us regarding regional waste sites, so we could start utilizing shared equipment; for example, shredders or compactors. We also started discussion in some areas with communities and regions about mobile equipment that we could maybe transfer from community to community.

So there are a lot of things on the horizon. We expect to have a public discussion paper ready for this summer and we will have that out so that the communities and the general public can have some input. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the difficulties that we encountered with rolling out this program was in enabling all communities to have a way that recyclable materials could be returned for repayment, reimbursement. It appears, Mr. Speaker, that with 26 licensed operators, of course not all our communities, have a license depot but the reality is when consumers in those communities purchase a recyclable container, they are still required to pay the deposit. So I would like to ask the Minister what systems are in place in those communities that do not have a depot to enable consumers to have their deposits reimbursed?

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

Further Return To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there are only six communities that don't have independent depot operators, and those are the smaller communities like Kakisa, Jean Marie, Fort Liard, Wrigley, Tulita and Colville Lake. Mr. Speaker, in most instances, we have operators from other communities that would go in on a biweekly or monthly basis to work with those communities and pick up some of the recycling that's done there.

Mr. Speaker, we still have to have operators in those communities and we are working with them. We would like to have independent operators in each of those communities rather than some communities being served from other areas. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, one of the concepts, foundations, of this program is that it would be, in effect, self-financing or paid for by the consumer. Information is that there is a fairly substantial fund built up for this and I am wondering as we go further in seeing where we can expand, what levels of new recycling we can introduce, what, if any, would be the requirements for new funding from the Legislative Assembly to get these things going or is it basically on its way and is it self-sustaining, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the program has been running well. It's been sustaining itself. There is still some requirement for our government to put an injection of dollars in there. Mr. Speaker, we do, however, have a board. We have a recycling board, a number of people who sit on the board, that advise us and as we take our next steps and develop our discussion paper, some of those questions that the Member is raising will be brought to the forefront and we will have some answers

when we come back with some of the recommendations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Short supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will return to the e-garbage theme. I will recall that when we were first bringing in the container deposit program, people started hoarding and collecting and saving containers in anticipation of the day that they could actually turn them into some cash. Cash in your trash, so it really worked. I am wondering, should we advise people to start saving their old computers and gadgets, not only to save the environment but to potentially look for an opportunity to get some cash from this kind of trash in the future, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 345-15(5): Inclusion Of Electronic Waste In Recycling Programs

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Member is asking me my opinion. I am giving my opinion on an issue that we don't have the final answers on. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a number of things to address in this discussion paper including plastic bags, electronic waste, e-garbage, as the Member had mentioned, batteries, tires, fuel drums, a number of different things. I don't know if it's possible for people to start storing these things. It would depend on how much room they have. Mr. Speaker, we certainly would advise people that we will enter the next phase of discussion and start to have an opportunity for people to provide input and start looking at incorporating the next part of our recycling program very shortly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 346-15(5): Wood Pellet-Fuelled Heating Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Carrying on with the recycling theme, I think one of the best recycled products is the pellets used lately for stoves. My questions are to the Minister of DPW. A thing I learned, that I didn't know about, by watching Northbeat earlier this week is the boiler system at the North Slave Correctional Centre entirely fuelled by pellets, I also learned that it is the only one or the first of its kind in all of North America. Not only does it have enough capacity to heat the water and the heating system for two-thirds of the facility, also it produces a lot less greenhouse gas. In fact, it saves money and the money has already been allocated for something else. I would like to know from the Minister what level of monitoring the department is doing to see other potential applicability of this heating system for other government buildings and the major infrastructure. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 346-15(5): Wood Pellet-Fuelled Heating Systems

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are doing this project as a pilot project so we can monitor the project, but, more importantly, work along with the private sector to offer them the ability to deliver this to the Northwest Territories for major facilities. This wood pellet heating system so far has shown results. We are monitoring. We are going to do assessment on it. At the end of the day, we do have an opportunity to take over the pilot program outright with a five-year commitment to the company. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 346-15(5): Wood Pellet-Fuelled Heating Systems

MS. LEE: I am not sure I was asking the government to take over the operation which is running well, but what I am looking for is for the government to look at the possibility of having other huge government infrastructures that uses a lot of fuel to adopt this energy method. I would like to know if the Minister is engaged in a detailed, intense study to see the applicability of this in other communities and other buildings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 346-15(5): Wood Pellet-Fuelled Heating Systems

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are trying different initiatives. This is just one of them. Like I mentioned, we are looking at electric heat for public facilities, looking at using wood pellets to heat facilities. We are coming forward with the energy plan. The plan identifies different initiatives we are doing. Again, this is just one of them. As a government, we have to be open minded to realize we have to change the way we do things and this is definitely one of the better advantages of working with the private sector of achieving that goal. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 346-15(5): Wood Pellet-Fuelled Heating Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for a very specific commitment and that is would the Minister look at bringing back to the House a very specific review of this project, the new pellet heating system for the North Slave Correctional Centre, and its applicability to other facilities, government-owned facilities, in the North? Also you have to take into consideration its implication on the Power Corporation and such. Could the Minister make a commitment to do a review and bring it back to us for the business planning session this summer? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 346-15(5): Wood Pellet-Fuelled Heating Systems

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to that and I will also commit to the Members if they would like a tour of the facility to see for themselves how this wood pellet system works. That is also being offered at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 347-15(5): Policy Regarding Unoccupied Public Housing Units

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of ECE. Mr. Speaker, we all know that ECE received over \$30 million plus from the Housing Corporation with regard to income support clients for public housing units. Mr. Speaker, I received four complaints from tenants from the community of Tuktoyaktuk after they returned home for Christmas holidays. Mr. Speaker, I might say these tenants were in good standing before they left for Aurora College in Inuvik. Upon their return back from Christmas holidays, they were given eviction notices by the local housing association. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of ECE. What policy does ECE have in place with regard to tenants who want to go and further their education outside of the communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 347-15(5): Policy Regarding Unoccupied Public Housing Units

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the policy that has been adopted by ECE is the same one that was in place with the Housing Corporation. We do ensure that people who have homes are able to maintain them or keep them for when they return after schooling. The Member referred to an issue in Tuk where there was a mistake made and we've worked to make sure that that is resolved. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 347-15(5): Policy Regarding Unoccupied Public Housing Units

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated that there was a mistake made by the department. Have his clients been notified and has the local housing authority been notified? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 347-15(5): Policy Regarding Unoccupied Public Housing Units

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mistake was made by the local housing authority and, yes, people have been notified and to the best of my knowledge, everybody is satisfied with the resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 347-15(5): Policy Regarding Unoccupied Public Housing Units

MR. POKIAK: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, when they got back from Christmas holidays, they were up to \$5,000 in arrears. Are these tenants in good standing now with the local housing authority under ECE? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 347-15(5): Policy Regarding Unoccupied Public Housing Units

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say that each of the tenants is in good standing with the LHO or ECE. I can say the issue where the arrears were assessed incorrectly has been corrected. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 348-15(5): Housing Standards For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As people know, I am very passionate about the needs required by our seniors and disabled community. Yesterday, I asked a question about standards for housing for seniors and disabled people in the community. Can the Minister of the Housing Corp tell us whether a firm policy document exists to guide the construction for units for seniors and disabled people on the principles of barrier-free and aging in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 348-15(5): Housing Standards For Seniors And Disabled Persons

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday, while we have some policies, we don't have a policy document as such for housing standards for seniors. The idea is not a bad one, but we don't have one document that deals with that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 348-15(5): Housing Standards For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for the clarification of that answer. Mr. Speaker, my next question to the Minister would be could he endeavour to take on the task of looking into creating a policy guideline to ensure that our seniors and our disabled people are taken care of on the basis and principles of barrier-free design and aging in place guidelines? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 348-15(5): Housing Standards For Seniors And Disabled Persons

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are building a number of seniors' units this year and next year and the year after. Certainly when we

design those, I will talk to the Housing Corporation about building them in a way that they are barrier-free, that they can be adapted to enable seniors to live independently as long as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 348-15(5): Housing Standards For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That answer said everything but yes. So, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister take on the Herculean task of drafting some kind of guidelines based on the principles of barrier-free design and aging in place to ensure that we can have our independent seniors and, of course, disabled community living on their own as long as possible in homes, rather than having to finally move them over to extended care? Could he do that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 348-15(5): Housing Standards For Seniors And Disabled Persons

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say yes, but I do want to talk to the Housing Corporation because we've just consolidated our programs and I'm not sure exactly what their plans are. But the intention is there, yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 349-15(5): Purchase Of Zamboni For Lutselk'e Arena

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just not too long ago the community of Lutselk'e had their new arena completed and they had their grand opening, which unfortunately the Commissioner, the Premier, and the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, myself included and other dignitaries were weathered out of the community, so we were unable to attend the opening ceremonies, which was quite unfortunate. I just wanted to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs with regards to the purchase of a Zamboni for the arena. I know it's not in the government's responsibility to pay for a Zamboni for any of these arena projects in the communities and I just want to ask the Minister if he will fully support and endorse the initiative by the First Nations band to get the industry perhaps, mining and maybe government, federal government, territorial government, to all contribute so that the community can maybe get a Zamboni there by this summer's barge? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 349-15(5): Purchase Of Zamboni For Lutselk'e Arena

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as part of our New Deal, we've made an allocation to the communities directly so that they can design and implement their own capital program. We're working with the communities to develop a sustainable, long-term plan that includes capital energy and a number of different things. We also have committed, as part of that

initiative, to support communities in terms of working, to leverage other dollars. We have some staff that can work with the community and we'd certainly commit to working and helping them to identify potential companies or organizations that may be able to contribute and maybe use some of their own resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 349-15(5): Purchase Of Zamboni For Lutselk'e Arena

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank the Minister for offering the assistance of, I guess, the Municipal and Community Affairs staff to develop a comprehensive capital plan for all the communities of the NWT. I know there's going to really be a lot of challenges there just to get the communities to comply and stick to the plan. I know there's been some concerns out there that a lot of communities seem to put their capital on the back burner and put other things on the forefront with community initiatives and use up capital dollars for different programs.

I just want to ask the Minister if, I think just one Member has stated out, you know, we had four charters going in and I'm sure the cost of those charters probably would have paid for a Zamboni in itself, but if he can endorse and offer a letter of support to the First Nations community of Lutselk'e that the Municipal and Community Affairs is fully supportive of the initiative to get industry onside and they would endorse any kind of a way of raising money in order to get the Zamboni on the barge for this summer, because you need six months to get it on order otherwise it's going to be another year before they can get one in there. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 349-15(5): Purchase Of Zamboni For Lutselk'e Arena

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if I agree that three or four charters is equivalent to a Zamboni. I think a Zamboni is around \$100,000. I don't believe four charters are equal to that. However, Mr. Speaker, we will commit to the community in writing, if the Member so wishes, that we will work with them, we'll help them develop a process, outline a process, and also if they need some assistance in identifying funding sources, organizations, we certainly can help with that, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a problem. It is our commitment that we will work with the communities to help them lever outside dollars or outside revenues or tools or whatever is required, that we have some staff people that are ready and willing to do that. So we'll commit to that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 350-15(5): Income Security Programs For Seniors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister responsible for seniors in the Northwest Territories. I've asked the Minister if he would look at forming a committee that would look at all

the needs of the seniors that are offered by this government in terms of forming a standard level of services for communities. We talked about the housing, about the medical, and we talked about the income support. Would there be an initiative for that by the Minister to initiate in the North? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 350-15(5): Income Security Programs For Seniors

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past year and a half this government has embarked on a fairly significant process of discussing the income security review, and that has lead to extensive consultations with seniors across the Territories in all regions. What I would hope to do is to be able to come forward to propose a solution to the changes that we're looking at for income security and then we'll review whether or not we need to have an ongoing committee to provide us with ongoing advice after we've been able to respond to this recent consultation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 350-15(5): Income Security Programs For Seniors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I do support the Minister on this initiative and it's looking at income support security programs. There is the NWT Seniors' Society. I guess I'm asking if it would go beyond the income security programs in terms of the housing programs. A colleague of mine had some discussions with the Minister of Housing Corporation in terms of the standard policy for seniors in terms of their housing design and medical services and other issues that seniors need to look at. Would the Minister look at going beyond the scope of this income support? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 350-15(5): Income Security Programs For Seniors

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The consultation process actually included all 17 subsidy programs that this government has. So it went beyond income support. So when I say income security, I'm referring to the broad spectrum, not just the income support programs. So what I would hope we could do is have some discussion about where we're going with income security before we start setting up other committees to review the process. Once we have the new guidelines in place and new outline for where we hope to be headed, that might be appropriate at that point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 350-15(5): Income Security Programs For Seniors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I look forward to this, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to looking at the government making a real strong recommendation by the support of the seniors to have a department just solely for the

seniors of the Northwest Territories, and have a strong Minister that would fight for the seniors to keep them well in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I didn't hear a question there. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice. The Prime Minister has announced a plan to change, somewhat dramatically, how judges are re-appointed and restructure committees to be able to greater influence the outcomes so they can get judges that are more sympathetic to the government's agenda, law and order agenda, and such.

---Applause

They are going to minimize the use of the judiciary, they want to increase the use of Conservative Party faithful on the committees. I'd like to ask the Minister, since this is a relatively new issue that's only come up since last week that I've become aware of it, whether the Minister would commit to review this particular change with his Cabinet colleagues and be able to report back to this House before the rise of the House next week when we take a break, to give us an indication of do they have the same concern that's being voiced by judges, lawyers and people at large across this country on this change? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't see a dramatic change in the appointment process. I think we know that the past federal government looked for appointees that were sympathetic to their philosophical views. I think this federal government will do the same. I think future federal governments will do the same. I don't think there's a great departure here from the way things have been run in the past in that respect. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then the Minister's in disagreement with a lot of Canadians. I've asked the Minister very clearly -- I think this is a very significant issue and it's been identified as a significant issue -- whether he would review this matter with Cabinet and indicate, come back and indicate to this House whether they support that kind of approach or they have any concerns so that we can know if there's further questions required from this side of the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we always welcome questions from that side of the

House. I would say, though, Mr. Speaker, again, I don't see a vast departure here. There's a concern that the Conservative government would want to change the laws of the country to speak to mandatory minimums, tougher sentences for serious crimes. Yes, they are doing that. Would they want judges who will look to put criminals in jail? I suspect they would. But there's no vast departure here from the appointment process that I can see, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is that his position as Minister or is that Cabinet's position? If it's his position, that's one thing; if this matter has been discussed and he's giving us the official position that they support this change, then clearly there's going to be a string of questions coming because I consider that very problematic. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, of course I don't believe there's been a great departure or change here in the way things are done. This isn't something that Cabinet has discussed. We haven't seen the need to discuss this. That's most probably because we haven't felt there's a large change in how it's done. Mr. Speaker, I think the important point and thing here is we want to see competent and capable judges in the Northwest Territories, whether they are our Territorial Court judges or Supreme. The last appointment of a Supreme Court justice done by Vic Taves, Conservative Justice Minister, was the appointment of someone who is very, very competent and I think that's the important thing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister continues to avoid the question. Is he prepared to take this issue back to Cabinet and discuss it? I think it's a significant issue. He indicates they haven't discussed it. I'm raising it as an issue in this House. Canadians are asking the question and I think northerners are, too. So will he review this with Cabinet and report back to this House before the rise next week, before the break? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 351-15(5): Appointment Process For Judges

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly raise this with my Cabinet colleagues and see if they feel the way I do about it, and that is that there hasn't been a great departure. We'll have that discussion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Has oral questions expired, Mr. Speaker? If oral questions are expired, then I request unanimous consent to go back to recognition of visitors in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We'll return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Bell.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize and introduce Randy Ottenbreit, obviously no stranger to northerners, who works with Imperial Oil and has travelled all of the North now, I am sure many times over. We welcome him here in the gallery.

But also with him today, his wife, Marjie, daughter Jessica, and they are all here, I understand, as tourists in the Northwest Territories...

---Applause

...getting a chance to view our great territory. I want to say how much we appreciate that and welcome them to the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Replies to budget address. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS

Mr. Braden's Reply

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to acknowledge the very original and astute observations of our colleague, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, in his statement and question this morning.

This is indeed a significant part of our work. It is a very important part of our work and it is one that is, I think, something that could use a very serious review and a lot of improvement, Mr. Speaker. Essentially what I'm concerned with, as we undertake our budget process, is the way we approve capital spending and the subsequent increases in costs that really seemed to have overtaken much of what we do.

Mr. Speaker, capital spending in less bureaucratic terms is bricks and mortar. It is the roads, the buildings, the water and sewer systems, the tank farms that we build in our communities and across our territory. It is also renovations and upgrades. It is computer systems. It is equipment. It covers a lot of territory.

In our process of review and evaluation and ultimate approval, Mr. Speaker -- and this is one that's quite unique to our consensus system of government -- all committees and all Regular Members are shown by departments their projections for the kind of projects they

would like to see, the kind of costs that are going to be involved. We start this process in September at our committee level, Mr. Speaker, and through the course of the winter and then leading up to where we are now, we have a constant hand in tuning those projects. Ultimately, as we have been going through day by day here, we review, we probe, we challenge, and eventually, Mr. Speaker, we are asked to vote on the approval of these projects. We approve them in good faith. Mr. Speaker, the good faith is that what we are shown in budget documents and projections is what we will get for the cost we approve. We are spending taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker, and we take this very seriously.

But I want to indicate that our faith and our trust in this process is shaken of late because of very serious variances in the end cost. Far too many projects are coming in way over budget, Mr. Speaker, and in the course of the year far too many projects are brought in as new or emergency.

This current year, Mr. Speaker, according to the budget documents that were presented to us and are available to the public, the capital spending allocation for the year 2006-2007, the year we are just closing out now, is going to be 50 percent above what we originally started with, Mr. Speaker. Back in March of 2006, we approved a capital allocation spending of \$110 million. It is going to be \$170 million. All in the space of one year. A 50 percent increase. Mr. Speaker, that tells me that something is wrong with the way we are conducting this process.

It seems as if we are not really approving capital projects and budgets, Mr. Speaker. Rather, it seems that all we are doing is approving the start or the beginning of a project with the end cost to the taxpayer widely and sometimes even wildly out of sync with what we are shown in the beginning.

For example, Mr. Speaker, a very difficult project for me still to come to terms with in terms of the amount of money that we spent is the North Slave Correctional Centre here in Yellowknife. Originally presented, I understand at around a \$35 million project, ballooned to \$49 million; almost a 50 percent increase and a multi-million dollar hit on our cash flow.

Mr. Speaker, in information that's readily available, recent information readily available to us. We also see various projects like a water supply system proposed to us at \$400,000 which in six months has ballooned to \$1.6 million; four times the cost presented to us to begin with. A tank farm, a fuel tank farm originally projected at \$1.6 million is now \$4.2 million. Mr. Speaker, we've been building tank farms in this country for decades now. How is it that we don't have enough of a handle on how to do it that we come up with a project, which I believe is not yet complete, but it's triple the amount of money in the space of six months?

Mr. Speaker, we know that within various departments, and it sort of goes back to the information that I presented earlier, that this current year we will surge our capital spending allocation from 110 to 170 million dollars. Just to give you a bit of a sample in some of the departments: Public Works and Services is projecting in the six-month period since the beginning of the current fiscal year, their capital allocations are going to jump from 9.2 to 17.1 million; Health and Social Services, Mr. Speaker, from 13 to 20 million; Education, Culture and Employment from a

\$28 million project to \$45 million in the space of six months.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into an analysis of this information, although that is really where I'm going. But what we're looking at is a blend of existing, of proposed and new projects that are brought in over the space of time and, of course, I'm sure that there are good and viable explanations that can be brought forward for each project and each cost overrun. But, Mr. Speaker, my point here is not to get into an exercise of singling out individual projects or departments, but rather to step back from a higher level to look at the way we are told about a project at the beginning of the year and why in so many cases, Mr. Speaker, the end result bears very little resemblance to the original story.

Mr. Speaker, I bring us back to the fact that we are dealing with taxpayers' money. The questions that we need to pursue in our whole approach to capital spending, and it's now in the hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, and I want to underline that this is not something that I think we can just begin to tweak or rejig a little bit. We really have to, on a departmental basis, at a planning and staffing and an approval basis, we have to step back and ask some big questions. Why is our costing, budgeting and approval system so wonky? What can be done to bring more certainty into the process? What is causing this, Mr. Speaker? Is it poor or inadequate estimating? Is it poor planning on the role of the folks who design or scope out these requirements and then design the solution? Is it lack of skills or resources within our own organization?

Mr. Speaker, what is the impact of the chronic labour shortage that we're facing in the NWT and across western Canada? What is the impact of the shortage of materials, the expanding costs of raw materials around the world? What impact do our demands for administration and accountability have on the eventual cost of a program, and what about the impact of things that are sometimes not within our control, things like the cost of freight or weather or other factors?

Mr. Speaker, when things go wrong, who do we hold to account? Our staff? Contractors? Suppliers? Mr. Speaker, we have to ask, what about ourselves here in the Legislative Assembly? Sometimes are we too anxious to see projects designed and booked and started with too little care and attention to due process to getting value for money, for taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker?

This Assembly and the departments that report to us have got to get a handle on this aspect of our expenditures and our planning and our commitments. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that we have time left in the mandate for this Assembly to undertake the kind of systematic and thorough review that I believe we need, but our successors in the 16th Assembly should look at this very closely early in their term, Mr. Speaker, to get control on this very vital, very expensive part of our spending, our taxpayers' spending and our accountability to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Replies to the budget address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 10-15(5): Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight Report On The Review Of The 2005-2006 Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met on December 6, 2006, to review the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. The committee would like to thank Ms. Shannon Gullberg, the Languages Commissioner, for appearing before us.

The committee was pleased to hear that some of the previous goals of the Commissioner are at or near completion, in particular the Commissioner's new website and the development of printed information about the complaints process in aboriginal languages. The new website will be fully bilingual in English and French and will provide some information in all aboriginal official languages of the Northwest Territories.

In our previous report, we encouraged the Commissioner to step up her efforts to publicize her office, particularly by undertaking community visits to meet with stakeholders and to raise public awareness about her office. Therefore, we were pleased to hear of the Commissioner's plans to visit Rae, Behchoko; Hay River; Inuvik; and, Fort Smith in early 2007 to conduct community and school meetings and to visit health centres.

The committee is also looking forward to receiving the two reports the Commissioner referred to in her presentation, namely a report regarding advertising requirements and a report on language services in health care facilities.

At several points in the report, the Commissioner directs comments at the Legislative Assembly or recommends that the Legislative Assembly take certain actions. These comments incorrectly suggest that the Legislative Assembly has responsibilities, which are in fact under the authority of the government. For example, on page 15 of the report, she states that: "The Legislative Assembly's approach to the issue of communication with the public has been uncoordinated and chaotic." The Commissioner then discusses amendments to section 11 of the act regarding communication with the public. Although the Speaker and the Legislative Assembly retain some authorities under the act, for example, the appointment of the Commissioner and the ultimate approval of bills to amend the act, the authority to make regulations resides with the Commissioner in Executive Council, which is effectively the Government of the Northwest Territories. As well, it is the government, and not the Legislative Assembly, which introduces bills to amend the act.

Motion That Committee Report 10-15(5) Be Deemed Read And Printed In Hansard In Its Entirety, Carried

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments to this report. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that the Report on the Review of the 2005-2006 Report of the Languages Commissioner be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Motion is on the floor. Motion is order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 10-15(5): Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight Report On The Review Of The 2005-2006 Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner

Recommendations

In the 2005-2006 annual report, the Commissioner makes six recommendations:

Languages Commissioner Recommendation 1

That the Legislative Assembly clarify what is meant by paragraph six of the preamble to the Official Languages Act. Further, paragraph 10 of the preamble should be deleted.

Paragraph six speaks to the purpose of the act with regard to the use of aboriginal languages. Presently, the act reads that aboriginal languages should be used "for all and any official purposes of the Northwest Territories at the time and in the manner that is appropriate." The Commissioner recommends that the meaning of this section needs to be clarified and suggests replacement with: "... the use of aboriginal languages in the manners and circumstances specifically identified and provided for in the act."

Paragraph ten of the preamble relates to "language of work." The Commissioner recommends the deletion of this paragraph, because workplace language is not addressed in the Official Languages Act nor in any other GNWT policy. Presently the protection from discrimination in employment practices stems from the Human Rights Act.

The committee shares the Commissioner's perception that the wording on language of work incorrectly suggests the act provides language rights in the workplace, which it does not.

Committee Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories include in its next bill to amend the Official Languages Act changes to clarify the wording of paragraph six of the preamble leading to a more specific prescription for the use of aboriginal languages provided for in either the act or regulations;

The committee further recommends the deletion of paragraph 10, which deals with "language of work," until such time as workplace language is addressed.

Languages Commissioner Recommendation 2

That the Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories be amended to include a provision that binds all contractors with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Suggested wording is as follows:

Every government institution has the duty to ensure that, where services are provided or made available

by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in the Northwest Territories or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in any particular official language in any case where those services, if provided by the institution, would be required to be provided in that official language.

The committee discussed these recommendations with interest, however, decided that more clarity about their implications is needed. The committee agrees that they deserve further consideration.

Languages Commissioner Recommendation 3

That the Legislative Assembly consider amending section 11 of the Official Languages Act such that, instead of defining language rights based on the concepts of "significant demand" and "nature of the office," language rights in the area of communication with the public be based on the following principles:

That some basic services should be available in any and all official languages, regardless of geographical area. This should include health services, mandatory registration, licensing, safety and other services that the Legislature consider essential.

That other services should be available according to designated language areas that are established in regulation. As well, those services that must be provided in those designated areas should also be set out in regulation, instead of policies and guidelines. In this way, the responsibility to provide such services will be clear and binding.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT examine and report back on the implications and advisability of extending obligations of the Official Languages Act to third parties that provide direct government services on a contractual basis.

Furthermore, the committee recommends the GNWT review and report back on the legal implications and the feasibility of abandoning the concepts of "significant demand" and "nature of the office" in favour of regulations specifying "basic services that should be available in any and all official languages regardless of the geographic area."

Languages Commissioner Recommendation 4

That the Legislative Assembly and all government departments review their systems for providing service through 1-800 numbers. Where a person who requests services in French will be transferred to an identified individual, consideration should be given to an automated response system for the 1-800 number, allowing for an individual to choose services in English or in French. The same approach should be considered for other official languages.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight cautiously supports this recommendation of the Languages Commissioner and was pleased that the Commissioner considers this service delivery method appropriate for aboriginal languages as well. The

committee feels strongly that a government-wide coordinated approach is needed to streamline the consistency and extent of the services delivered in languages other than English. The committee also considered financial implications of the recommendations and favours coordination as well in light of the potential for cost efficiencies. However, the committee cautions that service delivery through 1-800 or toll-free numbers has its limitations and might not be the only option for government-wide coordination of services delivered in all official languages.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT review and report back on their system for providing service through toll-free numbers in French and aboriginal Languages.

Languages Commissioner Recommendation 5

That the Government of the Northwest Territories immediately implements a plan for the training and certification of interpreters and translators.

With the closure of the aboriginal languages section of the GNWT Language Bureau in the mid-1990s, the Northwest Territories has lost any institution that would be responsible for language standards, terminology development, training and accreditation. The precarious situation of our aboriginal languages combined with the declining numbers of mother tongue speakers makes the need to actively address the revitalization of the aboriginal languages more urgent. In recent years, the former Languages Commissioner and the Special Committee on Official Languages addressed the need for capacity building through the development of translation standards as well as training and certification standards for interpreters and translators.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommended in its Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner that "...the GNWT work with Aurora College to deliver a basic interpreter/translator training program for aboriginal languages, as well as specialized training in medical terminology." While the government supports the idea in general, it "delegated" any action to the college and further made any action dependent on "sufficient demand and program funding." The government's response did not indicate any specific steps towards such an undertaking.

In her report, the Commissioner points out that despite the recognition of the importance of interpreter/translator training and certification, little has been done to actually implement any required steps that would address such education and standardization needs. In recommendation five, the Commissioner is clear about her expectations towards the GNWT in this regard.

The committee also notes that the re-establishment of training and certification for aboriginal languages interpreter/translator programs would be an important step towards language and terminology standardization as a vital aspect of language revitalization.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the GNWT implement a plan for the training and certification of interpreters and translators.

Languages Commissioner Recommendation 6

That the Government of the Northwest Territories immediately create a registry of interpreters and translators that is available to both the public and private sector.

Both the former Languages Commissioner Judi Tutcho in her Special Report on Privatization and the Special Committee on Official Languages have previously recommended the creation of an interpreter/translator registry. However, to date, no such registry is in existence, so it remains difficult to find qualified interpreters and translators. Certified interpreters/translators who are established in their profession are often extremely busy and cannot keep up with the demand. Creating a public registry would have multiple benefits like encouraging others to enter into the field and increasing the accessibility to professional linguistic services.

The Commissioner concludes her findings accordingly: "It is imperative that the public registry be developed immediately." The committee shares the Commissioner's sense of urgency on this issue, but cautions against creating a registry that would not be based on measurable standards of qualification, out of fairness to both interpreters and translators, and members of the public who might rely on such a list.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the GNWT, after progress has been made with the establishment of interpreter/translator training and certification program, proceed with establishing a registry of interpreters and translators for all official languages.

In conclusion, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight encourages the Commissioner to exercise her powers and make full use of her mandate, which, as outlined in section 20 of the Official Languages Act, includes ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the act in the administration of the affairs of government institutions, and conducting investigations on her own initiative.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 10-15(5) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great

Slave, that Committee Report 10-15(5) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Motion is on the floor. Motion is order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 10-15(5) will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bills 18, 19, 21, Committee Reports 7-15(5), 8-15(5) and 9-15(5), with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'll call Committee of the Whole to order, Members. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 21, Appropriation Act 2007-2008, specifically Public Works and Services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. We'll commence with that after a break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon, members of Committee of the Whole. I will call the meeting back to order. We are now reviewing the Department of Public Works and Services. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services if he has any comments.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services' main estimates for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

The main estimates propose a department operations and maintenance budget for 2007-2008 of \$51.8 million and an infrastructure investment plan of \$8.4 million. This is a 9.9 percent increase over the 2006-2007 Main Estimates.

The Department of Public Works and Services provides management, technical and support services to departments and communities.

The department also manages an additional \$141 million for projects and services on behalf of its clients through revolving funds, chargebacks and capital transfers. These funds are used to provide computer and data communications for government offices, fuel services for residents, businesses and NWT Power Corporation in 22 communities.

Overall, Public Works and Services contributes to achieving government-wide goals and appropriate balance for high quality services for our residents and operating within the limits of our current budgets.

I would like to take a moment to mention the Wood Pile Remediation Program. The progress made to date includes:

- stabilization of the Grandfather Ayha School in Deline;
- inspection of 1,400 piles under 16 buildings;
- foundation rehabilitations to Arctic Family Medical House and Aurora College's trade shop in Inuvik and the nurses' residence in Aklavik.

All of these are important community, regional and territorial facilities that contribute, in a positive way, to achieve the government's long-term objectives.

In this last fiscal year, the department has implemented several energy conservation initiatives to reduce energy costs for the GNWT such as:

- infrared thermal scanning of GNWT and community buildings;
- inspection of building mechanical and electrical systems;
- planning for the conversion of GNWT buildings to electric heat in Fort Smith;
- application of guidelines for energy conservation design in GNWT buildings;
- biomass heating system in the North Slave correction facilities.

The department also provides information systems and communication services for use by the government. More and more, the ability of the government to provide services to northern residents is dependent upon the availability of secure and reliable information and communication systems. This centralized service plays a key role as we make the necessary investments to upgrade outdated technology equipment and systems.

Another important role for this department is to be a key member of the GNWT team responsible for ensuring the quality of community drinking water, working closely with the departments of Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs, and Environment and Natural Resources.

Finally, I would like to mention the provision of essential fuel services. Through the petroleum products revolving fund, Public Works and Services funds the provision of heating fuel and gasoline in communities where a commercial operation does not exist. In December 2005, petroleum products division was contracted by the NWT Power Corporation to supply required fuel volumes and manage its tank farm facilities in a number of the communities. This includes providing safe tank farms in these remote locations, as well as contracting with and training local fuel delivery agents to provide the services. These agents have an important function in their

communities, and Public Works and Services works with them to carry out this important service.

Public Works and Services continues to be responsive to its many clients and to provide a high level of support to departments and the people of the NWT. The budget that we are reviewing today will contribute to achieving this objective.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions Members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. At this time, I would like to call on Mr. Ramsay with regard to the Department of Public Works and Services. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee met with the Minister and his officials on September 21, 2006, to review the draft business plan of the Department Public Works and Services.

The committee considered the department's draft main estimates on January 16 and 17, 2007.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$52 million in operations expense and \$8.4 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2007-2008.

Committee members offer the following comment on issues arising out of the review of the 2007-2008 Draft Main Estimates and budget-planning cycle:

Pile Inspection And Repair Program

At present, PWS is maintaining 60 buildings with an age of 30 years or more. Many of the wooden piles supporting GNWT infrastructure are reaching the end of their service life. PWS has established a formal Risk Management and Safety Program to ensure safe occupancy and operation of GNWT building infrastructure.

The Governance and Economic Development committee supports this initiative. The committee does not want to see any injury or harm come to the occupants of these buildings, or expose the GNWT to greater liability. We must make the necessary investment to maintain these buildings as long as possible, as there is insufficient funding for replacement in the capital plan.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommends the Pile Inspection and Repair Program continue in order to address the building condition and safety issues identified in the building condition reports.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this time, I would like to ask if the Minister would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please?

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Mike Aumond, deputy minister of Public Works and Services; to my left is John Gabel, director of Technical Services Centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for his opening comments on Public Works and Services' initiatives for the upcoming year and the year beyond. As he is well aware with the opening comments from the GED committee on the Wood Pile Remediation Program, they are going to continue on with that, but I also wanted to talk about the energy conservation initiatives that Public Works is understanding. I know a lot of Members have been bringing up the point to the Minister in a lot of meetings we had with the Department of Public Works and Services about the conversion of GNWT buildings to electric heat, not only in Fort Smith but also on all the hydro serviced communities in the South Slave region. It would definitely be a huge undertaking to make the conversion, but I think the savings in the long run would definitely be beneficial for the government in reducing greenhouse gases and in saving money for the government's O and M. I really want to stress the importance that this initiative would mean to a lot of people in the South, not just GNWT buildings. I think a pilot project like this would send a strong message out to private industry and businesses that there is a savings in converting to electricity in the South Slave region especially where we are on the hydro grid. I just wanted to ask the Minister if the pilot project that they are doing in Smith, what is the status of it? Is there a bigger plan for them to convert, like the schools and hospitals and all government buildings and not just those but even assist in providing NGOs with electric heat in the South Slave region? Is there a big plan that's going to come after this pilot project is complete? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to the electric heat pilot project we are doing in Fort Smith, we have looked at the possibility of 14 facilities in Fort Smith. We are focussing on three. The issue we have with the power supply is there is a surplus right now, but because there is potential of the Taltson system coming on, we are not sure how much of that surplus maybe used to sell to the mines. That's why we are looking at it as a five-year pilot project and look at the possibility of the type of savings we are going to achieve through electric heat compared to the cost of heating those facilities with diesel heat and, more importantly, that through the Power Corporation, if they do have the surplus power going forward into the future. That's why we are looking at a pilot project. Again, if the technology is there and we see the savings, we are definitely open to looking at other facilities in communities. We are looking at the college facilities and health centres and schools.

I think it's more important with the energy plan that's coming forth, we are looking at this as one of the means. We touched on a couple of questions in the House. We are looking at biomass by way of pellet heat systems. We

have to be open minded that we have to develop an energy plan right across the Territories. We try these pilot projects in different locations, but we have to make sure that we are able to carry those out from other locations if possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I just wanted to stress that this pilot project is really something very important that Public Works and Services get under way with. I think it's way overdue. There has been reports coming out on the use of interruptible power through the hydro grid system, through all these South Slave communities. If Public Works and Services was presented with some options with reviews on how they could use this interruptible power, whether it be from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. or doing the switchover to electric power, there was quite a few recommendations on how they could use this interruptible power which equates to about 10 megawatts that we haven't been using for the last 20 years. We are finally coming to terms with it only after the energy crisis going through the ceiling. It seems to be a reaction instead of a pro-action on the part of the government when reports come out on initiatives that we should have undertaken a long time ago when the reports were actually drafted instead of waiting for costs to skyrocket before we can actually realize savings in the long term.

I would just like to ask the Minister if he has compiled any information with respect to what government buildings are being converted over, what potential ones could be converted over in the next couple of years, not just in Smith but the whole South Slave region. Is there any cost associated in today's dollars of what those costs are going to be? Over the long term, I would go 10 years after the hydro is expanded, if it is. Has there been any research into the savings that the NWT residents would save in public dollars with respect to switching over? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we haven't gotten really into that detail of a survey. Right now, we are strictly focussing on Fort Smith at this time. Like I mentioned, we are looking at the possibility of 14 buildings. We want to try it out in three right now. Also, we are looking at trying to find ways of using different types of technologies that are out there. Again, we also have to realize that the community grid system has to be able to take on this excess power under the existing, so that's why we're working with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to ensure that we do have the capacity not only to do it, but also to have the capacity, too, for the community systems so that we don't have power interruptions and whatnot which will cause the system to fail because of we don't have the upgrades that's going to have to be made by the Power Corporation, which there will have to be capital investments made in that area.

But I'd just like to say to the Member that we are looking at developing an energy plan. We're also looking at the greenhouse gas emission survey that's being done. But I think we, as government, are reviewing our public infrastructure to see the consumption. I think it's pretty easy to see it through this program. I believe we're in

charge of about nine-point, nine-tenths of a cent, which is less than one cent per kilowatt through this agreement with the Power Corporation right now, with the possibility that after five or six years we're looking at paying six cents. But right now most of the residents are paying 10 cents a kilowatt.

So we are looking at the economics of it. Right now diesel fuel is roughly about 76 or 77 cents a litre. So I mean, you sort of look at the math and it does make sense to do this in most of our communities and the savings are definitely there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a comment, I guess. I'd just like to encourage the department to maybe put this up high on their priority list over the next year or so. Moving forward on this is something that's really a good initiative. You'll never get any bad feedback or backlashes from carrying out initiatives such as this. Any kind of energy conservation here in the NWT to reduce costs for the GNWT and the general public is always welcome. I always talk to residents in Fort Smith and Hay River and, of course, Fort Resolution, that are all around this power grid, and people just shake their heads and wonder why isn't the town, like Fort Smith, lit up like Las Vegas, they say. We got cheap power right in the backyard and people are just kind of wondering why it's all just not being used to their advantage or to the government's advantage. That's just a comment I'd like to make and if the Minister wants to respond, he can. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to thank the Member for his support of this initiative and I believe we all support these types of initiatives. But I think it's the public pressure that's out there now that we, as government and as people in northern Canada, that we have to set the bar high and show that we are doing things on our part to ensure that we deal with the greenhouse gas emissions and make sure that we cut down on our emissions. I think that this is definitely a way we can do it. If we have surplus power and diesel generators in communities, we should consider using that surplus that's basically going out the smokestack. So I think that the same thing applies in regard to the hydro stuff. Like you say, it's 10 megawatts of surplus power and I think that we have to definitely make use of that and that's why we're putting a proposal forward to do the conversions in Fort Smith at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just comments to the Minister on his opening statements. I'll make some general comments to his opening statements to the House here. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say to the Minister on this, several issues on this opening, on his presentation. The first one I want to talk about, the stabilization of ?ehtseo Ayha School in Deline and that the school was worked on pretty quickly by staff members to get things ready within the time frame because of the closeness of opening up the school in

Deline and that I must commend the Minister and his staff for getting there real quick and causing a lot of relief for the families because of the school system and the way it's working. I'm not too sure on the timing of how the assessments are done on such a public institution that follows certain time frames of their opening of their buildings. However, Mr. Chairman, the department's responded fast and quite surprising to the people of Deline that they got in there, they did the work, and they caused a minor, minimum delay of opening the school system for that year. I just wanted to say it to the Minister because they did do good work there. So I must say that to him.

I guess my question would be to other facilities in my region and any other facilities in the North, are we, from that experience are we going to be feeling somewhat comfortable by the MLAs that some of these institutions such as the school would be looked at in terms of this type of program? So I was only going to comment that somewhere in the books I guess the Minister will maybe or he could hand me some information if he wants to, to show me a plan for the wood piling remediation program for such situations as this one here.

The other one I want to talk to the Minister is on the biomass heating system in the North Slave Correctional Facility. I think it's a leading-edge project going ahead and I would like to see something like that in, of course, our region in terms of some facilities that are run by the Department of Public Works and Services and maybe on a smaller scale. I'm not too sure. I certainly would like to take a look at that system more closely in the North Slave Correctional Facility and that I think there's great opportunities in the North for a system like that in other regions that would help with the cost of living and cost of doing business in smaller remote communities. So I just wanted to commend the Minister, I guess, on that one too, for that initiative and cost-saving measure. I'd like to take outside of the larger centres now to see how these type of programs like the North Slave Correctional Facility, how do you put that into smaller communities and work them into the smaller centres like ours in the Sahtu?

The other point I want to make is the infrared thermal scan of GNWT buildings and community buildings. That's a good one again, too. I'm not too sure where that's going now. Once you've done the buildings, you looked at it and said, okay. So it costs you this much to fix the building or whatever they have to do, where does the community go after that? Does the Public Works lead the communities into a direction where they can help themselves or help their buildings or help the private businesses such as the band or the Metis or the town office to fix up the buildings?

Good things in those areas are my comments to the Member, to the Minister. Sorry, Mr. Chairman; to the Minister.

Mr. Chairman, my last comment would be a general comment on the quality of community drinking water and the department's working closely with the three identified departments of Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs, and Environment and Natural Resources. Again, I bring this up on behalf of my community and that community is Fort Good Hope as I talked about the issue of dead water. I'm not too sure what type of issues are being looked at in terms of satisfying the community there to say they have good quality water, yet I have several elders from that

community that keep reminding me that we should look at the dead water issue and see something to be done to satisfy them. Public Works is looking at that and I'm not too sure where they are with the other departments in terms of having that water issue resolved with the community of Fort Good Hope and look at types of solutions that could satisfy the elders in the community that would leave them with a level of comfort that the water is of good quality. Right now I'm going to just wait until the Minister gets to those pages in his budget to talk about that.

So I'll leave those comments to the Minister, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the Minister and the officials for being before us today. I'm just going to bring up one area and it's not so much a question as more of a statement of approval. Whereas on page 2 we talk about the biomass heating system at the North Slave Correctional Centre and, like other Members, I'm fully in support of this project. I'm a big fan of this and since energy prices really started to take on momentum a few years ago, I have learned quite a bit about alternative systems for heating buildings and houses, et cetera. I've come across from burning old oil to burning wood to wood pellets to garbage, and I've learned a lot about it over the, like I say, last couple years.

I would like to encourage the department, although they may have been asked in one way or another, but I'd like to encourage the department to make all findings available to the public. Therefore, anyone in the public industry who owns apartment buildings, large garages, et cetera, whatever the case may be, may be in a position to potentially access this information so they can build a bit of a case study under their own economics and say is there cheaper and smarter ways of doing things? This speaks to the emission changes as well as, of course, the economics when we talk about heating buildings through using regular home heating fuel or whatever the case may be. So smart energy, I'm a huge fan of that. I'm a huge fan of practical solutions like what we're doing now. As I understand it, our infrastructure costs are negligible in the sense of getting the product there to do the work. We're buying the heat, the raw heat. And you know what? Maybe we're opening up a new type of market through northern innovation, which I'm proud to see happening here.

With all of that said, Mr. Chairman, I don't have a specific question, although the Minister may want to comment on my thought about ensuring that all of this information can be made public. Therefore, like I say, maybe a large industry or someone in the hotel or apartment building business may want to examine this type of strategy. I think it's a good thing and the more people we can buy into this type of process, potentially we can make the pellets cheaper, we can make things easier for everyone. Technology can probably be cheaper and easier to use. So that being said, Mr. Chairman, that's all I have to say. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the Minister and staff for coming out today. I just have a few general comments in regard to the Minister's opening remarks. I appreciate the process for the Wood Pile Remediation Program. But I'd like to go one bit further. Hopefully the Minister will take it into consideration, anyway, with the department. I understand, you know, that we do have buildings still on wood piles, but I'll give you an example in one of my communities where the Department of Public Works and Services had units before and then they were sold or given to the local hamlet. They were eventually sold off to private individuals. So those are the type of units that may need assistance somewhere down the road. I don't know if your department will assist these private homeowners if required. Because at one time they did belong to government. I can provide that information to the Minister and the department, you know, somewhere down the road in terms of which units I'm talking about in Tuktoyaktuk anyway. Because I think, you know, you talk about liability earlier under the GED report. So I think it's important for consideration to be given to some of these people that bought these units that once belonged to government.

It's good to see that also, Mr. Chairman, that they'll do infrared thermal scanning on GNWT and community buildings, but I'd also like to see that maybe once they get that unit in place I hope that they can assist the private homeowners that can utilize the services. Whether it's within a reasonable cost or they can do that as a service to the homeowners so that they can find better efficient ways of maintaining their units, I think that will help a lot of local people if they can do that.

I'd like to, Mr. Chairman, also reply in regard to the community drinking water that the Minister talked about. I understand he's working with the different departments. MACA is responsible for the infrastructure, but also DPW oversees the programs that they're operating in the communities. Unfortunately, but I hope I haven't heard back from Sachs Harbour yet, but it's an example. They've been having an ongoing problem over there last year and, you know, that's really part of basically been going to each other and saying we've done something and we sort of, they were sort of going back and forth and saying we've done this, we've done that. I think it's really important that we work closely in terms of any projects that both MACA and DPW have. I'm sure that, especially the one water plant in Sachs Harbour, I'm sure it's gone way over what the cost was originally costed at. So I think it's got to be, you know, we have to look at things like that.

Mr. Chairman, the last comment I'd like to make is in regard to the petroleum products. You know, Mr. Chairman, unfortunately in Tuktoyaktuk, about three or four years ago it was privatized. It worked fairly well at the beginning. But eventually the person that got the contract, I guess after the contract expired, quit selling gasoline to the local community, so the Northern Store took on that responsibility. At present, though, it's good to know that the contractor in Tuk is still providing diesel heating fuel for the community, but again I think it's important that the department should really look at these kind of issues that might come up further down the road. We're fortunate that Northern Store in Tuk eventually took that gas station service. The costs are within reason with the previous contractor, but again, you know, it's these kind of things that in small communities when you privatize to make sure that they'll be there for a long time, the long term. Not to

go in there and then just because it's costing them too much they go somewhere else.

Mr. Chairman, these are just some of my general comments and I thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much, Mr. Pokiak. Next on the list for general comments I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to offer a few general comments. First off, I just want to take this opportunity to put it on record that when a Member or myself especially raises questions about contracting process, I don't mean in any way to diminish or underestimate or undervalue the importance of the sound contracting process, and we do not want to see any safety or quality issues compromised. I just want to make sure that my concerns, if I bring them up, are based on fairness and openness of the process. So I just want to leave it at that.

The second thing I do want to say is on the TSC issue. I'm not saying that just because a person who is in charge is here, but I do want to commend the department for a real good job that was done in rolling that program out. I don't know; I haven't seen a survey on anything...maybe I did see some on what the people feel about how the new, the network program we have, I think I may have seen some and I think the ratio was quite high. But as for me, personally as a user and someone who has been in and out of the government system for at least 21 years when a long time ago we didn't even have an e-mail. I think we had to get into HP system to see. Only some people had access to e-mail. Then for a long time before this new program rolled out, really it was not practical or useful to access government e-mail because you couldn't open most of the documents. For people like us or many people out there who are travelling or they are in different regions or different parts of the country on business, or even if you wanted to access your e-mail at work, it really is helping a lot.

So obviously it's a real improvement on the program, but I think the credit has to be given to how it was rolled out, because I think there was a lot of prep work done to prepare all the users on how it's going to be done and who was going to get it first. So I think we are always quick to note on what doesn't get done right and focus on the problem areas, but I have always...I remember going through a lot of briefings with the previous Minister on this initiative and I really thought that it was carried out really well, so I do want to commend the department and the staff and the Minister who are involved with that.

There was just one more issue that I wanted to comment on and I think it's something that I've mentioned already in question period today, and that has to do with this exciting new project. That's another thing. Often, I think, I'm never shy for pointing out problem areas and the shortfalls that the government has to address, but sometimes I don't think government does even enough to sell what they do good and what they do well, and I have actually pointed out things to other Ministers about some of the things that the government is doing that they should spend more time talking about, and that project I think is what's going on at the North Slave Correctional Centre and that pellet boiler system. I remember watching that and thinking how come we didn't know anything about that? Our Standing Committee on Social Programs oversees the work of

Justice, but maybe that was briefed in DPW. But I do want to just state for the record again that I think that's a very exciting project. I think we should be proud of the fact that that is the first one in North America as a test case, but it's something that is very suitable to us because we are so far away from the source of fuel and diesel distribution systems. We do have a capacity to have a sawmill operation, so maybe years down the road we could be involved in manufacturing those pellets. I don't mean that we should all go out and change our major heating systems to pellets instantly, but the GNWT is one of the biggest builders of the Territories. I would like to see the government really focus on the next major project, whether it's a school or government building or something, to really work to incorporate this option in part of the plan to see if we can expand the use of that and gradually, if it turns out successful, make this as a viable option to our heating system. I don't know all the details of this operation and I'd like to get more detail on that. But from what I saw and heard, I really do see a lot of downside and I'd like to encourage the Minister to...(inaudible)...that. Those are my general comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. No other speakers on the list for general comments, so I'll direct...The questions will come up, Mr. Minister, through the detail, but if you wish to comment briefly on the concerns that were raised, I'll allow you to do that. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the issue regarding the piling agreement...(inaudible)...I think if we're in a community, I think we're able to work with the community governments.

Also a question that was asked by Calvin in regard to the facilities that were sold to individuals which use the government facilities. I believe there is a program within the Housing Corporation for such an initiative. But again, we are doing these surveys. We're identifying those communities. I think we can also include those facilities as part of our planning process.

But in regards to the Deline school, we are going to be going in there this summer to complete that project. Also, there's the question about the ramp facility. That will also be as part of the contract to have that also concluded this summer.

In regards to the drinking water that we're involved in, again, it does include other agencies, but again it's to make sure we have the capacity not only within our departments, but also within the communities to ensure that those facilities are up and running and we do have the trained, qualified operators in those communities with the training that they do require in order to maintain and operate. I think that's one of our biggest challenges.

Again, with the situation with regards to the biomass, that heat system, it is a partnership that we've been involved with. We partnered with a company in regards to Arctic Green Energy. Basically all we are is they came in, they set the facility up, they pay for the pellets, they pay to operate it and all we do is purchase the heat off the facility. But again, it's something that we are opening to partnering with other companies and new technologies that are out there, and I think we are open to that and I think this shows that with the project we've done in regard

to the corrections facility. I think that does show we can work with the private sector to build on that.

In regards to the TSC, we are doing a review I believe next month with a bunch of client departments to see exactly what they think of the service and exactly how we can improve, and also so we can get feedback from them. So there's a major review that's taking place in the next month.

So those are some of the comments back in regards to the questions that were asked, but we will get more detail once we get into the budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Committee, I'll direct you to page 5-7, that's the operations expenditure summary which we'll defer to the end and we'll actually start the detail on page 5-10, and that's the revenue summary. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 5-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$7.341 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: The question I have here is for the programs that are being delivered in our community in terms of DPW process of gathering information. I want to ask the Minister, Mr. Chairman, in terms of how they assess it. I know they go through a very complex system and when they put a program into a service or upgrading a service in our communities up in our region that great care is taken and consideration is given due to the distance away from larger centres such as Yellowknife and Hay River. The accessibility to our communities is sometimes challenging because we have limited barging system and limited road system, and if we don't catch those two systems we have to fly certain materials and supplies in and sometimes our region loses out on such opportunities because of the way the structure was set up. No fault to anybody. I guess I'm just asking that the Minister, Mr. Chairman, has some flexibility in terms of providing some flexibility to some of our local communities. Sometimes there's bad weather for weeks and there are so many people working in the department, sometimes the chain of command doesn't quite...Sometimes they misinterpret. Even the best communication gets misinterpreted sometimes. So it's just for those type of delays that our region is taking and given some extra consideration when they're working with our region that there's some fairness and consideration given to some of our projects that have to be done in our region. I want to ask that question, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in all cases, most of the work that we do is put out by way of public tenders, or else we do have a sole-source contract arrangement with, say, a local operator in specific communities. Those are put out by way of requests for proposal. We do try every way to inform individuals that tenders are coming out, when they're coming out, and offer people in those communities the opportunity to bid on those contracts. Again, it's a question about capacity issues. In some cases, the expertise may not be there so we may have to go outside to major regional centres or even farther south to find that

expertise. In some cases, we do have a situation like we had in Deline in regards to the school where it was an emergency, so we had to react to it quick so we had to get people in, get the job done and make sure the children were safe and back in school. So we do have those situations, but the majority of time those contracts are tendered through our tendering process and also try to give as much opportunity for local people to bid on those projects and also retain the work in those communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, I agree with the Minister in terms of some of this work. Sometimes it's very specialized and you need to get people from outside that may have the capacity to do it in our region. I agree with him; that's the case that you have to go in that area. I guess what I'm asking is some consideration when they have certain capacity and capability in our communities or our region that it's being looked at in that sense. I want to certainly support our local business in our communities.

In our region there's no all-season roads. We are somewhat isolated in our region, so we're somewhat, Mr. Chair, at a disadvantage from other communities that have all-season roads going into the communities where they can easily get the materials by vehicles, and those communities that have to be serviced by barges or by aircraft are sometimes at a disadvantage. I want to ask the department if they would give some consideration, do some assessment of what can get done and look at some of those factors, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, we definitely will take the Member's question as notice. But I think we do have processes we do follow in regards to negotiated contracting guidelines. We also ensure that we do have a process. In most cases we have to work with the local agency or hamlet council or the education boards and whatnot to look at facilities like the school or health centre. In those cases, the communities are involved all the way through the process, so I think it's important that we build on that.

Again, if there are capacity issues that we have to deal with, we do try to work with communities to formulate that amongst themselves who have the capacity, but also try to give the community enough time to go out and find that expertise so that they can work with them to take on some of these projects. So again, we'll definitely look into this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, again I agree with the Minister in terms of there is a process already established by this government and a process established by the Department of Public Works and Services, and I certainly want to support the Minister and this government to adhere by this process. There is some flexibility that the Minister has looked, he said he will consider within our region. I can give you some examples; however, I just don't want to do it because

there's no need to. I think the Minister has given me some assurance that he'll look at and I take it that he'll do that for me and for the people I represent in the Sahtu region. So I'm going to leave it at that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Committee, we are on page 5-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$7.341 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-17, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$42.535 million. Mr. Villeneuve.

Motion 44-15(5): Wood Pile Inspection And Repair Program, Carried

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Pile Inspection and Repair Program continue in order to address the building condition and safety issues identified in the building condition reports. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The motion is just being passed around. I'll just give committee a moment to get the motion.

To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I'll be speaking in favour of this. I think over the last couple of years we've certainly identified that this has turned into quite a safety risk, and I wouldn't want to think that the bureaucracy in any way would be slowing this process down. In recognizing that piles were put under buildings with maybe misunderstood technology or misunderstanding the problem at the time, they're not surviving in such a way that our schools, our buildings, et cetera, are able to last. So that being said, Mr. Chairman, realizing the risk, I think we're at greater risk by ignoring it and significant legal risk by not taking every step before us to ensure that this problem is dealt with as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. All those in favour? Those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. We are on page 5-17, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to, for the record, declare a conflict under asset management because of leases held with Public Works and Services from a company which I'm a shareholder. So I'd like the record to note that and I will remove myself from any discussion on this matter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen, for bringing that to our attention. I'll allow you to excuse yourself from the vote on this page. We are

on page 5-17, activity summary, asset management. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a quick question for the Minister, I guess. Earlier in my general comments I indicated about the privatization of petroleum products. I'd just like to ask the Minister if he can be very careful in terms of when they do start looking at privatization in small communities that they make sure that once their contracts are out to private people, that they will make sure that they abide even further than the end of the contract. Like I said earlier, in Tuktoyaktuk we did encounter some problems. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do work along with the communities. So if we know there's a situation where the community may run out of fuel or gas, we make attempt to also go in and have a separate supply of fuel in those communities. We had a situation in Wrigley where we went in and actually brought fuel products to the community to ensure they didn't run out. So we definitely do that. But again, the policy of the government is that if there's a private operator in the communities, we try to avoid to compete. But again in small communities, in some cases we know we can't do that. There is a problem in communities where there is a high cost of living, but also somebody has that situation where you can't get the product and it makes it hard for the individual. So we are definitely open to that. We've had that situation occur already and we have dealt with that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Pokiak?

MR. POKIAK: No, that's it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the question I have for the Minister is on the granular material planning and coordination. Is the Minister working with the other departments that will require this type of specific supply in our communities so that they can be done all at once in terms of our limited access to the winter roads? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, we are the lead agent who works along with other departments -- MACA, Transportation, local municipalities, the Housing Corporation -- so we try to do a plan so that everybody who are going to need gravel, make sure that everybody is aware that there is going to be a gravel haul in a particular community. Also, we try to get as much mileage as we can by ensuring that everybody pool their resources and be able to identify that this applies for all the communities. So we do, again, work in conjunction with those other agencies to ensure we're able to accomplish that. So we definitely work with other boards and agencies and departments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to what the Minister has said and how we come to results in my community in terms of this coordination effort and that the proper procedures are put in place when all the gravel is brought to our communities. We had some difficulty with missing gravel, so I am not too sure how that is being dealt with in terms of future situations like this for gravel and who owns what. I wanted to ensure that I would not like to see this happen to other communities in terms of how that was rolled out by having this gravel being brought into our community. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the reason the government has decentralized this responsibility is to not only coordinate but also to ensure we do have a secure gravel source in the community that we don't have a situation where we are losing gravel. Want to make sure it's coordinated, it's in a secure location and it meets the needs of our client departments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last issue I want to talk about is with regard to the Chief Albert Wright School being built in Tulita and the issue of gravel being a concern. It somewhat boggles my mind when I look at this issue. Gravel was brought in from Norman Wells in sandbags, barged in from Norman Wells to Tulita. We have the same gravel in Tulita that is in Norman Wells. Why did we bring the gravel in on that barge? Maybe it had to do with some equipment that we didn't have in Tulita. It's just mind blowing to me. People in Tulita just laugh because they are saying you are hauling gravel now from one community to the next community. Maybe they should have brought in a machine to do the work in Tulita. It just doesn't make sense. I guess that's what we are asking. That's what I want to say is the issue here. That's what the people in my region ask about in terms of the coordination of this issue here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to the gravel that was brought into the community from Norman Wells, the gravel was a type of gravel that had to be used to do the concrete. That's why you needed that special type of gravel that had to be crushed in a certain size. That's why the gravel was brought in from Norman Wells by way of barge.

The other gravel that's in the community, they have been able to work with other departments, Transportation and the private sector to ensure we have enough gravel in the community to do the Albert Wright School project which is currently under way. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, two miles away we have our gravel that far from the distance of the concrete. So I guess I disagree with the Minister on that point, however, he will have the information to back him up on that. I don't think that kind of information would satisfy our people at

least. So, Mr. Chairman, I am going to leave it at that for now and continue on with the budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to argue with the Member, but I believe it's the granular material that's from the pit in Norman Wells that was used for the crush and also the material outside of Tulita is pit run. There is a difference between the type of material that was used in this case. Again, if the Member wants more information on this matter, I am more than willing to sit down with him and give him the information and data that he requests.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to the information from the pits on this issue here from the department. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: I definitely look forward to working with the Member resolving the pit question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We are on page 5-17, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$42.535 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-18, activity summary, asset management, grants and contributions, grants, \$260,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-23, activity summary, Technology Service Centre, operations expenditure summary, \$885,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Before we go any further, I would just like to recognize the folks who are in the audience there. We have the junior cager basketball team from Deline.

---Applause

Thanks for being with us. Good luck to you. Page 5-23, Technology Service Centre, operations expenditure summary, \$885,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-25, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$1.039 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-26, information item, lease commitments - infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-27, Technology Service Centre, chargeback.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Anything questions? Information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-30, public stores revolving fund. Anything questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-31, petroleum products revolving fund. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-34 and 5-35, information item, work performed on behalf of others, total \$1.763 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I will now draw your attention back to page 5-7, where we have the department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$51.8 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I will now draw your attention to the infrastructure acquisition plan. If you could please, turn to 4-6 of the plan. That's infrastructure acquisition plan, asset management, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$1.201 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total activity, \$1.201 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-8, information acquisition plan, Technology Service Centre, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$900,000. Total activity, \$900,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 4-10, infrastructure acquisition plan, petroleum products division, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$6.288 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total activity, \$6.288 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total department, \$8.389 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Public Works and Services' estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I would like to thank you, Minister Krutko, Mr. Aumond and Mr. Gabel, for being with us this afternoon. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress at this time. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 18: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 21, Appropriation Act 2007-2008, and Committee Report 8-15(5) and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. McLeod. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We will return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the Tulita Timber Wolves, the basketball team from Tulita that is playing in Yellowknife this weekend. I would like to recognize the young players who recently won a championship in Fort Simpson. I would like to start off with a young fellow, Nathan Peters, Napoleon Kenny, Sam "Hoops" Yakeleya, Zak Bayha, Gary Yatsili, Robert Peter, Nick Yakeleya, George Wrigley, Brent McCauley and their teacher, also the coach and mentor, Neil Barry, and tireless hard-working chaperone, Evelyn Peters. Welcome to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 20: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Gail Bennett): There will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at the rise of the House today.

Orders of the day for Monday, February 19, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Archives Act
 - Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008
 - Committee Report 7-15(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 8-15(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 9-15(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 19, 2007, at 1:30 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 13:55.

