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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 12, 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 afternoon, colleagues. 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 84-15(5): Mallik Gas Hydrates Program**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Aurora College, through the Aurora Research Institute, or ARI, is involved in a major research project in the Beaufort-Delta working with Natural Resources Canada and the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation, an arm of the Government of Japan. ARI is assisting with the delivery of a major energy research program involving gas hydrates.

Japan and Canada have collaborated to advance research on gas hydrates for the past 10 years, having completed previous field projects at the Mallik site in 1998 and 2002. Japan has a keen interest in gas hydrates as it has sources offshore where there are immense challenges in conducting research. The work underway is pioneering new methods of extracting gas hydrates and the results of this research will not only benefit the NWT, Canada and Japan, but other locations where deposits of gas hydrates exist. Finding new sources of energy, particularly cleaner sources of energy, is important for the international community.

Mr. Speaker, gas hydrates are a solid form of natural gas, which is believed to be abundant in the Mackenzie Delta. The Mallik Gas Hydrates Research and Development Program is planned over two winters, 2006-07 and 2007-08. The goal is to see the first experimental production from gas hydrates. As gas hydrate deposits also occur in marine settings, Japan is interested in evaluating whether techniques developed and proven in the NWT are applicable to the production of Japanese offshore deposits.

Natural gas is a clean burning hydrocarbon fuel. Canada would benefit if gas hydrates could be developed as an environmentally sustainable resource. The NWT would benefit as estimates suggest the volume of gas hydrates in the Mackenzie Delta may equal or exceed that of conventional gas resources.

Mr. Speaker, the project is on track. Road construction was initiated in December and, in February, drilling equipment was mobilized to the site. Currently two research wells are being drilled. Between 100 and 115 people are working at the camp which has reached full

capacity. Despite harsh weather conditions, good progress is being made.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this House may take pride in this \$50 million research project as it has an unprecedented role for Aurora College and ARI. The college is acting as a coordinator for field activities with major contracts following the terms of the access and benefits agreement signed with the Inuvialuit Development Corporation. This ensures that local businesses and joint ventures play a key role in the program with the majority of the program budget being spent on contracts with northern drilling and oilfield companies.

The Gas Hydrates Research Program is a good opportunity for Aurora Research Institute to take an active role in leading-edge research in the energy sector and could improve the ability of ARI to secure funding for other large-scale programs including alternate energy programs related to wind and hydro power.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT is focussed on all aspects of energy development in northern Canada. Responsible development of rich energy resources will play a key role in the economic development of the Northwest Territories and will have an impact on the Energy Strategy of Canada as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Minister's Statement 85-15(5): Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report today on the excellent performance of NWT harvested furs at recent fur auctions.

In total, over 9,000 NWT pelts have been sold at three separate auctions since January. In all cases, fur sold through the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program has outperformed fur from all other jurisdictions at auction...

---Applause

...with total sales from all pelts now expected to exceed \$800,000.

Marten pelts sold through the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program continue to fetch a higher-than-average price for harvesters in the NWT; over \$79 for NWT pelts compared to the overall average of just over \$69.

Mr. Speaker, while prices for marten spiked dramatically last year, those results were an exception to the norm and were fuelled, in part, by exceptional interest from the

Chinese marketplace that was not renewed to the same extent this year.

The price of individual marten pelts is down from last year. However, Mr. Speaker, it is on par with those that have been recorded for the past five years and is, in fact, up slightly from two years ago. This is important to us, Mr. Speaker, because as a government we originated the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program in 2002 for the exact circumstances we are witnessing today.

The Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program provides: a guaranteed fur advance for NWT trappers while their fur is shipped for sale; a prime bonus fur those whose furs sell for more than the advance; and a grubstake payment of \$5 per pelt paid to eligible trappers at the start of each fur trapping season.

It provides NWT trappers with a comprehensive fur marketing service and ensures trappers in the NWT are secure in the knowledge that they will receive a return from their efforts.

Since the program's inception, the price for marten pelts has risen sharply from about \$60 per pelt Canadian to the almost \$80 we are discussing today. Marten pelts account for almost 80 percent of the total value of the NWT harvest.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps most importantly, I am pleased to report that since the introduction of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, the number of youth involved in the trapping industry is continuing to grow.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this trend indicates that the trapping sector of our traditional economy is getting stronger and continues to benefit residents across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Waste Of Caribou Meat

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years, I have become much more informed about caribou and hunting than I ever was prior to that time. The one issue that kept coming up that caught my attention was a discussion by Members in this House, by people everywhere I travelled in the Northwest Territories, and that's the issue of waste. Mr. Speaker, I am specifically talking of stories where animals are shot and only the back strap and hind quarters are taken. In some cases, the animals aren't even gutted. I have heard stories of meat being labelled as diseased because they didn't want to bother carrying it back to their boat because it was too far. Stories of animals being shot and they checked the brisket by cutting the brisket to see if there is any fat and if there is no fat, the entire animal is just left and they go on to the next animal that was shot.

I have seen pictures, 120 animals shot on the Dempster Highway, bodies all dragged to the side of the road, a big pile of bodies, antlers, hooves, just thrown together, a monstrous pile, 120 at one time.

I have heard of hunters shooting into the herd; I was told rifles probably not even sighted, hoping to hit something. If nothing dropped, they carry on not checking for wounded animals.

I have heard the stories of people being able to go out on Gordon Lake afterwards just to walk around and harvest all the tongues and all the other parts that have been left behind, the front shoulders, the ribs, because they are not being picked up; of animals being shot far in capacity to take them out of the place they are being hunted.

Mr. Speaker, as we talk about the value of these animals and the precious gift that they are, clearly one of the things we have to keep in mind is that we can't forget that point. As we talk about the caribou numbers and what's happening to the animals, we can't afford to waste what is really and truly a precious resource. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Decisive Action Required To Protect Caribou

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in late January of this year, more than 150 harvesters, biologists, regulatory officials and elected leaders met in Inuvik to tackle the critical issue of a declining caribou herds. Those three days of discussions were preceded by a similar meeting in Yellowknife a month earlier, and since then by other meetings among industry and community groups. The strong show of participation in Inuvik, the respectful and businesslike tone and the debates and the wide range of consensus delivers a crystal clear message, Mr. Speaker, that northerners are united on the need and the urgency to take decisive action to protect the caribou.

Delegates at the Inuvik summit delivered more than 20 recommendations on what to do. These ranged from reductions in harvesting to the need for more training, awareness of responsible harvesting practices, to comprehensive monitoring and reporting of harvest levels. That's just a few of the consensus points they delivered.

Later this week, Mr. Speaker, there will be yet one more critical set of meetings when the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board holds its hearing into the issue. As the statutory resource board designated by the Tlicho settlement, I am confident that their findings will present further good direction on what should be done. Now, Mr. Speaker, the duty and the responsibility to translate all these recommendations into concrete actions falls on this government. We are the agency with the mandate, resources and the authority to take action.

Mr. Speaker, our government must not be timid. This Assembly needs to heed the messages sent by that unprecedented gathering in Inuvik and the recommendations yet to come from Wekeezhii. We must back them up with equal resolve and determination. We must show that we, too, will do our part as stewards of the

caribou and everything they mean to our people in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Consultations With Tlicho Elders On Wildlife Management Decisions

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod, gave his Minister's statement in the House during this session, I was glad to hear him say the co-management boards established under land claims agreements have the primary responsibility for wildlife management in their settlement areas.

Mr. Speaker, before anyone starts any research, identification or monitoring on Tlicho lands, chapter 12 of the Tlicho Agreement specifically states that proposals have to be submitted by the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board for their review before any activity happens on the land. Mr. Speaker, government should also be talking to Tlicho elders before any major decisions are made.

Environment and Natural Resources should be talking to the elders, not just the wildlife biologists, before they come onto our land to monitor caribou herds. Mr. Speaker, traditional knowledge is respecting Tlicho. Any decision made without consulting the elders will not be respected by us as the Tlicho Government. Mr. Speaker, specifically, the elders need to be consulted about the wolves and the increase in population in our region. I have stood here before this House and talked about the people in the Tlicho communities and their concern about how close the predators are coming to them and how they are concerned for their children's safety. Mr. Speaker, we are worried that it is only a matter of time that the wolves start attacking our children.

Mr. Speaker, I must stress again the need for ENR to work more closely with the elders before any final decisions are made about the caribou and other issues such as predators before any decision is made. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Sustainable Caribou Population Levels

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Envision the caribou roaming on this vast countryside of tundra and forests. The caribou, once in large numbers, continue to migrate in search of food and eventually locate to their calving grounds to start the cycle all over again. The caribou do not understand the meaning of boundaries, because they need to continue to move from feeding place to feeding place to survive.

Mr. Speaker, the caribou have provided meat and clothing to the people of the Northwest Territories for generations and generations and they are known to survive predation and hunting. Over the past 20 years or so, with the invention of snowmobiles and aircraft, people in the Northwest Territories find it a lot easier to hunt this free-roaming species.

Mr. Speaker, recently, over the last few months, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources conducted photo census aerial surveys of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose West, Bluenose East, Tuk Peninsula, Porcupine and Bathurst herds, and much to ENR's co-management board's surprise, to find the numbers in these herds declining. Why? There are many reasons that can relate to the decline of the herds. A few examples are predation by wolves, bears and over hunting by the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in response to the surveys, the Department of ENR held community hearings with the local hunters and trappers committees along the Beaufort and Mackenzie Valley to discuss the numbers. The department of ENR and some of the co-management boards agreed that something had to be done to address the decline of the herds. Mr. Speaker, we, as legislators, but more specifically the Minister of ENR, must continue to work with the co-management boards to make sure the caribou will be around for generations to come. We owe it to our children and their children.

Mr. Speaker, I will not put the blame on anyone, but I will continue to support the decision of the Minister in ensuring the caribou numbers increase to a level where they are sustainable. My continued support for the Minister's decision is dependent on whether the department does a thorough consultation process with the Behchoko Management Board established under the respective land claim agreement. Those groups without a land claim will need to take care of their interests. In closing, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has taken a precautionary step to address the concerns of the caribou herds that we must continue to do more for the benefit of all Northwest Territories residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Long-Term Impacts Of Caribou Management Decisions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for generations, caribou have taken care of the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories. They fed us, clothed us, and provided tools for us. Mr. Speaker, we have been told lately that the numbers are declining and now it is our turn to look after the future of the caribou. Aboriginal governments and the co-management boards recognize that there may be a problem and want to do what they can to ensure the survival of the caribou for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, caribou are a way of life for the aboriginal people. They always have been. We have to do now what is best for the survival of the caribou. Let us not wait until the herds are depleted to the point of where they cannot recover.

Mr. Speaker, there is a story I always like to tell. I ran into an elder while I was driving on the Dempster Highway. This is a guy who has been around for years. He has hunted caribou for years. He is driving up and down the highway picking up piles of guts from the side of the road. I asked him why he was doing that. He said we tell people that we can govern ourselves, but yet we leave garbage on the side of the road. That wasn't sending a very good message to people. So he took it upon himself to pick up these piles of guts and go throw them away, because that is how much he didn't want people to think badly of his people.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, this elder is now gone but I think a lot of us here are getting close to being elders; some closer than others. It is now our turn to carry his message forward and do what we can to teach the future generations to respect the caribou. My grandson is nine months old, Mr. Speaker, and I want to come to a point as he gets older to be able to enjoy the benefits of the caribou like we all have and not just have it a story in history that his grandpa tells him when the caribou were plentiful and roaming the Northwest Territories and we didn't do what we could to manage these caribou and sadly, grandson, there are no caribou left for you. We have to go to Northern and buy pork chops or beef from Alberta. We don't want that day to come, Mr. Speaker. We are in a position, along with the rest of the leadership of the Northwest Territories, that we can do something about it and leave something for the future generations and not deplete it today. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Incorporating Traditional Knowledge In Caribou Management

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that binds the people of the Sahtu more strongly than the land and the culture and it is the caribou. Mr. Speaker, our region has over 70 licensed tourism establishments, including outfitters, outpost camps, catering to the outdoor tourists as well as big game outfitters and sports fishermen. They are welcome to our region, Mr. Speaker, but they need to respect the land they operate. It is our land and not theirs. I talked about some of the stories. I talked to one young guide who worked in the Mackenzie Mountains. I asked him, do you guys shoot sheep? He said yes. Do you guys skin the sheep also for the people? He said yes. I said how do you skin the sheep? He was telling me. I said, don't you know the traditional knowledge and what our people have been telling is that when you shoot a sheep, you cannot skin it where you shot it. You have to pack it a mile or two away, then you have to skin it. But there is a certain way you have to skin this animal because it is a precious animal to us. It is a gift to us. So traditional laws like that, we are losing them fast in the mountains.

Mr. Speaker, that meat from the various animals we shoot in the mountains gets distributed to people in the Sahtu communities and older people that want this meat. The delicacy sometimes is not brought into the communities. Some of the meat is sometimes not distributed fast enough. It is old. Sometimes the meat is full of sand on it. Sometimes the meat is spoiled. People sometimes

don't understand why this is happening, that people in the North in my country here are wondering why certain parts of their skills are not being used by the outfitters. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pokiak from Nunakput talked about our land here in terms of our land claim agreements, in terms of an agreement that should be respected. I, for one, support the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board in terms of their decision on this issue here with caribou.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that one day I hope we will see our free-roaming caribou and that we don't have to walk into a Legislative Assembly and see an animal in our foyer that is stuffed and that is the only thing that we can see and are the results of our caribou in the future. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Value-Added Opportunities For Caribou Products

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today we are having a theme day on the value of the natural resource of caribou in our territory. Like most wildlife species, there are many factors that affect the populations in nature. Their numbers rise and fall in historical cyclic patterns. Whether in times of plenty or in times of decline, it is always in season to consider treating this precious resource with respect. For many generations, the caribou have been a source of food and hides for garments. In this day and age, I think it would still be respectful to think of every way possible that value could be derived from these creatures. When hunted for meat, many hides and racks of antlers are left with the animals that are hunted. Fewer and fewer people are willing or have the knowledge to process the hides with traditional tanning methods.

I know that caribou are a way of life for aboriginal people. We don't have to visit very many homes in the small community and you will see caribou ribs on the stove boiling and you will see caribou slabs drying and hanging on racks in the kitchen drying for dry meat. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is time to consider some value-added aspects of the caribou, including value to hunters for the hides that could be traditionally or commercially tanned. Hides can be processed with hair on or hair off. There are many uses for such hides. In the past, the government conducted a pilot project associated with the muskox harvest that saw value realized from the hair made into beautiful garments, commercially processing the hides which produced unique material for garments and furniture upholstery. Why not the same available for caribou hides so that harvesters can have their hunting costs offset through the value of the hides? There would also be economy created in the commercial tanning process. Caribou hair is also dyed or left natural for tufting in works of art such as that we see decorating birch bark baskets, garments and framed art. Then there are the beautiful items created by the antlers either left in their natural state or sawn up to make all types of jewellery and accessories.

I believe this government has a role to play in organizing and creating opportunities for the many value-added opportunities that would create an incentive for every and

all parts of the caribou to be used. To do less is to waste this valuable resource and what it has to offer and to deprive those involved in the harvest for realizing as much economic value from these creatures as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Responsibility Of Individuals For Caribou Management Decisions

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, too, I would also like to use my Member's statement to talk about our caribou and the crisis that the caribou are in. Caribou, Mr. Speaker, is our most important renewable resource here in the NWT, second only to the people of the NWT whose survival is directly attributable to our caribou and our other wildlife. Although there are issues that are before the courts that we cannot discuss here in the House which are directly related to this caribou crisis and the recommendations for recovery of our herds by this government, I feel that it is now time to send a strong message out to the public that each individual's actions to address the declining numbers is a first step towards a full recovery of our herds' numbers.

Mr. Speaker, the coffee shop talk-of-the-day is either about climate change, energy conservation or caribou hunting. I hear about people going out and getting caribou. Being an avid hunter myself, I am never hesitant to ask how many caribou that were successfully hunted. Many people will be glad to tell you just how many they harvested over the hunt that they went out on and what they did with the meat. This is all good information for everybody in the coffee shop because now everybody will know who to go to visit to get some caribou meat. By letting people in the coffee shop know how many you harvested, Mr. Speaker, it is just no longer considered coffee shop talk. This is really very important and vital information on our caribou survival. We all have to show our support for our caribou by being more diligent and informative as to how many caribou were actually taken by informing our local wildlife officers after each successful hunt. With more and better details on exactly how many caribou are actually being harvested by all northerners, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, we can all be confident that any future management actions that may restrict or place certain conditions on sectors of our society from exercising their historical harvesting practices are the right decisions and that we should, and will, stand behind these actions without resolve or reservation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Federal Funding For Public Transit System

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I will be talking about an urgent matter for the City of Yellowknife. I want to discuss the federal funding for the public transit system, or what I should be calling the

stalled federal funding transit initiative that was promised by the federal government to the City of Yellowknife. It is about time that the Minister of MACA remembers that he works for big communities and small communities equally. The federal government has recognized how important a strong and sustainable public transit system is and they have, to their credit, even introduced a tax deduction that highlights that. So where is the City of Yellowknife's transit money?

I have addressed this issue in previous Member's statements with no answers, although I continue to be very hopeful. I am concerned about the federal transit funding promised to the City of Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the funding available under the New Deal for cities and communities, the federal government was going to make over \$1 million available for existing NWT public transit systems, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, this money has been available for some time and still the City of Yellowknife has not received a dime or even a bus token on this matter. An initial announcement was made on June 1, 2005, which further underscores how this issue has been stalled by the Minister of MACA. Further, Mr. Speaker, B.C. and Ontario have been spending their money since September 2005, and still we have no idea of where this money is and what the Minister is planning to do with it. This money can improve our transit ridership in Yellowknife and decrease our greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging more people to use public transit.

Yellowknife is a growing city. Our economy depends on a good transit system, Mr. Speaker. I would like to see some support from our MACA Minister to deliver on that money. Mr. Speaker, if you want to encourage people to ride the bus, you need to have buses. If you want buses, you need the money that was promised to get them on the street. So, Mr. Speaker, I have to remind the Minister; what is he doing? Is he re-engineering the definition that promised the City of Yellowknife transit money, or what is he doing? I don't know. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will have questions for the Minister of MACA yet again, who is supposed to represent big and small communities equally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about Stanton Territorial Hospital. I want to address the deficit that is facing this hospital. As well, I want to clarify an item I mentioned on Friday during discussions on the supplementary appropriation act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to state, for the record, that on Friday I did mention that the Department of Health and Social Services had not informed the House that Stanton Hospital's deficit for 2005-06 was \$5.8 million. Mr. Speaker, upon further review, this information was in fact contained in the public accounts for 2005-06. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the flagship of our health care system, Stanton Territorial Hospital, is awash in \$13 million of red ink: \$5.8 million in 2005-06 and another \$7 million in 2006-07. On Friday, through the supplementary

appropriation, \$2.9 million, or half of the deficit for 2005-06, was approved. That leaves us now in a \$10 million dilemma. There is little doubt that the hospital has been chronically underfunded for the past four years. Many issues have been raised in the House in the areas of staffing, morale, cleanliness and laundry services. The Minister has an obligation to plan to address this deficit through working with Regular Members on the Standing Committee on Social Programs. It would appear that Stanton has been underfunded and denied its request for proper funding and, Mr. Speaker, it is little wonder why there are morale issues and staffing concerns at this hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for disclosing the fact that, this year, the deficit is close to \$7 million at Stanton. I appreciate his honesty. However, we need to come up with a plan to fund that hospital more effectively. Requests for funding coming from the hospital have to be acted on in a manner that is more becoming of the essential service that it provides to this territory. The fear I have, Mr. Speaker, and all Members of this House should have, is that the department may now be looking at imposing a deficit recovery plan at Stanton. Mr. Speaker, this would come after years of chronic underfunding and this action would cause untold duress to this hospital. We need a recovery plan that includes increased funding for the future. We also need to be talking about ways in which we can make this the best hospital that we can. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Traditional Activities At William McDonald School

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with today's theme of learning about and respecting the traditional way of life and preserving our wildlife, I would like to take this opportunity to speak about some very interesting and exciting activities William McDonald School is involved in, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday morning, twelve Grade 8 students and five teachers, led by Mr. Radcliffe, set off on a five-day dog mushing trip to Behchoko and back. They will be travelling with five dog teams under the supervision of the world-renowned expert dog musher, our very own Grant Beck.

---Applause

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MS. LEE: This is the first time such an endeavour has been undertaken by any school in Yellowknife. They stopped in Enodah last night. With the technology of satellite, we were able to track them down there. They lodged at Trout Rock. Today, as we speak, they are taking their turns mushing the dog teams toward Behchoko. Tonight they will be staying with Moise and Joyce Rabesca. Mr. Speaker, they won't be stopping at comfortable lodges all the way. They will be camping and learning how to survive in the cold for the last three days. They will also be stopping at Blackduck Lake and meet and learn from Eddie Rabesca who will teach them traditional knowledge including how he sets the nets and all the other things that go on in the bush.

Mr. Speaker, there is another team of William McDonald students travelling by skidoo to another area around the city to learn about traditional and outdoor living, under the direction of Mr. Jeff Seabrook.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the excellent academic work our students do in our schools, but they do a lot more. Some of the William McDonald students have spent a lot of time Paging with us during this long session as well. Mr. Speaker, I know that the students and teachers involved in this dog mushing trip spent countless hours planning, raising money and organizing. This would not have happened without the leadership of principal Dean MacInnis and generous involvement by Grant Beck and his beautiful dogs. A lot of businesses and parents contributed to make this happen. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them and to encourage everyone involved to have this as a regular event in their school curriculum. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my wife, Judy.

---Applause

I would also like to recognize my new CA, Ms. Billie Lennie. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a special guest in the gallery. Mr. Andrew Chatwood is a former Member of Parliament for the riding that used to be called Grand Falls-White Bay, Labrador, which included an eastern island of Newfoundland, all of Labrador and the southern tip of the Northwest Territories that is now part of Nunavut. He would like to be recognized more as the grandfather of one of our Pages from William McDonald School, Zander Chatwood. He is also the father-in-law of someone well known to us all, Dr. Ewin Affleck. He is up there with his daughter, Susan Chatwood-Affleck. I would like to welcome them to the House.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a member of the Fort Resolution Seniors' Society, the president of the Native Women's Association of the NWT, my mother, Ms. Terry Villeneuve. Welcome.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the gallery. It's always nice to have an audience here. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, our region has over 70 licensed tours and establishments, including outfitters, outpost camps that cater to the outdoor tourist, as well as big game outfitters and sports fishermen. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI if he is aware of how many aboriginal people are employed by outfitters in the Mackenzie Mountain region. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the exact number at my fingertips here, but I would say unfortunately not many; not enough. We believe that if we're going to be serious about economic diversification, tourism holds out a lot of potential. But it will only work if we effectively involve local people, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's statement, talking about traditional knowledge and how important it is that we adhere to that and understand that. I think we can only do that with the involvement of local people, obviously. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of ITI, is his department keeping stats on the numbers of people hired in the Mackenzie Mountain region? Is his department keeping stats? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Between my department and the Department of ENR, we can get that information. I don't have it in front of me. We work through our regional offices, we work with the tourism operators, and we do collect that kind of information. I can certainly provide that for the Member and will commit to do so. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the information the Minister is going to provide to me. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, has his department or his people in our region heard about any types of complaints in terms of the conditions of the meat that is brought into our communities and when those meats are brought in and how they're looked after? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, yes, anecdotally I can tell you that the last time I was in the region I did talk to our regional staff. They raised a number of these concerns that had been brought forward to them. We will sit down with our regional staff, we'll sit down with our tourism outfitters and make sure that they understand the requirements and understand how they can...I mean it may just be a matter of informing people properly, Mr. Speaker. We're certainly prepared to do that and that is a good role for government to play. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of ITI, can he update the Tourism Act that can sort out some of these things that we're talking about today and maybe some of the concerns that we have from our region in terms of the Tourism Act? Can the Minister provide me an update as to that act? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 473-15(5): Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, the Tourism Act has been passed, the regs are in development, and it will help to speak to a number of these issues as we move forward. Obviously a renewed commitment to consultation with land claimant organizations, if somebody's proposing a new tourism development they're very much going to have to do so with the support and with the cooperation and collaboration of the land claimant organizations of the region, which makes absolute sense, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment just about the student financial assistance policies and procedures. Mr. Speaker, I have received some inquiries from constituents of mine whose kids have been residents of the NWT pretty much most of their lives, have gone to school here pretty much 11 of the

12 years that they did go to school. They chose to go out of province to complete their high school because of peer pressure, because of social pressures that they were receiving, and they actually did go down and graduate. These people have graduated, they have applied for university and college, and they have been accepted, but they've been rejected by our student financial assistance because they have not resided continuously for the past 12 months in the NWT. That's in the policy here, Mr. Speaker, that would make you eligible for 12 continuous months before start of program. I want to know what the Department of Education can do for these students who are ordinarily residents of the NWT, but chose to live the last 12 months, complete their high school, enrol in post-secondary education, but be refused student financial assistance. How can we help those students, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have agreements with jurisdictions across Canada. All jurisdictions have a similar rule so that if somebody is ordinarily a resident in that jurisdiction, then student financial assistance from that province or territory would assist them. So for instance, if somebody spent 12 months in Alberta they would qualify for student financial assistance from the Province of Alberta and, conversely, we would provide student financial assistance for somebody who has resided in the Northwest Territories for 12 months. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The level of assistance, I guess, is another issue that we can talk about at a different time, but even though you are only a resident of Alberta for 12 months you are not entitled to as much student financial assistance as what you would be entitled to here in the NWT should you have been a resident here. I just want to know if we are going to get more and more students, with the better transportation mode, better able to move people around, students around in the NWT, there's going to be more students that will be going to private schools down in the South to finish off their high school diplomas, and I think the numbers are going to be going up because people are going to be seeing some success in that. These people want to come back to the NWT, move back to their communities and work for their people here in the NWT. How can our student financial assistance ensure that these students won't be struggling down in some place where they don't have any programs or eligibility requirements, if there's nothing like that? How can we help them from the NWT standpoint, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, all the programs across Canada are designed to work together so that each jurisdiction has agreed that we will support people who have lived in our jurisdiction for 12 months. Otherwise people could be moving across or around the country to take advantage of programs where one jurisdiction might provide better support than another does. As the Member has pointed out, our levels of support are very high and what we're concentrating on is making sure that we have good high schools so that people don't have to leave the Northwest Territories. We're making sure -- and we're seeing it in our graduation rate -- that we have competent education facilities and we're seeing a higher level of graduation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nobody's arguing the graduation rates and that's great. I know I even have some of my nephews have gone down south to private schools also just because of their social structure and it helps them to complete their high school and stuff. I just want to know what a simple adjustment here in the policy and procedures manuals would entail here. You know, to be considered. It says ordinarily a resident here in the NWT. I just want to know if they could just change it to something like ordinarily a resident, which is what these students are because they do come back in the summers and they're going to come back here and work every summer while they're in college. So can we tweak this eligibility requirement that would umbrella, I guess, all these other students that are down south? Can we do something like that, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rules of the program have been set up. As I said, we work with other jurisdictions to try and make sure that people can't just take advantage of the higher rates of support that we offer in comparison to other jurisdictions. So every jurisdiction has agreed that if somebody is in their jurisdiction for a year that they'll provide student financial assistance. That's a typical rule across the Territories. We don't want to be in a situation where somebody who may have lived in the Northwest Territories for a period of time and has left with their family automatically qualifies for student financial assistance. We couldn't afford a program that would allow everybody in. That's why we looked for a way that we could limit the program and keep its cost affordable while making sure that we have the best levels of support out there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know. I'm not talking about a whole bunch of people here, Mr. Speaker. Our student financial assistance programs do provide support to about 1,500 students from the NWT. I'm just wondering, you know, if there's a student who we know whose family is definitely living here in the NWT, they've been here for generations and they don't plan on going anywhere, but they have a student down south who's attended, finished their Grade 12, graduated. Maybe they might not have graduated here in the NWT, but they did succeed in graduating and they're trying to get into college now, but they just don't have the financial backing that they would like here that they could receive here in the NWT. Is there any kind of alternative program here in the student financial assistance portfolio that would be able to top up, like the Minister likes to refer to, top up their out-of-province student financial assistance to NWT levels? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 474-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Residency Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For post-secondary education, the Student Financial Assistance Program is targeted entirely at NWT residents. In looking at how the program was drawn up, we think that's the fairest way to limit it. We have a good school system, Mr. Speaker, and we're proud of it and we would like to see more people making sure that they stay here and take advantage of that school system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been hearing for a while that there may be a decline in the caribou numbers and I'd like to ask the Minister of ENR if the aboriginal governments and the co-management boards, the HTAs, have acknowledged the fact that the numbers may be declining? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to be careful how I respond to the question. I can say very safely that we have been talking to the co-management boards and we have been working together with all the boards, including a lot of the communities. We've had information sharing sessions in most of the communities in the Tlicho area and the Yellowknife area, and also other areas across the Territories. Things have been progressing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister if these boards and aboriginal governments have come forward to ENR with a plan to do their part in preserving the numbers? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've worked very closely with the co-management board in the Member's region. There are a number of initiatives that have come forward. We've agreed to work on different areas, including increasing monitoring and also check stations and trying to get a handle on the types of harvesting that's going on. So there are a number of initiatives that are out there. Some of it is voluntary, some of it is still in discussion stages, but things are being shared with co-management boards and they are making decisions in the Member's riding. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister, many of the land claimant groups have clauses in their agreements as to the harvesting of caribou. I'd like to ask the Minister if those agreements take precedence over any legislation that we may introduce? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the management agreements or the land claim agreements are protected by federal legislation, and we certainly honour those agreements and we follow what's outlined in those agreements and have been with the co-management groups. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, if caribou were to reach a very critical point or point of no return, who would have the authority to ban the harvesting of caribou? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 475-15(5): Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a couple of ways it can be done. First of all, it can

be a decision made by the co-management group. There is also still authority within the government to make some of those decisions. The federal government has also some jurisdictions where if the herd became close to extinction, that they could make some decisions also. So there's a number of different ways that it could be handled, but for the most part we plan to work with the co-management group and the federal government so together we can make those informed decisions. Thank you.

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

Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment with regard to my Member's statement. I asked questions about the viability of realizing some economic value from the hides and the antlers that are often left at the site where these caribou are hunted and killed. I made reference to a muskox project where there was a commercial harvesting of muskox and the hair, the hides, and the meat were all harvested. I'd like to ask the Minister if his department has even given consideration to a processing opportunity here in the Northwest Territories that would see caribou hides processed on a commercial basis? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a very good question and it's not one I have, unfortunately, an answer to right now. I'll certainly talk with the department to go back and we can look historically at whether or not there have been any undertakings in that respect. I do know, and I'm glad the Member pointed it out, the muskox harvest, I think that's a very good example of where we've been able to work together with the Inuvialuit to create some opportunities. We've all seen the results of that muskox hair, the quiviq in the garments that are made. That's something that we're very proud of in the Northwest Territories and I think is a very good example of something that we should try to emulate in other areas if we can. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in stores and in various kinds of outlets you can buy deer hide that's commercially tanned. I'd like to suggest that deer aren't much smaller than a caribou, so if you can buy deer hide you should be able to buy caribou hide. When I was in Alaska recently also, they had commercially tanned reindeer hides with the fur still on; a beautiful looking thing that could be put on the back of a sofa or used as a bedside mat. I would like to ask the Minister if a proponent came forward with a proposal to

process caribou hides in all different manners here in the Northwest Territories, would there be assistance or funding available to undertake such a venture? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, that's certainly something that I think we would sit down and consider and talk about. We do have a BDF schedule that seeks to provide raw materials for those who are interested in arts and crafts so that they can purchase caribou hides, but I think to take the Member's point, if there aren't any hides to purchase, that is certainly of not much help. So it's something that we'd be prepared to talk about. I do understand that sometimes the caribou hides come in in not the greatest condition. That's something that we'd have to talk about. But if there's an opportunity and if we've got a proponent interested and they'd like to come forward with a submission, certainly it's something that we would take seriously. I agree with the Member that it is a shame to waste any part of the animal, and where there are value-added opportunities, we want to pursue them. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as time goes on there are less and less people in the Northwest Territories; it's a bit of a dying art, the traditional tanning of caribou hides. It's something extremely labour intensive and it's also something that not a lot of people know how to do anymore. Under the program whereby harvesters bring furs to the Northwest Territories which then go to auction in southern Canada, there's a lot of support for that. Is there any chance that caribou hides could be treated in a similar manner if we don't have a processing facility here right away, something that might be implemented in a more timely basis would be to collect these hides from harvesters and actually have them processed at a southern operation for now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you. It's an interesting proposal and something that we could talk about. I'm not aware that there is caribou hide currently auctioned in the same way that we have these other hides, Mr. Speaker. But if there's a way that we can get this done, if there's a way that we can provide more raw materials for our arts and crafts sector, it is something that we are looking to give a boost to, so it's something that we would want to sit down and discuss the practicality of. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't so much thinking about sending the caribou hides out to auction. I was more thinking sending to a central place where they could be processed, where they could be commercially tanned and then returned to the Northwest Territories. That might, as an incentive, require the government to set up some kind of a deposit where if hunters bring them in they get a certain amount of money, at least as an incentive and then perhaps some share of a future pot of money once the hides have been commercially tanned. I was thinking more of that kind of support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 476-15(5): Commercial Caribou Hide Tanning Opportunities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I take the Member's point. We've already established the policy line. We do support harvesters in this regard with the prime for a bonus, with the grub stake. It's certainly something that if we could expand it to other areas, such as the one the Member is proposing, I think it's something that has some merit and something that I'd certainly like to talk about. Thank you.

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

Question 477-15(5): Jurisdiction Of Wildlife Co-Management Boards

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I'm following up a bit, I think, on the questions of my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes on the jurisdiction that we now have or share with the co-management boards in land claims settlement areas, Mr. Speaker. One that I'd appreciate some clarification on is the jurisdiction of these co-management boards related to the jurisdiction and responsibility that the Minister has. Just to give this a little bit more definition, Mr. Speaker, do the co-management boards, for instance, have jurisdiction or authority in areas such as enforcement or licensing or setting fees? This is the kind of thing that I'm wondering about: the powers of the Minister compared to those of these co-management boards, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 477-15(5): Jurisdiction Of Wildlife Co-Management Boards

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to respond to that question. That is an issue that's being challenged in the courts right now. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 477-15(5): Jurisdiction Of Wildlife Co-Management Boards

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. When someone has a concern or an issue related to wildlife management, where do they go to get answers? To the GNWT, to the Minister's department, or to the relevant co-management board?

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

Further Return To Question 477-15(5): Jurisdiction Of Wildlife Co-Management Boards

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm still the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources and if it's a day-to-day issue around wildlife and natural resources, they would come to our department, Mr. Speaker. The board itself would be making decisions overall on other issues, but the day-to-day information and the requirements for information would come to us. Thank you.

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

Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources with regard to one of the main recommendations of the Inuvik Caribou Summit and it has to do with the protection of the calving grounds. The Premier indicated he talked to Premier Okalik, and I just wanted to ask the Minister whether he'd had an opportunity to call his counterpart in Nunavut yet to discuss this issue. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been in contact with the two jurisdictions, Nunavut and Saskatchewan, and received support to do some work this summer on calving grounds. We are requesting to have a sit down discussion with the people from both those jurisdictions to talk about other initiatives we can do together. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate what steps he envisions, or his department has laid out, as part of the work plan to actually move this process forward formally so that there's a discussion paper or whatever's required next to advance this very critical issue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working with the different jurisdictions. We'd like to, first of all, make a contract and have the support to put together a plan that will allow us to monitor and also identify the different calving grounds. We're also looking at this as part of possibly an initiative through the International Polar Year, where there is some desire to look at all the calving grounds across North America. So there are a number of different ways we're looking at this, but the first step would be to sit down with the different jurisdictions and start putting the next steps together so that we're all on the same page on this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories we, of course, have the two calving grounds of our own, one of which is partially protected. Could the Minister indicate what steps he's taking internally which should be somewhat easier for us to be able to advance the protection of our own calving grounds, as well, so that we'll not only be asking other jurisdictions but we are getting our own house in order? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that's something that we're looking at as part of our proposal, so I can't comment on that.

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

Supplementary To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't quite catch the last part of the Minister's answer, but I'm assuming he said he can't talk about it for some reason. Could the Minister tell us why we can talk about calving grounds in Nunavut but not in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 478-15(5): Protection Of Caribou Calving Grounds

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is asking specific questions about reduction and protection for calving grounds in what is part of our proposal. Thank you.

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

Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I highlighted in my Member's statement, that if this government is serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, a well-functioning public transit system in its largest community should be the cornerstone of a conservation plan. A year ago I asked the Minister where is Yellowknife's transit money and he said, well, we're being held up from signing some type of deal because there were an agreement and there was some discussions going on. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister today what is the status of these discussions because, as I understand it, the City of Yellowknife still has not received a single dime on this issue as of yet. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member keeps referring to the public transit funding as Yellowknife's money.

---Laughter

I'm not sure where he's getting that idea. Mr. Speaker, the public transit funding was announced with no clear definition as to allocation. Mr. Speaker, we've been working hard over the last while to try to come to getting a contribution agreement signed; we're expecting to have one either by the end of this month or early in the new year. The pot of money that's available is now \$1.7 million and it's anticipated that Yellowknife will be able to get a good portion of it, but it is now open to the NWT. We've developed a criteria that will allow the communities to buy their own community buses or vans. Some communities have indicated that they'd like to have support for purchasing transportation for the disabled; some communities wanted the ability to purchase transportation for seniors; and we're trying to accommodate all that. Mr. Speaker, I'm not working with this in isolation. We have a working group and the NWT Association of Communities is an organization that we bounce a lot of our ideas off and we anticipate to have an agreement shortly.

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

Supplementary To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the information I have is a federal document and, on it, it says Yellowknife. Okay. So let's start with that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, public transit is a green-friendly transportation system and, as we all know, and especially this Cabinet, they know the transportation industry is the second largest offender in the Northwest Territories for greenhouse gas emissions. So, Mr. Speaker, given the environmental advantages for a growing public transit system for the North, again, largest community, why isn't this department making it a priority to make sure Yellowknife gets its fair share of this

money and quit changing the definition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I think the document the Member is referring to says Yellowknife has the only public transportation system and it doesn't define the criteria. The criteria that is in place is something we had to negotiate; we had to sit down and talk to our NWT Association of Communities and also the federal government to work out a mechanism that would allow us to spend money in different areas. That's what we're doing and the money will be available. I'm sure the bulk of the money would be able to be applied for and received by Yellowknife, but it's also now a fair process where all NWT communities can apply for and have the ability to apply for these dollars.

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

Supplementary To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I appreciate the fact that the Minister knows what document I'm talking about. The document also made reference to the fact that PEI and Nunavut, which didn't have...They made special acknowledgements because they did not have transit systems. But Yellowknife has a transit system and it was intended for any community that has a transit system. So, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is changing the definition. Can he guarantee today that these funds are bankable; that we will not have lost any of these funds because the Minister keeps negotiating and changing the definitions? My fear is we're going to lose this money by him sitting on his hands on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know where he's getting the idea that I'm sitting on my hands on this issue. It's been a very long process. We have to deal with the communities in the Northwest Territories; the NWT Association of Communities has got a working group. If he's asking me to ignore them, I don't think I can do that. We have to move forward, along with them and along with their recommendations, Mr. Speaker. We're just about at the end of the process. We're not going to be losing any of the funding; the money is already committed. That money is \$1.7 million and that money will be there ready and available as soon as we sign the agreement in the new fiscal year. He can work with the City of Yellowknife and apply for these monies like everybody else. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, may I remind the Minister, as I clearly said in my Member's statement, that B.C. and Ontario have been spending their money for a year and a half? So, Mr. Speaker, the fact is, what has taken the Minister of Municipal and Communities Affairs so long to get on and deal with the situation? What is taking so long? Thank you, Mr. Hawkins.

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

Further Return To Question 479-15(5): Federal Funding For Public Transit Systems

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, may I remind the Member that we have a consultation process with the local governments in our communities; we work with them, we take their recommendations. There was also an election halfway through our negotiation process that really slowed things down. Mr. Speaker, we have come forward now; we have a good agreement that we think we can sign; we're still working with the NWT Association of Communities to give us their final sanction on this and the money will be available in the new fiscal year. Thank you.

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

Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Minister McLeod. We talk about respecting our agreements that we have with our neighbouring aboriginal governments. I'm specifically talking about the Tlicho Government, chapter 12 of their agreement on wildlife management. I'd like to ask the Minister, did the Minister obtain permission from the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board before coming onto our Tlicho land to monitor caribou, Mr. Speaker? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if we have obtained permission. I know we worked with the whole management groups and we've also been very active in the different communities in the Tlicho area to talk about the different issues around caribou. But as to obtaining a formal position, I'm assuming that we had to get approval from the Wekeezhii, but I'd have to confirm that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, assuming that permission has been granted, I think it's a process that we must consider when we're dealing with the various boards; not just my region but the Sahtu and different respective regions, as well. It's important that we need to have an open communication dialogue. That's with the board, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to focus on elders now. I'd like to ask the Minister, can the Minister demonstrate how the elders are being consulted, and their involvement with respect to caribou and the development of a department and Northern Strategy to deal with this important matter? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we try to make it a practice to involve the elders from the affected communities, especially if it's a specific herd, whether it's in the Sahtu or the Gwich'in or the Tlicho area. When we have our workshops, we always make it a practice to bring in elders to do the prayers and also to provide some of the history on caribou and caribou hunting, and also to provide traditional knowledge. Our members are travelling to, and have travelled to, all the communities in the Tlicho area to hear and share information with all the members of those communities. That includes elders, also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has stated the recognition and importance of involving elders and traditional knowledge. It's great to hear that from the department, especially coming from the Minister. We have to respect that, as well. I'd like to ask the Minister when was the last time the department of ENR, Environment and Natural Resources, met with the Tlicho elders and sought their advice on how to deal with the increasing number of predators in our region? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members of our department were just recently in the Tlicho communities. I think they started some of the discussions and presentations in the month of December and carried on through into the month of January when they had their last public meeting. At those meetings, there were a number of elders. We did not have a meeting, I don't believe, to meet specifically with the elders, but we've had members as part of the discussion and part of the audience. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to continue on with the predators. The Tlicho Government had their meeting in Whati last month and one of the main issues was, of course, the caribou; another main issue was the predators out there; the wolves and grizzly bears that are approaching our communities. I'd like to ask the Minister if there's a commitment from the department to meet up with the Tlicho community elders and also traditional hunters to deal specifically with the predators that are roaming around our communities. When can that happen, because it's an immediate issue right now? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 480-15(5): Tlicho Land Claim Wildlife Management Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of predators is something that is already being monitored. We have a good handle on the numbers out there and the direction that the populations are going. If there is a specific community that the Member has wanted us to come in and address, we'd certainly be glad to do that. As part of our presentations, we provide this information on predators also, so I'm sure that the communities have already seen the information. But as I've stated before, if there is a community that has been experiencing problems, we'd certainly be glad to go in and talk to this issue. Thank you.

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

Question 481-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Loan Limits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment with regard to student financial assistance. Specifically with respect to the fact that this is such a successful program and with the increased cost in tuition fees and costs of going to school, there are a number of students from the North who are close to exceeding, or have exceeded, the maximum amount that students can borrow. We had discussions on this during Committee of the Whole and the Minister indicated that he would look into this. I think the time frame did not consider having this resolved before the upcoming school year. I would like to ask the Minister if he would reconsider that framework. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 481-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Loan Limits

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To my understanding, there are no more than half a dozen students who are approaching the limit or who have hit the limit that we have right now in the Territories. Mr. Speaker, what I committed to do was take a look at the program to see whether or not we could make some administrative changes to extend the loan limit that wouldn't actually add to the cost of the program. If that is

the case, then I would be able to make the changes very quickly and do it in time for next year. If, however, we need to seek supplementary appropriation funding in order to do those changes, that will take me a little bit longer. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I can't answer the question. We are still investigating whether or not we will be able to move on this before the beginning of the next school year.

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

Supplementary To Question 481-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Loan Limits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister give me a better idea as to when he is expected to know which direction he needs to take in this regard? Could the Minister give me some time frame as to when he would even have the analysis? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 481-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Loan Limits

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would expect by the end of this month I would have a better understanding of what the cost implications might be of increasing the loan limit. It is something I've talked to the department about and that I do want to move on. The question is whether or not we can move in time for this fall. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 481-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Loan Limits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what the dollar amounts are, but there are a relatively small number of students are in an extensive program, like nursing or teaching, where they needed bridge programming even if they are going to school down south. Could I ask the Minister to get back to me by the end of the month, in writing, as to what his analysis is so that we can work towards implementing it somehow or coming up with a solution? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 481-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Loan Limits

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I want to get back to the deficit that is currently at play at Stanton Territorial Hospital. I know, from 2005-06 it was \$5.8 million. In an effort to reduce that by 50 percent, we looked at the supplementary appropriation on Friday to get \$2.8 million to cut that in half. Today, there is \$2.9 million in deficit, and the

Minister mentioned on Friday there is an additional close to \$7 million, so we are looking at a \$10 million deficit at the hospital. Mr. Speaker, history has a way of repeating itself. That is why I want to ask these questions today. What are we going to do to address this \$10 million deficit at Stanton? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the deficit at Stanton, for the record, as the Member indicated during the supplementary process, I had remarked that for 2006-07 we are looking at potentially around just over \$6 million. That is an estimate by the Stanton authority. We will have to wait until year end to confirm that number. What the plan is in place, and has been in place with every authority, is we have a policy in place that deals with surpluses as well as deficits. What we have in place is that 50 percent of that deficit has to be funded from within in the following years. One of the other exercises we are doing is going through an exercise of looking at the actual funding that is taking place. If, in fact, there has been some chronic underfunding, then that is under review at this time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just wondering, during the last number of years here, the last three years I believe, there wasn't an authority per se running that hospital. In fact, there is a public administrator with a direct line to the DM of Health and Social Services and to the Minister himself. Do they still have to play by the same rules? I know the Minister talked about whether they are surpluses or deficits. Are we talking about the same thing here without an authority in place at Stanton? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is an authority in place or a public administrator, the rules are the same for every facility we have in place. In this case, the same rules apply. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, in an effort so history doesn't repeat itself, the deficit that was accrued in 2005-06 was recorded in the public accounts of that year. The deficit that is building up today didn't go to the Standing Committee on Social Programs. I am just wondering, the deficit that is accruing today, is there a plan by the department or by the Minister to include

Members on this side of the House and in the Standing Committee on Social Programs to address areas where we might be able to provide more funding for this hospital on an ongoing basis? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to running the facilities in the Northwest Territories, we would deal through committees on a number of fronts. One, first and foremost, is the business plan which sets up the budgets for the Department of Health and Social Services and, from there, each authority. As well, if we find during the year there are close cost overruns or increased costs from southern facilities, for example, we bring that to the table as well. The first picture we have to do is work with the authorities when they do identify to us there are some funding issues. One is to identify where those pressures are and look at it. In fact, if it is a one-year element or a blip, or if in fact it will become an ongoing process, the authority identifies that to the department. The department would then go forward to FMB for requests. As I stated through earlier questions in this area, at times they are directed to go back and firm up their numbers and come up with solid numbers or come back after one year of numbers has been established to confirm, in fact, this could be an ongoing trend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just wondering why the Minister wouldn't come back to the Standing Committee on Social Programs to address a deficit recovery model or method and instead we see the 50 percent knockdown of the \$5.8 million deficit from 2005-06. Why does it happen this way as opposed to working with the Standing Committee on Social Programs to take a look at areas that you could do better or do more? Is it common practice to go through a supplementary appropriation exercise to knock off a deficit in one of our operations? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. There are a couple of questions there. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 482-15(5): Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process that is used when a department does come into agreement with an authority on the numbers goes forward to FMB. If that is recognized, it is then included in the supplementary process. That is the process used. The policy was established quite some years ago when the idea of surpluses could be kept with authorities. We also had to address the other side if an authority made decisions to over expend in areas, there had to be a recovery plan. That recovery plan is worked through the authority and through the Department of Health and Social Services. It would be appropriate that the Minister, when decisions have been made, to inform committee that these things are outstanding. The practice

is, for example, if a decision is made to agree with a deficit recovery plan, the Minister would approach the appropriate Members. As a result, they may see some decline in services. But that process is ongoing as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, Honourable Joseph Handley. Yesterday, we witnessed the signing of the Sahoyue and ?ehdacho historical sites with the Government of Canada and, of course, the participation of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Deline representatives. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, in his discussions with the Minister of Environment, are there any further types of signings that we could see in the Northwest Territories that would have certain lands in the Northwest Territories come under the Protected Areas Strategy?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, over the years, as we first began discussing protected areas, there hadn't been a lot of progress being made. I was beginning to wonder if this was just going to be another boondoggle. Clearly, in yesterday's commitment by the Minister of Environment, the current Minister is certainly determined to move ahead with these. I was pleased with the announcements yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other areas. I did talk to him about the ramparts area west of Fort Good Hope, the Horn Plateau. We had some brief discussion about the Nahanni expansion and also the East Arm. So, Mr. Speaker, while it is not time to cuddle up with the federal government on this one yet, we are moving in the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope I wasn't giving the intention that we are cuddling up to the federal government on these important decisions here. I guess my point is that, Mr. Speaker, these areas are so important that even our people back home are wondering if there was just only a good gesture in terms of continuing on with developing in our area in terms of resource development. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Minister's discussions with the Environment Minister regarding the ramparts and other areas that we have interest in the Sahtu and other areas north of that, that their members would speak, at least areas in our communities and our region that have an interest, would we seek interim protection on some of the areas that they don't have that type of protection right now?

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

Further Return To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government's intention is to respect all of those areas that either have some protection to the claims or have been identified through the Protected Areas Strategy as well as other interests people may have for spiritual sites or culturally important sites. So we will have some form of interim protection of those. They fit into a number of different categories.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that, in my discussions with the federal Minister of Environment as well, he is committed to a balanced approach. We have protected areas and we also have areas that are open for development. I believe he is sincere in working with ourselves as well as the aboriginal leaders who were very influential in having the agreement yesterday. Chief Neyelle and others were influential at having that happen, and, presently, Roy Andre.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have a good model. We had a good start yesterday. I look forward to working closely on all of these. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of CBC's recent news announcement of the Mackenzie gas project, it may not happen until the first spike in the land so to speak. In terms of putting the pipeline through in 2014, is this department committing some of the Protected Areas Strategy that Sahoyue took 12 years? Is it something that we could speed up with the federal government in terms of creating that balanced approach to lands that we want protected in the North? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the length of time it took for the Sahoyue and ?ehdacho areas is not indicative of how long it will take on these. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister yesterday was speaking about months, not years, for designating some of these new areas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do applaud this government here on the leadership of Mr. Handley in terms of getting this deal done for the people in the Sahtu, Sahoyue and ?ehdacho. I also want to thank other people, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask again, would this government in terms of speeding up the process for Protected Areas Strategy takes precedent in terms of the amount of time that the Mackenzie gas project is proposed to be built? We would like to get some

of our lands surely protected under this type of agreement. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 483-15(5): Candidate Protected Areas

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would give the Member, and this House, assurance that we are going to move this ahead as quickly as we can even if the pipeline wasn't being built. I think it is important to protect these areas, that these are areas that have been, for hundreds if not thousands of years, important to people and we will do everything we can to protect them as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under The Water And Sewage Services Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring up a very important matter that comes up as a result of the questioning that I had for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs on Friday. During that time, and I quote from unedited Hansard, the Minister of MACA said, "Everybody was made aware that there was new reviews going on with the different streams of funding. I think there was adequate notice provided." What the Minister was speaking to is that communities receive adequate notice that they could anticipate this change in the support for water and sewer and that they could build that into their budget planning. They had ample notice to deal with that. He made reference to communities being made aware at the NWTAC AGM in May 2006. In fact, I had the document that was given to the communities in May 2006, and it showed Hay River still on there at \$566,212 for the water/sewer subsidy. Subsequent to that, Members were told that there were going to be some changes to that, so the number dropped down to \$414,000, which is about a \$150,000 reduction. Knowing there is going to be a change and knowing how much the change is going to be are two different things. I don't think it is fair for the Minister to suggest that in May 2006 communities should have known what their water/sewer subsidy was going to be. I would like to ask the Minister if he feels that Members or communities were given adequate notice. When was Hay River informed of the amount of water/sewer subsidy they would receive in this fiscal year? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under The Water And Sewage Services Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know if all the Members have the luxury of the document that the Member is referring to. Mr. Speaker, it is our practice at Municipal and Community Affairs to try to share the information as far in advance as possible with the communities. Historically, we have been providing the information to the communities at first opportunity, which is the NWT Association AGM. Then, usually, we provide it again in the fall through an update or

through community consultations. The Member is referring to a document that is titled Projected Revenues for Communities. In it, it projects the operation and maintenance budget. It also projects the capital and the water and sewer and also the gas tax and federal funding. Mr. Speaker, it also has a disclaimer in it that states these programs are under review. If the Member looks at the document, it is correct. The number is not what ended up being received by the Town of Hay River. The number on this document states that the community would get \$3.6 million. In fact, they ended up getting \$4.2 million. Mr. Speaker, we were off by what we projected. However, the dollars that were projected there were only projections. We came forward again in the fall through community visits to present to all communities. That included Hay River. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under The Water And Sewage Services Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for a municipality to budget for their water/sewer subsidy program on the basis of a projection. However, the point is that the Minister has stated in this House that Hay River had adequate notice. Now, it wasn't at the May 2006, meeting that we had adequate notice. That isn't the correct information. There is a disclaimer there. Agreed. So then we were notified of a number in the fall. Is the number that we were notified of in the fall for the water/sewer subsidy what Hay River is going to be getting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under The Water And Sewage Services Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the money that will be going to Hay River is what was just passed in the budget. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under The Water And Sewage Services Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I wanted the Minister to tell us, in the MACA update, the number for Hay River for water/sewer subsidy is not the amount that Hay River is going to get. In fact, it has been reduced by a further \$50,000 since the MACA update. So it went from the projected, to be amended in May 2006, to the fall number of \$414,000, to the number which just came out in February of only \$366,000. So it's been changed three times and I just don't know how the Minister can say that that's adequate notice. I don't think Hay River to this day has been formally notified of what the actual amount is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I don't know if I heard a question there, actually. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen; do you want to clarify your...

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has Hay River been notified of the amount they're going to receive for the water/sewer subsidy program in Hay River? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under the Water and Sewage Services Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have to remember this year we did a review of three different pots of money; we've changed our process of how we allocate dollars. The communities were very well aware that these were estimates, these were working numbers, and numbers in fact could possibly change. Mr. Speaker, we've shared that information with the Town of Hay River. I'm assuming that the Member has been made aware of that, but I think it's a matter of the community not willing to accept that these new dollars are in place and are based on a new formula that allows them flexibility. There's a lot more money in there this time around that they can really deal with some of the issues that are being brought forward. Other communities are receiving far less and they're able to reduce their water fees and other things of that nature, and I don't see why the community can't do the same. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time for question period has expired. I'll allow the Member a final supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under the Water and Sewage Services Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, my point is that the Minister says that Hay River had enough advance notice. It goes to my question of should the community been given more warning, or could the Minister agree that a phase in would have been more palatable or easier for the community to absorb such a reduction? In my correspondence received from MACA officials on February 22nd, correspondence they say is on its way for another \$50,000 reduction under the water/sewer subsidy program. So I think that the Minister, in saying that we received ample notice, is incorrect. Does the Minister concede that to this day Hay River has not been notified of the final number under this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 484-15(5): Community Funding Under the Water and Sewage Services Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The practice of informing communities of our estimates is something that was accepted by the community, the Association of Communities. They all recognized that their estimates, if we were not able to provide them in a form of draft estimates, then we would not be able to share that information. This is a year that things have changed from the normal practice because this is the year we reviewed our water and sewer program, we reviewed

our operations and maintenance. We, for the first time, have provided capital to the tax-based communities, there's now ample funding, there's gas tax. All these things change and there's no way we can provide a solid number a year in advance, Mr. Speaker. Either we do it through this practice of providing estimates, or we don't do it at all and communities would have to wait until the actual budget has passed. The communities have all voiced over the years that they need working numbers and this is the best process we have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod.

Speaker's Ruling

Before I proceed to written questions, colleagues, I want to provide a ruling on Written Question 54-15(5) asked by Mr. Hawkins to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment last Friday regarding funding for Yellowknife schools. This written question was in fact a series of 33 questions.

Rule 39(1) reads as follows: A question which would be likely to require a detailed or complex answer, or which would not reasonably be assumed to be within the present knowledge of the Minister, should be posed as a written question.

Members will know that this rule has been loosely applied by the Chair in the past. This was done for the benefit of Members and in the interest of full and open debate in this House. Like many things, however, when practices or privileges are misused, the intervention of the Chair is often required to set matters right. Previous Speakers have also cautioned Members about the proper use of written questions.

Written questions are intended to provide Members with an opportunity to seek complex, detailed and lengthy information from a Minister that they would not likely have at their disposal, or that would more appropriately be provided in written form due to the nature of the information being sought.

Written questions are not intended to be an indirect way of extending oral question period. They are not intended to be an opportunity for Members to make statements, engage in debate or grandstand, nor should they be unreasonably long.

In my view, none of Mr. Hawkin's questions met the criteria for a written question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ahhh.

MR. SPEAKER: He is not the first Member to use written questions in a manner that does not exactly fit their true purpose. However, the volume of questions asked clearly constitutes a misuse of the spirit and intent of rules and, frankly, was a waste of the valuable time of this House and its Members. I, therefore, rule Written Question 54-15(5) out of order and direct that the question be removed from the orders of the day and struck from Hansard. The Minister is under no obligation to provide a response.

In the future, the Chair will apply a strict interpretation of Rule 39(1). Written questions must not be asked in lieu of properly worded oral questions and must be in writing on the prescribed forms that can be obtained from the Clerk's

office. Members should clearly be reading from a written text when asking written questions. Thank you, Members.

---Applause

Written questions. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 57-15(5): Catholic Students In Yellowknife Separate School System

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one detailed question today not likely for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to have typically in their purview.

Mr. Speaker, noting that in other cities in Canada, such as Calgary, Alberta, you have to be baptized into the Catholic faith in order to be a student in their Catholic school system, what information can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment provide to me as to the details of how many children in the Yellowknife Catholic school system have identified themselves as being of the Catholic faith, and, further, how does that break down per school in their district?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 48-15(5): Interpretive Service In Health Centres

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 48-15(5) asked by Mr. Villeneuve on February 19, 2007, to the Honourable Floyd Roland, Minister of Health and Social Services, regarding interpretive service in health centres.

Health care professionals in all health centres throughout the NWT make efforts to ensure that those patients who need help are provided with interpretation services, whenever that is possible.

A number of employees of the Department of Health and Social Services authorities may be occasionally required to use a second official language in the workplace and they are identified as bilingual employees. Nineteen health centres across the NWT are funded to employ clerk interpreters. A detailed breakdown of this information will be provided to the Member.

Employees who have primary job duties to provide translation and interpretation, are paid remuneration according to their job evaluation and the pay range for that evaluation. Bilingual employees are paid a bonus of \$1,200 each year.

Family members who assist non-English-speaking patients with translation at the health centre are not paid by the GNWT for those services. If a family member is authorized to accompany a non-English-speaking patient on medical travel, then that escort is eligible for coverage of their travel, accommodation and meal costs as outlined in the medical travel policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 111-15(5): Interactivity Transfers Over \$250,000

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to section 31.1(2) of the Finance Administration Act, I wish to table the following document entitled Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Tabled Document 112-15(5): Transportation Of Dangerous Goods Act, 2006 Annual Report

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Minister of Transportation's Report to the Legislative Assembly for 2006 on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 13: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 23-15(5): Support For Work Of The Inuvik Caribou Summit

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, March 14, 2007, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Legislative Assembly endorses the recommendations of the January 2007 Inuvik Caribou Summit; and further that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories adhere to the regulatory processes and jurisdictions of the wildlife co-management boards, and the spirit and intent of provisions respecting wildlife in all Northwest Territories land claim agreements and self-government agreements; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the Government of Nunavut to protect caribou calving and migration routes; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that the Government of Canada fulfils its fiduciary obligations in respect of Crown lands and wildlife management.

Mr. Speaker at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with your motion, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 15: MOTIONS

Motion 23-15(5): Support For Work Of The Inuvik Caribou Summit, Carried

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the caribou are a precious natural resource, a gift to all northerners, and are essential to aboriginal life and cultures;

AND WHEREAS the caribou are among the last and largest free-roaming herds of animals on the Earth;

AND WHEREAS all northern people accept their role to act together as responsible stewards of all living things;

AND WHEREAS the people of the North want to ensure the survival and strength of the caribou for generations to come;

AND WHEREAS the combined impact of mineral development, ice roads, unrestricted harvesting practices, sport and commercial harvesting, predation, insects and climate change are causing unprecedented pressure on the caribou;

AND WHEREAS the caribou populations of the NWT have been found to be in dramatic decline;

AND WHEREAS the North's leaders, regulators, scientists and harvesters, at the Inuvik Caribou Summit in January 2007, have concluded that decisive action must be taken urgently;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Legislative Assembly endorses the recommendations of the January 2007 Inuvik Caribou Summit;

AND FURTHER that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories adhere to the regulatory processes and jurisdictions of the wildlife co-management boards, and the spirit and intent of provisions respecting wildlife in all Northwest Territories land claim agreements and self-government agreements;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the Government of Nunavut to protect caribou calving and migration routes;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that the Government of Canada fulfils its fiduciary obligations in respect of Crown lands and wildlife management.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I am very proud and pleased to bring this

motion to the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I am not a harvester, but I am an avid consumer of caribou. I appreciate and have come to embrace just how important this creature, this species is to the North, to what I am proud of about being a northerner, how the caribou have made themselves so much a part of everybody's life living here in the NWT. I enjoy the art and the craft that has emerged from the traditions of the aboriginal people and of other contemporary artisans and people who use the materials and the products that are a gift of the caribou.

The clothing and art that comes from them is something that is renowned around the world as is the skill and craft of the people who make it. It is the essence of the herds around which the survival of aboriginal people, over generations, has been part of their life. It has to continue to be, Mr. Speaker. That is why there is so much concern and I think so much resolve and unanimity demonstrated at that amazing gathering in Inuvik. I had the opportunity to attend it as the MLA for Great Slave. What struck me about that gathering, Mr. Speaker, apart from many others I have attended in my terms here as an MLA, was the resolve and the intensity and the urgency of people to focus on the true question of the survival of the caribou herds and of the way we, as the people who are the cause of so much impact on the caribou herds, the way we also need to look at the way we have been conducting ourselves, the kinds of management, restrictions, enforcement and ideas that we are ready to bring into play.

I have found, Mr. Speaker, compared to many other meetings I have attended, there was an extraordinary resolve to act decisively, to be bold and to do things in a very timely manner, Mr. Speaker.

There were a number of statements that came up throughout the meeting. One of them was keep politics out of caribou management. There is a certain level of politics that has to be accepted in that and that is where we need to look at our responsibility.

As I said in my statement earlier today, Mr. Speaker, the most significant thing that this Assembly can do is to heed the signal that was sent to us from Inuvik, from other recent gatherings, that we are going to hear later on this week from the other Wekeezhii board, that we have to act boldly, we have to act in a very timely fashion and that we should not be shy. We should not hold back from taking strong and potentially even excessive steps, Mr. Speaker, to protect the caribou herds that we know are under threat today.

Mr. Speaker, I contend if the measures that we choose to undertake are potentially excessive or prove to be excessive, and the herds, indeed, rebound, as we all hope they will and indeed the traditional knowledge of the aboriginal people tells us they will, if we put rules out there that are excessive, we can pull back on them. We can open up restrictions we may choose to put on ourselves, but if we do not act strongly and with enough force, will and determination now, it may well be too late. Mr. Speaker, that is the key message that I would like to leave with the Assembly. Now is not the time to be timid. Now is the time to be bold, to take the signals, to take the messages that those 150...I saw a number, 180 harvesters, scientists, regulators, community leaders, that was the message they delivered to us and that is what we must take as our mandate to act. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague Mr. Braden for putting forward this motion. I think this motion is very important to the benefit of our people in the Northwest Territories. It's unfortunate to have to come to a situation like this, but I think, as leaders in this Assembly, we have to take steps like Mr. Braden said, to take the bull by the horns and then do something to make sure our caribou population comes back.

So I'm very happy at this time to speak in support of this motion. This motion is pretty well straightforward. It speaks for itself. I think, from the Inuit, I think right now the co-management boards play a vital role in terms of the decisions that I make, and I appreciate the Minister when he works with the co-management boards to try to find solutions in terms of what's best for the wildlife, the caribou that we require to survive in today's society.

Like Mr. Braden said, the meeting in Inuvik was well attended by a lot of people from across the Territories and I appreciate their input. I thank the Minister responsible for putting forward the workshop conference. We heard from the elders, we heard people from government, we heard people from across the jurisdictions in Alberta, Saskatchewan sort of said pointing in terms of Indian Affairs was there, but they didn't really have input in terms of what was coming forward. But I, you know, just in their attendance alone might have shown something, you know, we do care about our stuff here, our caribou here.

Mr. Speaker, I think we're trying to move in the right direction and all I can say is that I will support the motion that's before us here now and I will continue to support the Minister, like I said in my Member's statement, that as long as he works with the co-management boards, I will support all of the decisions that he may have to make. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of this work of the Inuvik Caribou Summit workshop that was held there in January. We've heard it all before, we see it all in the news, and we hear it here in the House just about every day all the caribou crisis that the NWT's going through and all the pressures that the caribou are feeling from development, climate change, and even from just harvesters in general, whether they be aboriginal or non-aboriginal. I think that this motion definitely is demanding some action from this government, but also we have to expect action from everybody here in the NWT that harvests caribou, that uses caribou, and lives with caribou, Mr. Speaker. It's with these people where the action has to start. We have to start right at the grassroots to the people who depend highly on caribou as a means of curbing the high cost of living here in the NWT, and helping their families survive with the high price of beef and other meat here in the NWT. We need caribou and we need our fish in order to carry forward as a people that thrive here in the NWT with the challenges that we have.

I think this motion definitely speaks to the fact that the regulatory processes and jurisdictions that this government works with the co-management boards on these caribou declining numbers is something that we have to really be supportive of regardless of what decisions these co-management boards come out with. We all have to stand behind them because obviously those co-management boards are speaking for the people that are most greatly affected by their decision that they're going to make, and whatever they're going to have to live with, I'm sure other people here in the NWT will be able to live with just as easy, because they're going to be taking the brunt of whatever decision that they're going to come down with and it's going to affect the people that they're making that decision for and in conjunction with.

So I fully support this motion that the honourable Mr. Braden brought forward here with Mr. Pokiak, that action - and it starts right out there on the land -- Mr. Speaker, with everybody who's out there hunting right now. I'm sure there are a lot of people out there today and all winter and they're harvesting caribou as we speak. I just hope that with their actions out there, that they fully respect and endorse whatever the co-management boards come around and the decision that they have to live with, we're all going to have to live with it. I hope that we don't see anything like this coming around for the next 20 or 30 years that we're going to have to address again. I hope we can do it right this time and then we wouldn't have to come up with the crisis situation like we do today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be speaking in favour of the motion that's before us today. I applaud the efforts of my colleagues in bringing this motion forward. There was a lot of work that went into it, obviously, with some of the discussion that's happened in this House over the life of this session and into last year. It's a very important matter, Mr. Speaker, and you can hear how passionately my colleagues speak of caribou, what it means to the people of the Northwest Territories, to their constituents, and the aboriginal people who have hunted caribou for thousands and thousands of years here in the Northwest Territories. I think it is vitally important that we get some clarity on the issues that are out there, we get some money into researching caribou and finding out more about them so we can protect the calving grounds, so we can protect migration routes, and we can make a difference, Mr. Speaker, because the decisions that we make, as leaders here in the Northwest Territories, obviously are going to have impacts well into the future, and we have an obligation to the future residents here in the Northwest Territories and generations to make the decisions that are going to ensure that there are caribou here for everyone's use well into the future.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I am in support of the motion. There definitely needs to be some more resources put into the research, the methodology, and the accounting of the caribou. We have to do the research. We have to work with the elders. We have to work with the communities, the co-management boards, in an effort to get everybody

on the same page, and if the numbers are true, then we really, really have to take decisive action.

So again, I wanted to thank the mover and the seconder of the motion and I will be supporting the motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to thank Mr. Braden and Mr. Pokiak for putting this motion forward. I fully support this motion that's in front of us. You know, I was just saying in my language that just the other day my family and I were having caribou ribs at home.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Holy!

MR. LAFFERTY: It's finger-licking good.

---Laughter

I think KFC stole the theme from the Tlicho regional Dene nation. Traditional word.

Mr. Speaker, this has been our survival for thousands of years, as some Members have indicated. We survive on caribou and we highly regard it, highly respect it, the caribou herds in our region, in other regions. We share the caribou. We share the meat as well. It has been in our generations for years and we will continue on the journey.

You know, we, as the Tlicho Nation, have consulted with our elders. We have consulted with various parties, with our neighbouring Sahtu, with our neighbouring Dehcho, with our neighbouring Thebacha. They're the ones who also hunt in our region as well. So we respect that. Just with the Tlicho consultation, there's been meetings in the past, Mr. Speaker; one in Behchoko late fall last year, another one in January in Inuvik. My Tlicho leadership went over there to monitor, just observe, sit back. But they were given an opportunity to speak and they spoke their mind. Another meeting took place in February in Whati; follow-up on Inuvik and Behchoko meeting. That's where we had four different groups, four different dialogues with the elders, the youth, the members, the traditional hunters and trappers. They all shared their stories; how important it is to preserve, to monitor, to protect the herds, and how can we protect the herd, what can we do as a Tlicho Government, with the assistance of the GNWT as government.

We, as Tlicho Government, need to do our own work, our own initiative. Of course we cannot do it alone. We have to do it with the ENR department; technical people with various departments that we will be working with still. The recommendation will be brought forward. Those are the recommendations that will probably be discussed tomorrow, the next day and Thursday. I will be attending that meeting this week.

Like I said, this has been our survival for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to again thank the two Members, Braden and Pokiak, for submitting this motion and again, I fully, fully support the motion. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, as well, stand to speak in support of this motion and would like to thank Mr. Braden and Mr. Pokiak for taking the time and effort to bring this forward. Mr. Speaker, as the motion indicates, caribou are a precious resource and a gift to be nurtured and protected in a time of difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, I see this motion, like the motion on climate change and the motion on the fundamental right to water, as a statement of a basic value that we have as a Legislature reflecting the constituents that we have in the Northwest Territories, and that this motion, as well, will help set the public policy going forward for the remainder of the life of this Assembly and set the stage along with the other two motions and laying out the public policy direction for the 16th Assembly for their consideration when they take office.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, this is, first and foremost, a wildlife and conservation issue where actions have been based on the precautionary principle. It brings into question some of the things we have to balance as we look at what do we do with the caribou, and they're touched on in the water motion and the climate change motion about the development pressures and the balance with the environment and the need for a strong and healthy environment if you're going to have a good economy. The caribou are part of that. They're part of the warp and weft, of the fabric of the wildlife and environment of the Northwest Territories. It's important that we move on this and that we make this statement in this House.

I'd like, as well, to touch briefly on the role of the federal government. While we speak clearly that the federal government has a role at the policy and program level, especially as we're going to be talking to other jurisdictions about the protection of calving grounds, operation on the ground here, I want to acknowledge the work of Dr. David Livingstone and the contributions, financial contributions that they have made both this fiscal year and their contributions for next year as a start to their further involvement to this process.

Mr. Speaker, the world is watching. The intergovernmental panel on climate change has finished their second report. Some of those recommendations and results were leaked to the newspaper. They were in the Globe and Mail on Sunday and they talked very clearly of the extinction of species around the world. They talk of the extinction possibly of the polar bear and other species in the North. I know when they're talking about other species in the North one of the species they have in mind is what may happen to the caribou if things do not go well in their favour. So we have a very critical task that the generations yet unborn are counting on us to carry out and that is the protection of the Barren Land caribou. I hope that the people of the Northwest Territories will gather together on this issue and recognize how fundamentally important this is to us and those yet to come. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the heels of many statements made in this House today on this motion, I'd like to just, for the record, thank the Members for bringing this motion forward and to put on record that I will be abstaining from this motion.

Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that in my entire time that I've been here I have never abstained on any motion. In fact, I have always taken a firm position and always vocalized my position. But without going into any details about this issue in general, and perhaps it may be true that I'm reading this motion and the whole issue much more broadly, but I'd rather air on the side of being too broad than being too narrow in the chance that we may in any way jeopardize the core cases that are before the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories where there are two parties in action and one of them being the government.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that in future I'll be able to speak more on this. But for now I think I have decided that it's most prudent for me in acting on my own principle and the respect for the separate independence of this Legislature to make decisions and the court to make their own decisions, and for Wekeezhii board and any other institutions and duly authorized bodies to make the decisions independently from others that I feel that I must abstain. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. Braden and Mr. Pokiak for bringing forward this important motion and opportunity for us to debate it in the House here. Mr. Speaker, I would be 110 percent in support of this motion here in terms of having been brought along. I wanted to say a few words, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit the Aven Manor centre and visit two elders there. One of the elders at the Aven Manor centre said, you know, I wouldn't mind having some of my own food. I know what he was talking about. He was talking about the wildlife food, either moose meat or caribou. He said I wouldn't mind having some of that food here, just to have a taste of it. Even though they are looked after fairly good and they're fed fairly good, some of the elders back in Aven Manor from our hometown want what they call Dene bede. They want Indian food, Dene food. So I know this goes back a long way.

Mr. Speaker, the other elder that I visited and had a brief hello, he had his eyes on us as we talked. He's in the centre, but he's watching us and this elder is very keen and very sharp and he says that every day he tunes us in and looks to see how we are doing. He says you guys are talking and working on our behalf. I want to say hello to those two elders that I spoke to at the Aven Manor and some of the older people. I know there are lots. I want to say that. On this important motion here, Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the statement that this House has done in a short time in terms of this government in terms of the value and the value of our culture and the value of our land and, most importantly, the value of our lives here. Mr. Speaker, this motion talks about the gift that the caribou has given us. Sometimes, this gift we take it for

granted if we have too many. This gift is being used by all people, not only the aboriginal people but for the economic base such as outfitters, sports hunters, many opportunities that it presents. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the gift that the elders have talked about, the caribou and how it helps us with our people. It is very essential to the aboriginal people and to our culture. Sometimes, not having the lifestyle we used to have, we forget about our roles and how we look after the caribou. Sometimes we forget the caribou what they mean to us. Mr. Speaker, the issue that we are talking about now, it may be hard on the caribou. I am not too sure. There is lots of knowledge that we haven't yet really picked up on this issue here. I would really like to see, Mr. Speaker, in terms of this motion here in terms of objecting that we get as much traditional knowledge as we can from the elders on the caribou and to use that for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, through those points, I wanted to look at the spirit, respecting the spirit and intent of our land claims in the land claim negotiators that fought for this specific clause in our land claims in terms of the specific area that what this really means to us and our people that this important issue for our wildlife for our people that our land claim agreements are upheld and respected to the spirit and intent that we said when we had it entered into our land claim agreements. I want to speak to that point of this motion here. It talks about that. Our people knew about it. It was in our treaties. Now, we have included it more into our land claims.

Mr. Speaker, the second last point I want to raise is the importance of the caribou calving grounds in terms of this motion and protecting those calving grounds. Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of Dodo Canyon. It is a sheep nest mountain in the Norman Wells area. It is very important to have those areas protected. That is where the babies are born. That is where babies will sustain our life as aboriginal people. In certain areas along the Mackenzie River, up around this area, there are certain calving grounds that people want protected.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, before I close, that there is a fiduciary obligation by the government under the land claim agreements to make sure that our way of life is sustained and will continue on for generations. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank Mr. Braden and Mr. Pokiak for bringing forward this very important motion. It is something that we want to work on together with the governments, work on with people in the communities. I am getting hungry because people are talking about caribou so much. Caribou ribs that we would have for future and we don't have to walk into our museums and see stuffed caribou like we had one out here in the foyer. I look forward to seeing this herd continue to live with us for generations and generations. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to thank Mr. Braden and Mr. Pokiak for bringing this motion forward. There was a lot of work that went into the final product here. We appreciate all the work that you gentlemen have put into this.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at the caribou and I looked at them as an elder, one that has cared for us over the years, provided for us and looked after us, and then the day comes when it is our turn to care for the elders. That time, Mr. Speaker, is now. We have to do what we can to protect the caribou. We have to do what we can to make sure that there is some caribou left for future generations. Mr. Speaker, you have heard many reasons today why some of my colleagues support the motion and they are all good, valid reasons, but we really have to have a close look here and make sure that the caribou are protected and we are in a position now to protect it. I have been a subsistence hunter for half of my life probably and I have always been told that you just take what you can use. There was an old ad on TV years ago, I think put out by Renewable Resources that was take what you can use and use what you take. That was always a very true message. I told the story of an elder that was picking up caribou guts on the side of the road. Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of wisdom in what he was doing. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the guys that brought the motion forward. I will be fully supporting this motion. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank Mr. Braden and Mr. Pokiak for the work that they have put into crafting this motion that is before us today. I want to say clearly I support the caribou. I support the people who harvest the caribou. I support the people who depend on the caribou and the livelihood that is derived from the caribou. However, there is one whereas in this motion that I cannot support, and it is: and whereas the caribou populations of the NWT have been found to be in dramatic decline. Now whether I think that or I don't think that, the fact is that that particular issue is something that some people have made an application to the courts regarding. I cannot show them disrespect of supporting that motion with that one whereas in there. I will move a motion to delete that one whereas. Until that is determined, whether we think it or not, I don't think that it is fair to the application before the courts for this government and this Legislature to take that position at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Are you moving a motion?

Motion To Amend Motion 23-15(5), Defeated

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Kam Lake, that Motion 23-15(5) be amended by deleting the following clause: and whereas the caribou populations in the NWT have found to be in dramatic decline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The motion is on the floor. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I respect the privilege of any Member at any time to come in and fine tune a motion of the House and see if there is a way of improving it. To the point of the state of the population or the threats that it may be under is a point of great discussion in a number of different venues right

now, Mr. Speaker. The position that the motion takes is that, indeed, the caribou population is under threat and that action needs to be taken. I am standing, of course, in support of the motion and in opposition to this amendment because I do believe that it is, at least in part, a rate of rapid decline of the population of caribou that compels us to take the kind of action that we have been advocating and, as the motion calls for, is advocated by the people who met in Inuvik in January. So I will not be supporting the amendment, because I do sincerely believe that there is something going on and we have to act on just as soon as we can and with as much resolve and determination as we can, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly support the motion. I support it in its entirety. The reason why I am going to support the amendment as it is presented is because, right or wrong, this is the crux of the argument either way in a judicial review that is currently underway. Why would we include it in the motion at this time? It could go either way on that. It is debatable. The numbers are debatable. I have been through two day-long meetings. The numbers are debatable. Again, I don't see what we lose. There are pressures on the caribou. Their numbers may or may not be declining, Mr. Speaker. I think we owe it to the people who live here in the Northwest Territories who harvest the caribou to find out what the numbers are. So let's do that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this present time, I will not support the amendment to the motion. I think it wasn't long enough to what we have been told by the government and by the people of the Northwest Territories. The things that came out of the summit in Inuvik, I think their voice is important. I understand there is a debate about the numbers right now, but I will give you an example. The Inuvialuit are people that conserve and manage. Although they dispute the numbers right now presently back home, they still took that measure and said, okay, look. Although we know the dispute about the numbers, again, they are there. They took the numbers and looked at it and said, look, as co-management boards, we have to do something with this. They sat down with the department. I really appreciate the work that my people in the co-management board do on behalf of the wildlife, not only the caribou; the fish, the char that happened in Paulatuk, the Perry caribou that happened in Sachs Harbour. They have been on a quota system for 10 or 15 years. They are surviving just by management alone. So we take one species like the Perry caribou and central Banks Island and you do that and work with it. They are sustainable to a point now that they will live with what is given to them. At this present time, I will not support the amendment. I will go with the motion that came out before. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to reiterate that I will also be abstaining from this amendment for the same reason. I need to put that on record because I think it is important for legislators to say how they make decisions and why so. I want to make it clear that I totally respect the process here as I do for other processes. I respect everybody's opinion. I am making my own mind on a very narrow legal perspective as I know it. As far as I know, there are two parties, and I am not speaking for or against or even the subject area. I don't know. I just don't want to be doing anything here that would jeopardize or benefit either party in any way. That is just the principle I am going by on this. I hope the Members respect that it is not about whether you love the caribou or not. I hope to be able to discuss this fully some time down the road. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, life in AOC is always interesting.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the whole crux of the issue of the work since 2003 and the millions of dollars spent by the government, the thousands of hours of staff time, hundreds of hours of airplane and helicopter time, the hundreds of thousands of square kilometres covered, was to find out what was going on. We gathered, 180 of us, in Inuvik. We spent six months prior to that talking about the numbers and the work that was done. People in Inuvik gathered. We are here today saying that we support their recommendations, yet we are going to say we can't talk about the decline of caribou, so we tell the people in Inuvik that, basically, that wasn't a very worthwhile exercise, at least not in this forum today.

It makes no sense to me, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, there is an issue. There is a serious decline. We have spoken to the motion. I think we have to carry on with the motion in its entirety to keep the integrity of the motion and recognize the value and put value in respect on the work that the people have done for the last six months to get us to this point where we can stand in the Legislature and support this. I won't support this amendment. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Miltenberger has said, in AOC, there is never a dull moment. Mr. Speaker, I would speak to this amendment in terms of not supporting it. We have had a lot of discussions on it. Our region has talked about it for a lot of good people together and that we have made some headway in terms of what we are going to do, taking ownership. I am not going to support the motion because I think we should go with the original motion. I would like to go with that course of direction. I wanted to say that for the record, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am standing up and won't be supporting this amendment to the motion just simply due to the fact that it was agreed to by all stakeholders in January that the caribou are in dramatic decline. How dramatic? It is not for us to debate here today. That is in the courts right now, the methodology and how dramatic it is. That is for them to figure out in the courts. Today, we know that they are in decline. Everybody has agreed to it. So let's just move on and get this motion carried through so that people here can rest assured that this government really does care about the caribou and the fact that it is declining, and we need to take some action right now and not argue about how we are going to count them over again. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand, too, to voice my non-support of the amendment. Mr. Speaker, the people met in Inuvik. There were leaders, regulators, scientists and harvesters. They all came up with a plan of action. That plan of action is something that this government should support. We should support it. Those are the people that I will listen to. That is why I will not support this amendment. I will support the original motion. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this amendment that is in front of us as a motion item, I, too, cannot support it due to the fact that we have heard over and over in the communities in the Northwest Territories that there is definitely a decline in caribou. That is the whole purpose of why we are here dealing with this motion. Mr. Speaker, this is a critical time of our Assembly here that we must deal with this motion as it is presented earlier. I cannot support the amendment. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's funny because by convention we typically can't talk about what's before the courts and, you know, following that circumstance, like recognizing it, it would also seem odd that we would talk about why we can't talk about it. So, you know, I think the only thing we really understand here is that there's uncertainty and this clause sort of points it out. As far as I'm concerned, even though there may be uncertainty, we only have three options, which is the numbers are going up, they're going down or they're stable. As far as I'm concerned, this little clause is a small detail that doesn't change the fact that there's uncertainty and concern about the bigger picture. So I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the amendment.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour of the amendment? All those opposed? The amendment is defeated.

---Defeated

To the main motion. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly recognize the difficulty in addressing this issue in light of where we are in terms of legalities around it. It's obvious that the Members of this House, like many of the residents across the Territories, are very passionate about the caribou and making sure that the herds are here forever.

I'm certainly very encouraged by what we've heard from the Caribou Summit, the traditional harvesters, the residents who attended and many of my colleagues that attended from this House; the discussion and the debate about how the best way to help the herd recover and to be there for the long term. I'm certainly overwhelmed, Mr. Speaker, by the response, the discussion and the commitment that in the last four months I've listened to and heard on the issue of caribou. Certainly I'm very pleased with the level of discussion that happened at the Caribou Summit. It was certainly an historic gathering, as somebody mentioned here earlier; about 180 people that attended from all across the NWT to share their experience and their knowledge about caribou. I think it's probably one of the first times that we've had elders, leaders, harvesters from all across the North, different levels of government, industry and others to come together and discuss the issue of caribou and caribou populations, and talk about potential actions and plans to preserve this very valuable resource. I certainly, again, have to applaud all the members that attended for this honesty and for their commitment shown at the summit.

Many people at the summit and at our information sharing at our community meetings talked about the sacrifices that aboriginal people have made historically when caribou numbers were low. I think that same spirit and willingness has been demonstrated at the summit, at a lot of our discussions in the communities and certainly in this House over the last couple of weeks. The summit has reinforced the actions taken by some of the caribou management boards and also this government to deal with the barren-ground caribou numbers. Many of the actions discussed at the Caribou Summit reflected that.

I wanted to say that Members of this House can rest assured that this government will continue to work closely with the co-management boards and continue to work with the communities as we work towards implementing the actions of the Caribou Summit. I think as stewards of this land and of the wildlife that we share it with, we all have to admit, take ownership, and play a part in the conservation of caribou. This role is, of course, not only shared by us. There are other jurisdictions that share this role with us, mainly Nunavut, Saskatchewan and the Yukon, and we've committed to working with them and making every effort to start putting steps in place to protect the calving grounds and different areas that need to be protected. We will, of

course, have to also increase our knowledge on the status of all the herds. As Members know, we are doing more work in this area. We are doing a survey of the Beverly herd this year and we have support from other jurisdictions. There will be a meeting with my counterparts in Nunavut and also with Saskatchewan to talk about protecting calving grounds.

In closing, the support and discussion around this issue from the Members of the Legislature and also at the Caribou Summit has certainly been appreciated and I look forward to working with all the different MLAs of this House, the co-management boards, the communities, harvesters, industry and our other partners, to ensure that this very important resource is there for our current generation and also our future generations, Mr. Speaker. I also wanted to point out that, as this a recommendation to Cabinet, we will not be voting on this motion.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My comments on the motion as a whole are pretty brief. What I said earlier, which was the fact I still believe that there's a lot of uncertainty as far as the issue is concerned as a whole. I wish the motion could be more strongly worded. The thing is I find that this court case really challenges what we should really be saying. With that said, I hope Cabinet hears, as well as the ENR Minister hears, the message that we're trying to send; although, like I say, we can't really put it into writing.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is very passionate from those who are harvesters to those who are just purchasers of, in some way, who use the meat or whatever the case may be, but it's a very passionate issue as far as the Territories is concerned. From the Minister's comments, you can hear that; that they recognize that. Again, my area of concern, it's really sad that the outfitters had to launch their court challenge before we had a caribou day, a caribou theme day, but, that being said, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister receives the motion as it's intended. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll allow the mover of the motion to close the debate. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, for joining in on the debate of I think what is probably the single most important issue when it comes to daily lives and the livelihood of people in so many of our communities. Mr. Speaker, I think all of us have collected a tremendous amount of information. I know I've got a couple of binders that are at least a couple of inches thick; I think the e-mail file is well-over the 200 mark on this and that's just in the last couple of months. It has very much captured our attention and our hope in preparing for this motion and in taking in the meetings -- I think there were five or six of us in Inuvik -- we're demonstrating that we really are paying attention and that it is the resolve on this side of the Assembly, at the very least, Mr. Speaker, to continue to hold the government to account and to make sure that it delivers to the very best of its ability, with our support and with our engagement, to do the very best that we can to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that this gift of caribou to our people, to Canadians, to the world, is indeed one that we will steward, that we will protect and we will do everything we can to ensure that it's here for generations

to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to conclude the debate on this and I would like to ask for a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The Member has asked for a recorded vote. To the motion. All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Braden; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. Hawkins; Mr. Ramsay; Mr. Pokiak; Mr. Villeneuve; Mr. Lafferty; Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. Handley; Mr. Dent; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Bell; Mrs. Groenewegen; Ms. Lee.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The results of the motion, the vote: in favour of the motion, eight; against the motion, zero; abstaining, nine. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

First reading of bills. The honourable Member responsible for Transportation, Mr. McLeod, or Mr. Menicoche.

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the Order Paper, please.

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. Return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, colleagues. It is my honour to recognize Ms. Susan Caitlin and her son Julian Sabourin to the gallery. Mahsi cho.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hey! Hey!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 10-15(5), with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 18: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee today? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Committee Report 10-15(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Then we'll have a brief break and we'll resume our consideration of this report.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are dealing with Committee Report 10-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Report on the Review of 2005-2006 of the Languages Commissioner was been deemed read on February 16th, 2007, and we do have seven motions that are going to be brought forward. If I can deal with the first motion, Madam Chair.

Committee Motion 52-15(5): More Specific Prescription For Use Of Aboriginal Languages, Carried

Madam Chair, I move that this 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. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 53-15(5): Extending Obligations Of The Official Languages Act To Third Parties That Provide Services On A Contractual Basis, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories 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. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to state for the record, obviously I'm in support of all the recommendations that are before us today, but I mentioned during committee's deliberation on this that I think it's important that we can come up with all the recommendations that we like as a committee, but at some point in time we really have to put our minds to what it's going to cost the Government of the Northwest Territories, and we should pay some attention to this because there is certainly going to be a cost associated with trying to implement these recommendations and these motions. So I just wanted to make committee members live to that, that I believe a lot of work has to go into finding out what it costs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

At this time I would like to draw Members' attention in the visitors gallery to Mr. Larry Bagnell, the Liberal MP for the Yukon territory. Welcome.

---Applause

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 54-15(5): Regulating Basic Services Available In All Official Languages Regardless Of Geographic Area, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and report back on the legal implications and feasibility of abandoning the concept 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. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 55-15(5): System For Providing Service Through Toll-Free Numbers In French And Aboriginal Languages, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends GNWT review and report back on their system for providing service through

toll-free numbers in French and aboriginal languages. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 56-15(5): Training And Certification Of Interpreters And Translators, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement a plan for the training and certification of interpreters and translators. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 57-15(5): Establishment Of A Registry Of Interpreters And Translators For All Official Languages, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, after progress has been made with the establishment of an interpreter and translator training and certification program, proceed with establishing a registry of interpreters and translators for all official languages. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 58-15(5): Comprehensive Response To CR 10-15(5) Be Tabled Within 120 Days, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the final motion, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Does the committee agree that that concludes the consideration of Committee Report 10-15(5)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. What is the wish of the committee now? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move to report progress. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

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

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole please, Mrs. Groenewegen?

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 10-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner and would like to report progress, with seven motions being adopted, and that Committee Report 10-15(5) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member from the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 20: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 22: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 22 has had third reading. Third reading of bills.

Colleagues, your rules state that this Assembly must hold two sessions per year. Accordingly, in order to accommodate this year, we are concluded this Fifth Session of the 15th Assembly and shall immediately convene the Sixth Session tomorrow. We have concluded this Fifth Session with a very busy and extended budget session and I would like to thank all of the Members for their hard work and diligence and for giving proper attention to the important work that is done in this House. To the Legislative Assembly staff and to the government officials and employees who assisted us, I also thank you for your commitment and contribution to the work that we do.

Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if His Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the House to give assent to bills and to prorogue the Fifth Session of the 15th Assembly?

ITEM 21: PROROGATION

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Tony Whitford): Ooh, it's going to be one of those sessions. First of all I must apologize for my voice. I was supporting the NWT athletes in the Canada Winter Games with great vigour.

---Applause

But I saved enough for this afternoon. ...(English not provided)

It is my privilege and pleasure to be with you today, particularly as we celebrate Commonwealth Day. I am sure that you have all seen the Union Jack flying outside of the Legislative Assembly building today honouring Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth. Today's Commonwealth is an association of some 53 countries. It is made up of nearly two billion citizens, which is about 30 percent of the world's population drawn from the broadest ranges of faiths, races, cultures and traditions.

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, has sent a special message to the people of the Commonwealth today and I would like to share a small part of that message with you today. Her Majesty says:

"In today's difficult and sometimes divided world, I believe that it is more important than ever to keep trying to respect and understand each other better. Each and every one of us has hopes, needs and priorities. Each of us is an individual, with ties of emotion and bonds of obligation - to culture, religion, community, country and beyond. In short, each of us is special.

The more we see others in this way, the more we can understand them and their points of view. In what we think and say and do, let us as individuals actively seek out the views of others; let us make the best use of what our beliefs and history teaches us; let us have open minds and hearts; and let us, like

the Commonwealth, find our diversity a cause for celebration and a source of strength and unity."

Wise and inspiring words, I say, from our much-loved head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and words that I believe are particularly relevant to us today as we go about the important work of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Members, I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of a former Member of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Vince Steen. I had the pleasure of serving as an MLA with Mr. Steen during the 14th Assembly. Mr. Steen was a dedicated and a reliable Member and an honourable and intelligent man. He was true to his community, to his friends and, most importantly, to his family. He contributed significantly to the discussions of the day in this House, but never missed an opportunity to pepper those discussions with traditional wisdom and community relevance. I offer our sincere condolences to Mr. Steen's family and to his friends. We will miss him and we will remember him fondly.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Education Act;
- Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Archives Act;
- Bill 21, Appropriations Act, 2007-2008;
- Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriations Act No. 3, 2006-2007.

Prior to prorogating this Fifth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly, I would like to advise you that the Sixth Session of the 15th Assembly will convene on Tuesday, March 13th, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. sharp.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the Fifth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mahsi.

---Applause

---PROROGATION