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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, August 17, 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. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning colleagues. Before we begin the day, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a special day for one of our Members. It happens to be the birthday of the Member for the riding of Yellowknife South, the Honourable Brendan Bell.

---Applause

What a difference eight years makes. I remember when he was first elected to the 14th Assembly. Mr. Bell was known as Baby Bell, but he's gone from Baby Bell to a seasoned veteran. So all the best to you today.

Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 32-15(6): Council Of The Federation**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity today to report back to this House on last week's Council of the Federation meeting as well as the meeting with aboriginal leaders I attended along with my fellow Premiers.

In what has become an important part of these meetings, Premiers met with the aboriginal leaders of the five national aboriginal organizations: Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations, AFN; Patrick Brazeau, leader of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, CAP; Duane Smith, vice-president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, ITK; Bruce Dumont, interim president of the Metis National Council, MNC; and Beverly Jacobs, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, NWAC, to discuss issues of common concern.

These meetings between Premiers and leaders of the national aboriginal organizations grew, in large part, from the Western Premiers' Conference we hosted in Inuvik in 2004. I am pleased to say that leaders agreed in Moncton to have these meetings become a regular and continuing part of the Council of the Federation meetings.

This year's meeting, and the three aboriginal summits that took place over the past year, are evidence of the continued commitment by Premiers to work with aboriginal leaders to advance a national aboriginal agenda; an agenda that identifies priority areas as well as solutions we can put in place to tackle such serious issues as family violence, substance abuse, comparatively low rates of education and employment and poor health and housing conditions.

Premiers have taken their role as national leaders seriously and have worked hard to establish and maintain a mutually respectful government-to-government relationship with aboriginal leaders. In that spirit, I am pleased to advise Members that the Northwest Territories has agreed to host next year's National Aboriginal Women's Summit.

Mr. Speaker, as noted in my sessional statement, I am pleased to report that Premiers released an important document in Moncton entitled A Shared Vision for Energy in Canada. This seven-point national energy plan is geared towards ensuring a secure, sustainable, reliable and competitively priced energy supply that meets Canada's present and future needs. The plan, supplemented by energy maps, provides an inventory of the current and potential energy sources from coast to coast to coast, articulates a shared vision for energy in Canada and calls on the federal government to formally involve provinces and territories in international discussions and negotiations that deal with energy and natural resource matters.

This national energy plan strikes a balance between security of energy supply, environmental stewardship, social responsibility and economic prosperity. In the context of energy development, Premiers reiterated their unequivocal support for the Northwest Territories to successfully conclude a devolution and resource revenue sharing agreement so they can be the primary beneficiaries of the development of northern resources.

The agenda of the Council of the Federation also focussed on the issue of climate change. Premiers released a document entitled Climate Change: Leading Practices by Provincial and Territorial Governments of Canada. This collection of best practices highlights the good work provinces and territories are currently doing, or plan to do, to reduce greenhouse gases and to adapt to climate change.

Premiers realize more needs to be done and together we agreed to:

- produce an additional 25,000 megawatts of renewable energy through 2020;
- join The Climate Registry to ensure the consistent and verifiable measurement of greenhouse gas emissions;
- work to develop strategies to implement a national biofuels and hydrogen distribution system;
- develop a comprehensive inventory of research currently underway to identify areas of focus for future work and potential partnerships;

- include climate change in school curricula;
- develop and implement programs, standards or incentives aimed at improving energy efficiency in buildings and promoting the use of energy efficient appliances, vehicles and other energy-using products; and
- committed to recapture methane gas from large landfills.

The Northwest Territories has programs in place or in development to assist in meeting the above goals, including the recently released Energy Efficiency Incentive Program, which provides incentives for residents to purchase energy-efficient models of products they use every day.

Mr. Speaker, for the North, where climate change impacts are felt first, adaptation is a critical matter. Along with our territorial colleagues, we are successful in gaining support to work together on a number of fronts, including work around adaptation.

We have worked hard to establish a strong northern voice with our provincial and territorial colleagues at the Council of the Federation and I believe, as evidenced by this year's achievements, we have succeeded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Minister's Statement 33-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to provide Members with an update on the status of the community capacity building fund and to share information on the projects communities have started with assistance from this fund.

Members will recall that the community capacity building fund was established in 2005 with funding provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs administered this \$35 million program, which was designed to flow funding directly to communities, to assist them to advance their unique priorities and address capacity building issues on a community-by-community basis.

Mr. Speaker, there were some initial concerns raised by communities who felt that it would be too difficult to reach consensus among local governing bodies on how to spend their share of the money. I am pleased to announce that all 33 communities in the Northwest Territories were able to reach agreements and have submitted their proposals and applications for funding. This success demonstrates that community leaders are able to put aside their political differences and work together for the good of their communities.

The funding is being used to support an impressive range of projects that will enhance the quality of life in communities and I would like to share a few examples. Several communities are setting up to expanding youth centres and day care programs. Many communities,

including Aklavik, Fort Simpson, Enterprise, Gameti and Inuvik, have used some of the funding to purchase playground equipment, develop golf courses, or buy sporting equipment for community use. Renovations and expansions are being done to arenas, community offices, curling rinks and sportsplex buildings. Fort Smith has a new swimming pool, and new community offices are being developed in Fort McPherson, Behchoko, Paulatuk, Hay River and Sachs Harbour. Arbours will be built in Aklavik, Jean Marie River and the Hay River Reserve. Many communities are expanding parks and trail systems and putting in street signs.

But not all the money is going to infrastructure. Some communities are supporting staff training and development and scholarship programs. Graveyards are being fenced and cleaned up. School programs and community recreation programs are being enhanced. In partnership with Aurora College, Colville Lake has developed a human resource plan which will provide training to every employable resident in the community, supported by a day care centre and training subsidies.

In reviewing the funding proposals, it is apparent that each community spent a considerable amount of time and effort in developing their priorities, to ensure that projects chosen reflect the unique needs of community residents.

The community capacity building fund will leave a lasting legacy in Northwest Territories communities, in improved infrastructure, in increased community capacity and in enhanced collaborative working relationships among local governing bodies. Beginning next year, Municipal and Community Affairs will work with communities to put together a final report on how the funds were used.

I would like to congratulate all the communities that have successfully developed proposals and are beginning the exciting stage of starting their projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Speaker's Outreach Program Visit To Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An historic event took place when the Mace departed in the same arms of the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms from Yellowknife for a long journey from Yellowknife to Sachs Harbour, Northwest Territories and Banks Island on August 1 to 3, 2007. The Speaker made it his mandate to travel and take the Mace across the Northwest Territories and I hope the 16th Assembly will continue this program.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I could not attend this event, so at this time I would like to personally thank the individuals who made this long journey to Sachs Harbour to display the Mace for the people of Sachs Harbour.

First, I would like to thank His Worship Mayor Robert Eldridge and council, Mr. Raymond Kaslak, the SAO, and the residents of Sachs Harbour in welcoming the staff and the Mace to the community.

Secondly, thank you to the Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker; the Honourable Anthony "Tony" Whitford, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; my honourable colleague, Mr. Dave Ramsay, MLA, Kam Lake; Mr. Tim Mercer, Clerk; Mr. Derek Edjericon, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms; Sue Tkachuk, executive assistant to the Speaker; Patricia Russell, communications, for making this journey to display the Mace.

I understand there were delegations from News/North and also APTN. I understand the mayor and the residents of Sachs Harbour welcomed you with open arms and made you feel at home during the visit.

Mr. Speaker, a special thank you should go to John, Sr. and Samantha Lucas for taking you on the boat tour and for the catering. I understand you were able to see some local birds and wildlife on this local boat tour.

Mr. Speaker, there are two other events taking place this week in Sachs Harbour I would like to mention. The annual White Fox Jamboree starts today, and tomorrow the Department of Fisheries and Ocean will be holding their annual Oceans Day event. I know the mayor and community will welcome all visitors from across the territory and enjoy a safe weekend.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, because session is on this week, I cannot be in Sachs Harbour to help celebrate with the residents of Sachs Harbour. I would like to extend best wishes to the residents of Sachs Harbour and hope they have a safe and enjoyable week as they celebrate the jamboree and Oceans Day festivities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Funding Challenges Facing Non-Government Organizations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the eight years I have served as MLA, few issues have received as much attention as the chronic financial problems facing our non-government organizations. These are agencies like the YWCA, Council for Persons with Disabilities, Sport North, and, as my colleague from Hay River South highlighted so effectively yesterday, the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre.

Over the years, these volunteer-driven agencies have become reliable, trustworthy and essential partners with our government in the delivery of an immense range of services and programs in virtually every community. But I deeply regret, Mr. Speaker, that, as a government, we have not acted in the same spirit and commitment as they have. That is because in our contract and service agreements with them, we have failed to keep up our side of the deal. That is because we are slowly starving them of the money they need to keep up their side of the deal.

The situation has reached a crisis point. In a recently released report, eight Yellowknife-based agencies outlined their stark reality of the challenges they face. The gap in salaries falls between 23 and 41 percent. That is as much as \$30,000 a year of what equivalent work in the GNWT pays. Many of the staff have to work two jobs in

order to keep a household going. Turnover rates average 50 percent a year and can be triple that level, and recruiting for vacant positions has stretched up to six months. Mr. Speaker, managers face a hopeless catch-22 situation of never being able to get ahead. They are forced to backfill for non-existent staff and cope with increasing mountains of paperwork and accountability that we demand of them.

In the report, they have given a clear business plan of what we can do. We need to catch up to within 80 percent of the GNWT's pay packet. I also advocate, Mr. Speaker, that we need to bring back the core funding model with multi-year agreements indexed to inflation to allow those volunteer boards that lead these organizations to the certainty and stability they need to lead their organizations in the vital work they do.

Mr. Speaker, above all, we need to change our political attitude. We need to treat them as true partners, genuinely value the contribution they make, and show that this government will change the way we do business and support their ideas and the service they give to us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Cost Of Living In Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living in the Sahtu is one issue that has been bothering my people for a long time. The Government of the Northwest Territories provided MLAs with a presentation in 2006 called the Cost of Living in the Northwest Territories. This presentation showed Sahtu communities are in the top 10 most expensive communities for food prices in the Northwest Territories. For instance, food in the Sahtu is actually double the cost of food in Edmonton. However, in Yellowknife, food is only 10 percent more expensive than in Edmonton. The Sahtu is also in the top 10 again when it comes to non-food items such as household supplies, cleaning goods and personal care items. Gas and fuel prices are very high. For instance, Colville Lake pays \$1.22 a litre while in Hay River they only pay 95 cents a litre. Not only is the Sahtu paying more per litre in heating fuel, but we also are in the colder regions in the Northwest Territories. To add to this burden, Mr. Speaker, communities in the Sahtu also have, in general, a lower income and endure the highest cost of living in the Northwest Territories.

Larger communities on the highway system have the highest income and the lowest cost of living. Thousands of dollars are spent that pump into each household in an attempt to mitigate the high cost of living when, as I pointed out in my earlier statements in this Assembly, if you have a highway built in the Sahtu, life would be less expensive.

Maybe this government should save millions of dollars by just building a highway into the Sahtu. The cost of living discussions have taken a lot of time in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It is time to stop talking about it and time to start acting. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Water Is Life Fort Smith Conference

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, water is life. That is a very fundamental fact and a fact that is going to drive our political agendas more and more in the coming years. It is also the name of the major conference that is going to be held in Fort Smith next week: Water is Life.

There are people coming from across the North and across Canada to attend this particular meeting. It is being sponsored by the Akaitcho Government. I would like to commend them for doing that. I would also like to thank the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for their considerable help in arranging and helping to fund this particular conference, which I believe is going to be very important. One of the keynote speakers is going to be Mr. Justin Trudeau. I will be attending the first few days there. I also, as well, look forward to the words of wisdom that are going to be brought to us by Minister McLeod when he comes to address this conference on Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that across the land, governments are adjusting their political agendas slowly to recognize the impacts of the climate, of global warming and of our hugely growing population. But we have to do more. We are still taking, in many cases, baby steps. I will be encouraging all those attending this conference to look to not only describe the concern and care that we have to take with water, but also give recommendations for, as we know in a few short weeks there will be the 16th Assembly taking its place in this House. They will need advice and guidance of how to better balance economic and resource development with protection of the environment and healthy people. I am going to be encouraging all those attending to give us those recommendations to help advise us as we move forward to the 16th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On All-Weather Road Connecting Tlicho Communities And Diamond Mines

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in August of 2007, there was an advertisement in a native journal. The Kitikmeot Corporation wants to build a port, a road to Bathurst Inlet. The port will be capable of handling 25,000 tons of ice class vessels. A 211 kilometre all-weather road is south of some of the richest minerals in the territory and Canada. Nunavut is moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we did something positive in our jurisdiction here in the Northwest Territories. There are three diamond mines in our backyard. We currently have jurisdiction over them. Diavik Diamond Mines has already been quoted as saying trucking supplies down an

all-weather road will be much cheaper than flying them in, and a port is one of several options the diamond mines are considering.

Mr. Speaker, the areas of the diamond mines is situated on the Tlicho traditional territory, Wekeezhii lands and the Monfwi Gogha De Niitlee traditional territory. The mining companies and the GNWT must respect the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement. We are currently in discussion with the Minister of Transportation and senior staff on a proposal of an all-weather road from Behchoko and connecting Whati, Gameti, Wekweeti and continuing on to BHP and Diavik Diamond Mines and other mines. Fortune Minerals that is in our Tlicho territory, the gold mine will also be on route.

Mr. Speaker, the diamond mines need to leave behind a lasting legacy after they have shut down. They have always talked about leaving something positive behind. This is one avenue that they should consider. A permanent all-weather road access will certainly benefit the Tlicho communities in the long run. The mines need to work with the stakeholders; rightfully, the Tlicho Government.

Mr. Speaker, we want an all-weather road built connecting the Tlicho communities on route to the diamond mines now before we miss the boat. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Members' Statements On Legislative Assembly Page Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our Assembly, we rely on Pages for much of the efficiency we achieve, such as it is, in the conduct of our business. They deliver copies of motions and statements, and they make sure we have fresh water always available. But, Mr. Speaker, probably the most important function for Pages in our Assembly is carrying notes between Members in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I doubt the public has any idea how much is done by way of notes between Members while we are in session. When we are at work here in the House, decorum requires we spend most of our time in our seats. So we use notes to conduct business, and, Mr. Speaker, though none of us would admit to authoring one, like conversations, not all of our notes would stand to public reading very well. I was reminded of that at the last session when I asked a Page what she thought of the job. She said she really enjoyed it but was surprised at how many notes were passed between Members. She went on to tell me that when her teacher saw a note being passed in class, she would take it and then read it in front of the whole class.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure I speak for all Members here when I thank you for not taking a similar approach.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, our Page Program is a tremendous way to expose young northerners to how our consensus government system works. Most jurisdictions use older

students than we do. I suspect those who are interested in the job in the South are already politically aware. Here in the Northwest Territories, we get young people in often before they even think of politics and, most importantly, before the cynicism that has become prevalent about the political process is entrenched in our minds.

Mr. Speaker, from talking to Pages after they have worked here, I know that many have had their eyes opened to politics as a possibility for their future. I have been surprised by how many young people have told me that, after being a Page, they were fascinated by what we do here and even how they thought politics might be in their future. Some have come back as youth parliamentarians. It is a good program.

On a more personal note, Mr. Speaker, I have been pleased for the past couple of days that our son, Tyler, could be a Page in this House.

---Applause

It has given him an opportunity to see some of my job and for him to gain perspective around politics. He has come to understand that when people discuss issues, their disagreeing with one another doesn't mean that they really dislike each other, just that they have different points of view.

I am also pleased that it has given him an opportunity to experience our schedule, to help him understand...Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable colleagues. I am also pleased that it has given Tyler an opportunity to experience our schedule and help him understand why I have missed so many of his hockey and little league baseball games and parent/teacher meetings over the years.

As I am moving on to other pursuits, not retiring, as was reported in the newspaper, I expect to make more of those events. I know that Tyler looks forward to me being able to get to more of his games, but I am not sure he is looking forward to me being around more to make sure that his homework is done every night.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of the Pages for their work in this House. It is a great program, and I hope that subsequent assemblies continue the program. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Reliance On Agency Nurses

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use my Member's statement today to talk about staffing concerns of nurses which have been brought to my

attention. Staffing has, and continues to be, an issue in our health care system. We have had numerous discussions about the cost, and the impact, and the reliance on agency nurses and what that impact is having on our existing staff and the overall health care budgets at Stanton and the other health authorities.

I have a very difficult time understanding why I have to stand here again today raising issues on behalf of staff. It is not just a short list of issues like the use of agency nurses, workplace harassment, unfair labour practices, discrimination, intimidation, pay level disparity and the mobility of nurses to work in other regions. The department and Stanton have been working on staffing issues for four years, the four years that I have been here. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, the Stanton Health Authority was tasked with developing their own recruitment and retention strategy within the context of system-wide recruitment and retention initiatives. In addition to the strategy, Stanton was to come up with a human resources staffing plan in 2003. Early in 2004, Stanton was to conduct a staffing analysis to determine appropriate staffing levels and to confirm the role and mandate of the employee services function and give it a higher profile.

Mr. Speaker, where is this plan today? Why are so many staff still feeling left out with nowhere to turn for help except to the union and to their MLA? It seems so bizarre that we have to spend so much time, effort and energy and, really, we have nothing to show for it.

Mr. Speaker, another study which was started late last year was to interview staff and to try to find out exactly what was happening at Stanton. Where is this staffing utilization review report? The last reason I have heard is that the consultants have not completed the sections related to Stanton and to the satisfaction of that hospital. Mr. Speaker, if I can be so bold, it sounds to me like the report doesn't say what Stanton wants it to say, so the consultants are busy trying to rework that report.

As a government, we definitely need to get a grip on staffing issues in our health care system. We can't afford to be flying nurses in from Honduras and Newfoundland and paying the high cost of agency nurses. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said, we can't afford to keep flying nurses in from Honduras and Newfoundland and paying the high cost of agency nurses. What the government should be doing is looking at creative ways to try to get more nurses to live here. How about a targeted campaign to newly graduated nurses in southern Canada where we would sign them up to return a service agreement for four, five or six years and, in return, the Government of the Northwest Territories could look at paying off their student loans? They would come here and some of them would stay here, Mr. Speaker. They would raise their families here. I think it is creative ways like that the government should be looking at instead of flying nurses in from Honduras. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Congratulations To Newly Married Constituents

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to express my well wishes to four couples in my riding who were married recently and to a dear friend who will marry this weekend. In Fort Liard, Mr. Speaker, I have Mr. Marc Schmitz married to Ms. Alana Harris, Mr. Jonathon Buckley who married Ms. Stacey McLeod; and in Fort Simpson, Mr. Michael Canney married to Ms. Lyn Wharton, as well as last weekend Mr. Colin Munroe to Miss Leah Keats. This coming weekend, a close friend of mine, Miss Lisa Lafferty to be married to a Michael Tetso. I wish to congratulate these families, every happiness and wish them fortune in their marriages and their futures. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Workers' Compensation Board Outstanding Claims

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about WCB. Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that a lot of good progress has been made between the Members of this House, the Minister, the chair of the Governance Council and the new CEO over the last number of months. We have gotten some really good work done. I am particularly impressed, Mr. Speaker, with the changes in approach and willingness shown by the senior staff in working with us to make the new WCB Act under review as good and as responsive as it can be for the stakeholders.

Before I get too carried away with too many compliments and confusing the balance of things, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you about something we have not seen as much progress on. That is the fact that we have not seen much movement in policy changes or closure of many long outstanding files. Some of them are 15 to 20 years long. The long awaited changes to the chronic pain policy announced in April of this year have not translated into concrete changes in situations for a dozen or so files that have been on the WCB lineup for many years. The abrupt settlement of the Ivan Valic appeal raised expectations for equally speedy settlement or system-wide changes. But that is not what has happened. Everything surrounding it remains enclosed in shadow. After a flurry of activities, I don't know of any more resources or push being made to come to a resolution of longstanding cases.

Mr. Speaker, the last I heard, the new chronic pain policy was still hung up on retroactivity clause. I know the worker's advisor has been gathering all the cases hoping to make progress with the new management and new direction, but, as I see it, unless there are real efforts made and real resources put forward to clean up these files quickly, nothing is going to get done. So I urge the WCB, the new management, the Minister and the board to keep working, to really do something about these long outstanding files and the people that are waiting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For Small Business

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my Member's statement today to tell this government that we are not doing enough to support small business in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, we have expended a lot of time and energy going around and consulting, consulting, consulting. We have amalgamated things. We have come up with a new BDIC, but I tell you today still, if you want to start a business or expand a business, you have got a very rough road ahead of you in terms of accessing capital to do that.

I had the opportunity and thank the Minister of ITI for inviting me to attend a roundtable on the economy with our Prime Minister last week. The Prime Minister shared that sovereignty is a very big priority of the Conservative government. I took the opportunity to tell the Prime Minister that one step towards addressing the issue of sovereignty is to ensure that we have people living in the North. If we want people living in the North, we need something for them to do to support themselves. We need jobs and we need strong communities. That will create the presence that we need in the North to say that this is Canada and we have sovereignty.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the issue of accessing capital, we have business programs in place, but I think they have gone backwards. It has been many years since we have had an economic development agreement. If the federal government wants to do something useful with Canadian taxpayers' dollars, they should revisit the issue of a very good economic development agreement in partnership with our government so that people who had the creativity, and the initiative, and the desire to start small businesses can do so.

Resource development is out there. It is big. We need the businesses to come in and to service that industry, but we need to create that opportunity on a level playing field. There has been a turning away from some of the emphasis on some of the level ones in larger communities, but yesterday the issue of housing came up in this Assembly of modular housing. Most of you who have been to Hay River to visit, you know that we have a proven track record there with a company that is building modular units. There is no reason why you would go three miles south into Alberta and people are building modular homes. If we can do that in Alberta, why can we not do that on a viable basis in the Northwest Territories? Part of the reason is it is a capital-intensive business to start up. We have a \$2 million cap on our lending. It should not be there. For businesses that want to expand, with a proven track record, we should be revisiting the issue of those loan caps. I will have questions for the Minister of ITI on this today. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Regional Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centre

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with all of the illegal drugs that are starting to come out now, the single biggest addiction for years and years has been the abuse of alcohol. Mr. Speaker, every community that we visited over the last two and a half, almost three years that I have been here, almost the single biggest concern in every community has been the abuse of alcohol and the effects on the community and on their lives. I see some communities trying to take some initiatives now in dealing with the problems of alcohol. I think one community introduced prohibition just recently. We wish them luck with that.

Something struck me this summer, Mr. Speaker, as I was driving down to my office at six o'clock in the morning.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oooh, hard working.

MR. MCLEOD: I noticed more and more people on the streets in Inuvik. That causes me a great deal of concern. They are people that really have no place to go. A lot of them are addicted to alcohol. I am sure many of them would like to seek help. But when you need to get help up in the Beaufort-Delta, you have to leave the Beaufort-Delta.

I go back again to the spring when my Social Programs colleagues and I had an opportunity to visit a camp on the east branch which was being put up by the Nihitat Gwich'in. They are hoping to use this camp to deal with these types of situations where they could have people have a place to stay. They could go there and hopefully turn their lives around and beat their addiction to alcohol. I am sure by having a camp on the east branch would make more people want to go and seek help, especially if they can have the support of family and the community.

As a government, we have to do what we can, Mr. Speaker, to not only encourage these types of initiatives taken on by people regardless of what our report says. People recognize the need for treatment centres and regional treatment centres. I think we should support that. If there is a way that we can support the Nigtat Gwich'in in any way financially to get this camp up and going, and deal with the problem that they recognize, and commend them for recognizing it and taking the initiative, we should back them with all the resources that we can, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Procedure For Premier And Cabinet Selection

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to make special note of red Friday. I always like to wear red on Fridays to show my support for our troops and their families, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to participate as a Member of the Legislative Assembly in what is a unique consensus system of government. Although the consensus system has many advantages, I believe that for it to continue its

relevance, it must change and evolve with the needs of the North. I strongly encourage the 16th Assembly to seriously look at changes they may be able to make to continue consensus vitality in the sense of moving forward for our future.

We are truly an anomaly, Mr. Speaker, in that our current Premier, who was acclaimed as an MLA by his constituents and then acclaimed in his position in the House, achieved becoming voted as Premier without casting one vote. Now, of course, Premier Handley has served us very well and his comments are no reflection of his performance. However, one change I believe would greatly strengthen our system of governance is if we elected our Premier at large. A Premier elected at large would have the advantage of a clear mandate from across the Northwest Territories.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: ...(inaudible)...

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Premier being selected throughout the Territories would have the strength, because they could select their Cabinet Members that they see with strength to move forward. This would give our Premier the ability to pick an A-team, our star team. Mr. Speaker, the Premier could also look at that time picking a Cabinet with regional balances...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: ...(inaudible)...

MR. HAWKINS: ...balancing gender balances, Mr. Speaker, and also looking at other unique strengths and individual qualifications to make the continued Cabinet even better than they are.

The ability to hire and fire Ministers would also give the Premier the power to keep Ministers in line. We pay the Premier to act in the top job. Well, let's give them the ultimate authority, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of ministerial performances belongs in the Premier, not the Premier putting pressure on the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, it should not be up to Regular Members to spill blood in the Assembly for the Premier when he should be doing his job.

Mr. Speaker, could I have some attention and order here?

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, our consensus style of government needs to evolve. In closing, for the NWT to continue the strength of consensus government, it must move forward with innovative approaches to make sure it is relevant for today and tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: ...(inaudible)...

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize in the gallery today Sue Glowach, a good family friend and also a great supporter of an organization that I

have been involved with for some time, the International Exchange Student Organization. I know that her family will again be welcoming a student to Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize a constituent whose family has lived in Weledeh for many years, well-known Bob Bromley.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to recognize a Page who travelled here from Fort McPherson, Mr. Dennis Nerysoo. Hopefully Dennis is able to take back what he has learned here and also his experience back to his classmates in Chief Julius School. With that, I would like to thank Dennis for coming down and wish him a safe journey home tomorrow. Thanks again for coming, Dennis.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome those in the gallery today. In addition to that, I have two constituents who are Pages with us this week, Mr. Dent's son, Tyler Dent. I would like to recognize him and my nephew Ryan Ramsay and as well all the other Pages that have been working on our behalf here this week. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome everybody here also, but I'd like to recognize a Page from my riding. His name is Jake Olson. He agreed to step in and he's having a lot of fun. So I'd just like to recognize him. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I have several constituents paging here as well this week. I'd like to recognize them. I hope I get them all. I don't have them broken out by riding, but I'm going to quickly do a scan. Christina Boggis is here, Shelby Brothers, Scott Stirling, Jake Olson, and I think that's Casey Canning. I think that's it. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to acknowledge their efforts here this week for us.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 140-15(6): All-Weather Road To Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the diamond mines continue work in the North here, north of Yellowknife, the winter road continues to be of question. Some years it's good; some years it's bad. Mr. Speaker, before this Assembly, I brought up the issue of could we work towards a permanent year-round winter road to our mine. This would help them with their logistics every year as they get organized bringing in their fuel straight up there. They don't have to worry about the winter road going out, and as we saw two years ago, they spent \$100 million in logistic money trying to get fuel up to the North. So there's a conglomerate whine to establish a year-round road. So the two options are to go straight from Yellowknife north or the Bathurst port. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation is he willing to work with his winter road conglomerate to ensure that this road gets permanently established in the Northwest Territories rather than we sit by and watch the Nunavut government get it established in the Bathurst port going south? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 140-15(6): All-Weather Road To Diamond Mines

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not quite sure if I heard the Member correctly, but I think he said we spent \$100 million and I'd like to correct that. The government has not expended any money in air lifting freight over to the mining companies at all, but there is a joint venture with all the mines that have done an alternative transportation study and we are working with them to define what kind of role the government would have in that road, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 140-15(6): All-Weather Road To Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister was correct; when I said they, I meant the diamonds mines spent \$100 million hiring the air transportation companies. So the Minister is right. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know what the Minister is willing to do to step forward, because they're presenting a plan, they tried to come to committee, but because committee was short on time this year and of course they're vamping up for this next winter road season and trying to get organized, what is he willing to do today, because I think we need a conglomerate or organizations to come together to advocate to the Minister of Transportation, the federal Minister of Transportation, to

make this a reality. What is he willing to do today to make that commitment? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 140-15(6): All-Weather Road To Diamond Mines

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much there, Mr. Speaker. Our department continues to work with the joint venture study and our most recent meeting we had was in July. We met with the joint venture to look at their study. Their option is the seasonal over-land route, which is realigning the road off the lakes and streams so they can add more days for transporting their freight up to the mines. That's the short-term solution that's being offered and we are working closely with them, Mr. Speaker. Thanks.

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

Supplementary To Question 140-15(6): All-Weather Road To Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be able to commit today to make this a priority policy to work on so we can move forward, knowing that this can be established in the short term, as opposed to just sitting here waiting to find out which way we're going with the wind? Because I'll tell you, Nunavut wants the Bathurst Port; Nunavut wants the year-round road to go from north to south to the mines. So if we sit down and do not do anything, we're going to miss this opportunity. Is he willing to move forward and make this a commitment on a policy to move on this initiative? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 140-15(6): All-Weather Road To Diamond Mines

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, we have, as a government, been advocating that getting a long-term road into the Slave Geological Province is a priority and we are working with the federal officials to that end. As well, there's many different options available out there and we're exploring them all, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

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

Mr. Speaker, maybe I have a solution for Mr. Hawkins's request...

---Laughter

...an all-weather road via Tlicho communities. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transportation said in February that the department, last year, completed a Tlicho

corridors options study that looked at an all-weather road and the all-weather road corridor option in the Tlicho region. The department also completed economic analysis of the benefits and costs of both realigning the Tlicho winter road through an over-land route and upgrading the seasonal route to all-weather road standards. These studies were slated to be completed later this year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me what the status is of these studies and discussions with the federal government? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, the roads to the Tlicho area are very important and we have been working very hard with the Tlicho Government to that respect. We have set up a Tlicho Road Studies Committee and we have been meeting early in the summer and we do have another meeting planned for the last week in August. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with this proposed winter road realignment and all-weather road in our jurisdiction, it would be much cheaper and also a shorter distance to travel to the mine site from the south. As you can see in this diagram, it clearly shows, from the department, that that's the best avenue to go, the Tlicho connecting the communities onto the mine site. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, can the Minister tell me if the Department of Transportation will be asking for money towards this initiative in the next business plan, for the Tlicho road connecting through our communities' all-weather road? Has it been determined whether it will be an all-weather road or upgrade of the seasonal route? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Tlicho road studies and the \$460,000 contribution from the federal government, and that's exactly what we're doing. It's a study to assess the routes to the Tlicho communities. I think the important message here, Mr. Speaker, is that Tlicho communities will be getting seasonal roads in the long term, Mr. Speaker, and with or without the mines running through them, without the mine road running through there, and it will be a priority of our government, improving the access to all Tlicho communities and we will begin talking about it in the business planning process how to plan for it. The first thing to do is to get the engineering studies done to see exactly what the full conditions are and how much the road will cost to build. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the commitment that's being made by the Minister to work with us, the Tlicho Government and also the communities. I guess the next question sort of leads to that where can the Minister tell me if he's worked with the Tlicho Chief Executive Council, because they are the authority in our region on this project, and how he is keeping them informed of the new development? There's a new development that's happening in Nunavut. What's our status? Are we moving forward expeditiously? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The developments in Nunavut are all part of the joint venture plans. It's something that government is outside the process. It's their initiative and if that's what they would like to plan for and proceed with, they can do that. But as for ourselves, we have been working closely with the Tlicho chiefs and we have established the steering committee to look at the Tlicho road studies and we have been to the communities to advise them and discuss this project. There is a draft consultation plan, which we have yet to go over one more time and that's the intent of our meeting at the end of this month, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question would relate to the winter road management committee. Since the Department of Transportation is responsible for transporting goods to the mining companies, I'd like to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, if he's willing to sit down with the winter road management committee if they can consult with the Tlicho Government, because rightfully it's in our jurisdiction, Wekeezhii and also Monfwi Gogha De Niitlee area, if he's willing to do that? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 141-15(6): All-Weather Road Corridor In Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'll be pleased to add that to the agenda at our upcoming meeting. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 142-15(6): Sachs Harbour RCMP Presence

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know that we passed a budget to get an RCMP presence in Sachs Harbour. Recently, over the last few

months, there have been some letters going through from the Minister to myself and to the mayor of Sachs Harbour that this has been delayed probably until 2008. I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice, can he give me an update on whether "G" Division has sent out notification to the RCMP membership in Sachs Harbour at the present time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 142-15(6): Sachs Harbour RCMP Presence

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the Member. The RCMP have indicated to me that they are in the hiring process and have started the search for members who would be qualified to go to Sachs Harbour and do the job there. We have been disappointed that there is some delay in getting the infrastructure on the ground in Sachs Harbour. As the Member knows well, we've got to be able to make the barge season. We weren't able to do that this year because when we looked at the state of facilities, they required more work than we could get done in time. So there is a delay in terms of the physical infrastructure. It will be a year later than we'd originally proposed, but the plan is to have members hired and on the ground ready to go into Sachs Harbour this fall. They will have to be permanently stationed in Inuvik and come back and forth until we have accommodations for them in Sachs Harbour, but the plan is to have a vastly increased force on the ground in Sachs Harbour this fall. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 142-15(6): Sachs Harbour RCMP Presence

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to accommodations, I did get a notification from the hamlet, from the SAO, that there's two units available that can be utilized. Has the Minister checked with the RCMP on whether that can be used at the present time? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 142-15(6): Sachs Harbour RCMP Presence

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, there are several issues. There are issues around accommodations and I've talked to the RCMP about that. I've relayed the offer of the hamlet as well. We've got issues around the detachment, though, in terms of it not meeting code. That needs to be replaced. So there are a number of infrastructure issues there, but we appreciate the offer from the community. I believe that the RCMP will be in discussion with them because, of course, although the members won't be permanently stationed there, we do need accommodation for them when they're in town. They will be overnight for weeks at a time. So that offer is very much appreciated and I know that the RCMP intend to have that discussion with the hamlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 142-15(6): Sachs Harbour RCMP Presence

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this case right now, I guess two RCMP will be stationed outside of Inuvik. So I'm just wondering, can the Minister ensure that these people that are hired, we'll make sure that they actually travel to Sachs Harbour as needed? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 142-15(6): Sachs Harbour RCMP Presence

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, the current situation is that we send members in when we can from Inuvik. They do roving patrols. We were targeting once every six weeks or on an emergency basis to have members come into the community. This fall, as the two positions are hired, they will be officially located, the positions will be housed in Inuvik, but their sole job is Sachs Harbour and that's where they'll spend the bulk of their time. They'll have to travel back and forth. When they are on their downtime back with their families, that won't be something that they're able to do in Sachs Harbour and this is one of the challenges of their residences too. We have to find members who don't have families with them because we don't have accommodation for families. So there are a number of challenges. But the bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, the policing situation in Sachs Harbour will be vastly improved this fall and I want to thank the Member for his support, thank the RCMP for recognizing how important this was and making it a priority. Thank you.

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

Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Roland. It goes back to my Member's statement from earlier where I was talking about recruitment and retention and government strategies. We've been discussing this recruitment and retention issue in the Northwest Territories for the last number of years, at least 10, 12 years now. We spend millions of dollars on consultants, on reports, on staff and, to be quite frank about it, it's not really improved any. I'd like to start off by asking the Minister how it is that our reliance on agency nurses and the money we spend on bringing nurses in from Newfoundland and Honduras, how are we going to move away from the reliance on agency nurses so that we can develop a workforce that's in the North, that's on the ground here? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I must say the Member has been consistent during our time here in the 15th Legislative Assembly on raising issues from our Stanton Territorial Health Authority and the hospital, where other nurses around the territory have to rely on the normal process through their union

processes that we negotiate. The question is a good one because it gives me an opportunity to highlight where in fact we have made significant moves and improved significantly the use of and how we've worked with nurses in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the 2006-2007 year was, indeed, one of our highest uses of agency nurses during that year. In fact, that year we had over 5,000 days of agency nurse use in the Northwest Territories, which was quite a concern, has been a concern to us throughout. We've heard it from Members; we've heard it from communities. So one of the things we did was work on a new contract and work with authorities to reduce the use of agency nurses to fill only where emergencies were in place. We have developed a relief pool. In fact, so far in 2007-08, up to June 30th, we've only used 561 days of agency nurse use. So I think we've made a significant move and we're starting to see the results of the work we're doing. In fact, I mean we have to acknowledge that the nurse issue hasn't reduced across the country, not just the Northwest Territories, but we are doing our part. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister and the government have ever given any consideration to a return of service for new grads from southern universities in the nursing profession that could look to coming north and raising families here and spending, you know, four or five or six years on the ground here in the Northwest Territories, and in return the government could look at paying off their student loans. Because, as we all know, tuition fees across the country are rising, the cost of getting an education is increasing, and I think we need to be looking at creative ways to try to get nurses on the ground here. The Northern Nursing Program has been successful and I think that would be a nice accompaniment to that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's another area we've been working on, is going to southern universities and colleges to attract the new graduate nurses to the Northwest Territories. I'd have to check on what sort of incentives we have. We know for the Northwest Territories we have one of the best systems in place through our Student Financial Assistance Program, as well as what we've done through the Community Health Nurse Development Program, or the CHN Program as we call it, and trying to take our nurse graduates right out of their courses and give them additional education opportunities to go into our small communities, by covering bursaries as well as the fees and salaries to cover and help authorities in that area, and that program is starting to pay off as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keeping with the staffing issue, I'd like to ask the Minister exactly where is the staffing utilization review report that the ministry and Stanton were conducting at Stanton Hospital? Where exactly is that in the process of being released? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the request of Members, as well as from just our own internal look at it, we decided that we needed to do this work and I committed to bringing that report back to Members. I hope that we can have that and I believe we should be able to provide that to committee before the end of this session. Hopefully I can deliver it to committee early next week. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it really hard to believe how it could take a year to do a report like this. From what I understand, the report is not completed to the liking of Stanton. Maybe it says something they don't want it to say. So what is the real issue and why can't the Minister today, almost nine months after this was talked about last October, initiated in February, like that's a long period of time. Why isn't the report ready to be looked at by Members of this House? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 143-15(6): Agency Nurse Usage

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we should be realistic in the fact that with as many employees over at the Stanton facility, we've gone into a process where we do a survey, and it was done through the Bureau of Statistics, that they do a survey with employees there and one out of every five goes into a further in-depth survey and that's the report we're working on. We are not playing with that report. In fact, I believe that report will come back and show for the majority of things there's satisfaction with the work around that facility, the work environment. There are a number of issues that will be looked at, but hopefully as we sit down and we work with committee and go through that report and look at what can be done.

As well, Mr. Speaker, for the record, I should state that through our Community Health Nurse Development Program we support 100 percent of all costs incurred, including salary and developmental for northern nurse graduates, costs there, and 50 percent of the salary and 100 percent of the developmental costs for non-northern nurses. So we are looking at incentives of bringing nurses to the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for WCB and it's in regards to the Member's statement I made earlier. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister to just give us a status report on what he has been able to accomplish in terms of clearing up some of the long outstanding files in light of the new chronic pain policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have enacted or revised that chronic pain policy where we have renewed it and it has taken effect April 19th of this year. So we do have a policy. I am doing a letter to all Members and also with a copy of the new policy so they can see it. Again, with those changes, we're hoping to have a clear, transparent policy that people can see and hopefully it will improve the services that we do have, but also deal with the outstanding claims that have been outstanding for some time, especially in the area of chronic pain. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague from Hay River South said that a strategy without money is a slogan and I say that a policy without resources to back it up. Would this be a statement on paper? I don't know. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement, I think a policy change is a start, but nothing will be affected in terms of making a difference on these files and the workers that have been waiting for years and years to have their cases resolved, expending a lot of energy and money and time and their mental health, in many cases, and physical health, not to mention. None of that will make any difference for them unless there is a real concerted effort to put some resources behind it, force the WCB staff or encourage them or ask them to really go through all the files and see, in light of the new policy, what changes we can make. So could I ask the Minister whether he's done that or not and if he hasn't done that, why not, and would he be willing to do that as soon as possible? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. A couple or three questions there, Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the issue the Member talks about, this issue has been voiced loud and clear from this Legislative Assembly and it has been passed on to the staff at the Workers' Compensation office here in Yellowknife to do everything they can to bring down the number of cases that are outstanding. More importantly,

by changing policies and also the legislation that we're looking at before the House, it will improve the system we have. It's been some time since that's happened and I think in order to improve things, we have to change things. I think one of the big changes, like I say, we are one of the few jurisdictions in this country that has made a change in regards to our pain disorder policy by including chronic pain in there. I think that by setting that precedent, across the country it is improving. Again, I do stress to the department to ensure that they do resolve these cases as soon as they can and ensure that injured workers are being dealt with fairly and as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the Minister's answers but, as I had stated in my Member's statement, I know that none of the files that I have been associated with have seen any movement whatsoever since April. So I have to assume that that may be the case, or most likely the case, that is what's going on with other files, but I am willing to be persuaded otherwise. So I'd like to ask the Minister, because I know the WCB has been collecting cases, would the Minister report to us and tell us before the end of this Assembly what progress has been made, what number of files are outstanding, what's being done about it and have we been able to resolve any of those files? Could he provide us with some of those detailed stats and information? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do commit to the Member to get that information to the House before this House adjourns, to update all the Members on exactly the status of those outstanding cases, how many of them have been resolved and exactly how many of them are still outstanding. So I commit that to the Member and the House here to get it back before the adjournment of this session.

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

Supplementary To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In doing that and further to that, could the Minister advise as to whether or not there have been any extra resources put into place to close these files? Each file could take a long time. So unless you put some bodies in there to speed up the process, it may not happen. So I'd like to ask the Minister to have that information as well, specifics on additional resources. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 144-15(6): Outstanding Files Relating To Chronic Pain Policy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I do commit to the Member to get the information on exactly how many resources have been expended in this area and also has there been an increase. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Before we go on, colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery to two distinguished gentlemen: the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Canada, Mr. Karel De Beer.

---Applause

With him is Consul General of the Netherlands, Mr. Hans Driesser.

---Applause

Also with them, protocol officer Carmen Moore and Jillian Adams.

---Applause

Welcome to Yellowknife and welcome to the House. Oral questions. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 145-15(6): Cost of Living In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I talked about the high cost of living in the Sahtu. I want to ask the Premier of the Northwest Territories, in his short time with the Legislative Assembly here, in terms of what types of targets is he looking at in terms of bringing down the percentage of the cost of living in our region, the communities that are most isolated and have no highway system and pay the higher costs of living. What are his targets, dollars, can he estimate in terms of bringing down the cost of living in our communities?

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

Return To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have fixed targets that we can work towards, although we do want to work towards the cost of living. It is much too high in a lot of our communities. In the short term, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the revisions we are making to the Income Support Program. That is going to help those who are most in need. Mr. Speaker, we have also done some revision on the housing program hopefully to help relieve some pressure there as well.

We have also committed to working with the people in Deline on a mini hydro project which will help to bring down the cost of energy, which is one of the biggest drivers of cost of living. So that will help.

Mr. Speaker, in the longer term, though, we are going to have to continue to lobby the federal government to carry out their responsibility to finance the building of a road up the Mackenzie Valley. That is the only way to lower costs.

---Applause

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

Supplementary To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the programs we have right now is the Food Mail Program the federal government offers. We are looking for some solutions in the Sahtu. A litre of milk, as I stated earlier in my Member's statement, is 40 cents more in Colville Lake than in Hay River. There are other costs that our members in the Sahtu region can tell this government how much more we pay. I would ask the Premier if he would work towards a fixed target within the government in terms of saying by the year in 2008-2009, we want to bring the cost of living down by this percentage. We want to give something for the people of the Sahtu to look forward to and also work with this government. Can the Minister make that commitment?

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

Further Return To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is certainly a recommendation we can make to the 16th Assembly, that we work towards some targets. We have done a lot in this Assembly to try to get things moving to lower the cost of living and with some good success. But setting fixed targets may be possible. That's something we have to work on.

Regarding the Food Mail Program, I have had meetings with the Northern Store and also the co-op on the Food Mail Program to ensure that our communities are benefitting from that program as well. Hopefully, maybe we will lobby the federal government again to put more money into that program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the discussions I had with the people when they go to Yellowknife or Hay River and do their shopping for the winter season is when they get into the lineup or bring their food to the counter and cash out, they tend to bring a lot of money. The teller tells them it's only this much and they say it can't be. It's a common discussion we have around our region.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you a question in terms of this type of thing with the Northern Store and the co-op, how can we look at something that would give incentive to people in the Sahtu to look at working with other communities in terms of bringing in some supplies? We do not have any roads or bridges. A long time ago, we used to have two barges that would sell products into our communities at a lower price.

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

Further Return To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are currently no programs that I am aware of that would organize a barge order system for communities, but it's something that possibly our economic development officers or people working for us in the regions could look at. How can we bring some products in on the barges? I know that is being done to some extent already, but there may be ways for improving on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government makes a mention of the Deh Cho Bridge as a cost-savings initiative. How much money will the Deh Cho Bridge save the Sahtu?

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

Further Return To Question 145-15(6): Cost Of Living In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Since the Deh Cho Bridge is not on the route to the Sahtu, then I don't expect it will make a big difference there. But, Mr. Speaker, it will make a difference to those communities on the north side of the Mackenzie River. Now we are doing that much, but, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't mean we aren't going to pay attention to the other communities. As the Member knows, we are working on the Bear River Bridge; we have done a lot of work on the Mackenzie Valley highway and put some 20-odd bridges in there already. So we are taking steps to lengthen the season for the winter road to keep down the costs. I look forward to the day when the Government of the Northwest Territories can have a ribbon cutting for the Mackenzie Valley highway that will lower the cost for everybody. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome our friends, the Ambassador and the Consul General from the Netherlands. You heard Mr. Speaker say "Mrs. Groenewegen," so there is one good name down here on the floor of the House.

---Laughter

---Applause

My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, in keeping with my Member's statement, Mr. Speaker. The Minister gave a good briefing on the BDIC business program and I thank him for that. One of the changes was to switch the focus to less developed communities and make no direct contributions available to level I communities. I would like to ask the

Minister why this was an action and decision that was taken by this program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a philosophical change and I have talked to my colleagues on this side of the House as well, Minister McLeod about his days as an economic development officer in Providence. We know that the amount of money we have available for business development funds and the amount of grants to go out to communities has been decimated over the last 10 to 15 years. We see much less money available in terms of grants, so we had a shrinking pool. Most of the money was being accessed by the larger communities and it became very apparent that the larger communities had easier access to capital, not enough access admittedly but easier access, and that many of our small communities weren't able to get much in the way of business development funding. So we've made a decision that we would target the grants to the smaller communities and try to improve loan access for the larger communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, speaking of loan access to the larger communities, I would like to ask the Minister about the Community Futures Program. The GNWT has talked about accessing an extra \$2 million through the SINED funding. I would like to ask the Minister what is the status of that application for that extra money? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I will have to get a formal update for the Member, from committee members, in terms of where the various different aspects of SINED funding sit today. There are very many schedules, targeted investment programs, application-based programming available. Individuals can apply through the Department of Indian and Northern Development to access funds. Government departments have been successful in accessing funds, whether it be for a road at Taltson, some runway work. There have been other pots of money that have been allocated across the territory. ITI has been involved in that. In terms of the specific \$2 million that the Member is referring to, I will certainly have to get more information and I will provide an update as soon as I get that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of level I communities, the amalgamation exercise that took place with the Business Development Corporation, with that and the new programs that are available, what has improved for level I communities, which is a community I represent? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, the amount of our loan portfolio continues to grow. I don't have a specific number here, but I believe the portfolio under the BDIC is in the \$40 million range. That is up significantly, so we are getting more money out to our communities. The Member, in her statement, talked about the personal limits set now at \$2 million for any one business or ownership group. We've had a lot of discussion around that. Our concern is we want to be sufficiently diversified. If one business runs into financial difficulty and we have a loan default, we want to make sure that that isn't such a large part or portion of our loan portfolio that it has a devastating effect.

So we are discussing, and we will continue to review, those loan limits. But the best information I can give to the Member is our portfolio continues to grow; we continue to get more money out into our communities; we continue to work to improve the provision of service as well, related to our programming and the work the staff are doing in the regions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if they had ever considered a two-tiered lending program where the cap could be larger for existing businesses that are expanding and have a proven track record as opposed to the higher risk businesses that are fledgling, new and just being tested out for the first time? Perhaps a different cap for businesses that have already been operating for awhile and offer some history or track record that would give some level of comfort. Also has there been any more thought given to the patient capital program that was discussed? Has anyone tried to access it? Where are we at with that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 146-15(6): BDIC Business Program Policy Changes

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Several questions there, Mr. Speaker. I hope that I can keep track and remember them all, but in terms of the patient capital, this is one of the new programs proposed by BDIC. They are out actively consulting. They are around communities in the North. I hope Members are being advised and apprised

that they are in their communities looking to consult with stakeholders on this. I think that can be a successful and new program for the BDIC. So these discussions are underway.

We are also looking at creating some differential rates, loan rates, depending on the level of risk to the business. We may have prime plus one, two, three, depending on the level of risk of the business is another thing that we had looked at, the BDIC is proposing. We were looking to put that into regulation.

Increased cap -- thank you very much to the Member -- there has been some discussion around this and I think our preference at this point would be to see those businesses that have a track record and are bankable, that we would get those loans out from under the realm of the BDIC and into the realm of the chartered banks. They don't really need the BDIC support and we can move them off into the chartered banks. That's what we would like to do and free up more money under our portfolio for new businesses. So there are some things we are looking at. If that isn't really viable, then maybe this is something that we do need to look at and that would be a couple of different tiers of lending. So these issues are very much in a state of discussion and we continue the consultation on these initiatives.

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

Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Roland, Minister of Finance. It relates to the situation or the increasingly desperate situation that our non-government organizations, especially in the social service sector, find themselves because of financial constraints. Mr. Speaker, in summarizing the overall findings of a recent study of staffing, the author of the report on behalf of several organizations states that unless there is a major rethinking over the next few years, the agencies that are now contracted to handle this kind of thing will not be able to continue to remain a viable economic alternative for government to turn to for support. They are seeking a rethinking of our overall approach to the incredibly effective and extremely good value for money agreements and arrangements that we've had for these organizations, but it is no longer sustainable until we change our approach. Mr. Speaker, are we rethinking our approach on funding these NGOs?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the fact is, as a government, we've heard the concerns about funding to NGOs. The study that was done was initiated through Yellowknife Health and Social Services with the organization partly to look at how they could seek funding from other sources and, as well, for Yellowknife Health and Social Services to address how it would put forward its submission to the department on forced growth. The government, overall, has heard this concern through our business planning process and we've

looked at it and looked at the categories of NGOs and how they work with us in delivering programs on our behalf and we've established a number of categories. In fact, category A groups now qualify for forced growth submissions through the business planning process. So we have taken some initial steps in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to see that we are making some progress here, but I don't know that I would say that allowing organizations to allow for forced growth really amounts to rethinking a partnership that we should engage in. Let's connect the dots here, Mr. Speaker. There are homelessness issues, family violence and dysfunction, and mental health issues grow in our communities and become more sophisticated. We rely very heavily on these organizations to be the frontline, go-to places to manage this for us. But even as these issues increase in our communities, we are disabling the organizations that we rely on to do this for us. Mr. Speaker, the report makes, among others, a very clear recommendation and clear benchmark that what we need to do is bring the pay and benefit package for these employees to within 80 percent of what the GNWT offers. Is that going to be a recommendation for the business planners in the coming fiscal year, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things we have to do is there are recommendations. In viewing that report and what it's looked at and recommendations it comes out with, first we have to compare apples to apples. The NGOs in this territory, if we are going to do a comparison, should be compared to other NGOs in other jurisdictions and then look at an adjustment going forward for the cost of doing business in the Northwest Territories. If we are going to connect the dots, we should go a long way back to see how some of these organizations were established. Some of these were as organizations brought concerns to the table and governments-of-the-day agreed to try to come up with a program and initiated contracts. I think that's another thing, Mr. Speaker, is there are contracts in place and can be negotiated when we go out for renewals of those. Ultimately, as a government, we have to look at the cost of delivering that service. If we are going to look at getting close to matching the GNWT, then the question has to be is it something the government is mandated to carry out. If it is, then maybe a review should be should the government be doing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister just told us that ultimately it's the cost that this Assembly has to consider. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister at all considering

the need that the people of the Northwest Territories have for the service? Isn't that really our primary job here?

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

Further Return To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think this government can speak by action and the fact that if you look at our budget, what we have done in our term to address those costs in the Northwest Territories, establish programs; for example, the Income Support Reform Program and a number of other areas. We have invested a lot of money in that area, so I think our record speaks for itself that we have become more involved. When you look at the total cost of spending on social programs by the government, we have done and carried a fair bit of weight in trying to address those concerns in the Northwest Territories.

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

Supplementary To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't allow this to get into such a bureaucratic argument at this stage. I am disappointed to hear that the Minister says we should compare ourselves to other jurisdictions. We should compare ourselves to the contracts and things that are in place. Mr. Speaker, we really need to look forward in a much more progressive and collaborative way and rethink this. I will ask once again, is the government going to instruct the business planners to really rethink the way we set up our partnerships and our long-term business with these organizations?

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

Further Return To Question 147-15(6): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, as a government, we have made decisions on the political level to accept that we needed some change and we have put that into place. The business plan process that we have entered into is, one, prepping the information. We have made suggestions, but ultimately the 16th Assembly is going to have to either accept or change that and relook if it wants to relook at the philosophy of government and how it supplies its programs. That opportunity will exist, but as we prepare this Assembly and have done so far a preparation, we have looked at some of the growth areas and we have accepted, as I have stated earlier, categories of forced growth that we can proceed and go forward with.

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

Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It goes back to the transfer from the Housing Corporation to ECE for tenant

assessments and the paying of rent. I would like to ask the Minister, this has been something that has been going on for a while now. Has the department done an assessment of the whole transfer and is it working? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have said several times in this House, the assessment of how the program is working is done on a continual basis. The senior management get together regularly. The deputies from the departments get together regularly. The Minister of the Housing Corporation and I discuss issues as they arise, as well. So we are satisfied that we have found ways to deal with all of the issues that have come up, up to this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the list of people that the Minister mentioned that he spoke to, the deputy minister, all senior administration, but they are not the people that are being assessed. Have they spoken to tenants and are tenants telling them that this is a program that is working? These are the people that this program is designed for. We are speaking to everybody else but the tenants. Have they spoken to the tenants and got their opinion on the way things are working? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we do deal with local housing authorities and LHOs. We bring people together who are working on the front line to tell us the problems they are running into. The numbers of complaints that we are hearing have diminished tremendously. We are not getting very many complaints at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sometimes wonder if there are 84,000 people in the Northwest Territories: 42,000 that they speak to and the other 42,000 that we speak to, because we are getting complaints from tenants that this is not working. The Minister says that he is getting no complaints. We are getting complaints, Mr. Speaker, that this is not working. Is there an option of transferring the responsibility back to the NWT Housing Corporation who was doing a good job of looking after it in the first place? Is that an option? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason we did this is, as Members in this House know, we have \$120 million that goes out every year as direct subsidies to people in the Northwest Territories. That is before we add the \$6 million that we are putting into the Income Support Program next year. We were in a situation where we had 17 programs run by seven different departments that did not mesh. We had situations where a person would earn, or a family would earn, an extra dollar and have \$200 clawed back by either the housing authority or by income support. We need to find a way to make sure that our programs work better together. We have families living side by side who are getting different levels of support right now because one family went to the housing authority and one family went to income support. It is not reasonable that governments provide two levels of support to two families in exactly the same circumstances. But that is what has happened because we haven't had programs that are coordinated and designed to help people effectively, efficiently and fairly. We need to make sure that we are properly targeting the people who need government assistance the most and that we are doing it in the right way. We think that the best way to do that is to ensure that we have a comprehensive and cohesive program. You can't do that if all of our subsidy programs are divided up among different departments. So we think that we have taken the best approach here. We know that we have resolved issues. We think that putting the subsidies together into one department will eventually mean that we will have a much better articulated program and one that is more supportive for all Members in this House. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting we hear what everybody else has to say and I still go back to the fact that we are hearing from tenants that this is a program that is not working. The assessments are coming in late, termination notices are given out more than they ever have been before. I know it because I have people coming to me who have been terminated and because of policy, there is nothing we can do about it. We can go and ask the questions, but it is just not working out for them. We are hearing from people who are getting termination notices. We talk about one-stop shopping. It is not about one-stop shopping. Is contracting out to the local housing authorities the assessment forms an option? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 148-15(6): Assessment Of Social Housing Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. Before the transfer of the subsidy, I can't tell you how many times, in my 16 years in this House, I have heard Members stand up opposite and go after the Minister of Housing for problems with assessments. So it isn't something that is new. There are always going to be

people who are having difficulty with how their assessments are done or how they are dealt with, but what we have now is a process where we are moving towards more consistency in how our program is being applied across the Northwest Territories. After the transfer, we discovered all sorts of different inconsistencies. Now we are making sure that people across the Territories are receiving fair and equitable supports. Yes, it has meant a change. Yes, people resist change, but in the long run, this is going to be a better program because of this change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have one question or maybe two. It depends on how the Minister responds. I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources around the implementation and the question on the traditional knowledge policy. I have written the Minister a letter. I asked the Minister if he would consider some options. I want to ask the Minister on the traditional knowledge policy how it is being monitored. Is it a policy that is being used by other departments in regards to this traditional knowledge policy?

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

Return To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources delayed the department in ensuring that traditional knowledge is utilized in all the different departments in the government. It is something that we continually remind the Ministers and departments to ensure that that happens.

Our policy, I believe, is hitting the 10 year mark. We recently had some discussion over the whole policy and how effective it is, and whether it needs to be revamped, at a recent conference in the community of the Hay River Reserve. It is something that we are going to undertake to do, is revisit the policy and do some consultations with the community as well. It is still a valid document that can still work or we need to make some adjustments to it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in what the Minister said. It will be utilized in all departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is hitting a 10 year mark. I am looking at how effective it is and look at some revisions based on the Hay River conference. Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Minister, would he look at the process of consultation in our communities? We have just come out of Kelly Lake in the Sahtu and TK workshop with the

elders and it seems like we need to do some serious consultation with our people to get their knowledge implemented into this government in terms of the knowledge that they possess in our communities. Would the Minister get a commitment on some serious discussions with our people on this policy? This is their life. These are their thoughts here to go into operation of this government. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would certainly commit to doing consultation with all of the different aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories when we do a review. We would like to hear from the communities and from the different people in the community on how they feel this could be improved.

We have a number of programs or a number of initiatives that we could point to that show that we have a lot of success in this area. But, of course, there is always room for improvement. We would like to make sure that this program continues to grow and is a benefit to the community. So we will certainly undertake to talk to the people in the Member's riding and all the other different ridings in the North.

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

Supplementary To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I look forward to those discussions across the North here and especially in my riding. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister then also commit to some of the department senior bureaucrats to be at this type of discussion with our people to come there with an attitude of listening to see how important these traditional knowledge experiences and wisdom are implemented to the government departments? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We always encourage our senior staff to get out of the offices and into the communities. We have a number of different initiatives out there that are utilizing traditional knowledge more and more. Protected areas, for example, is really an area that counts on the input from the knowledge of the people on the land. We will certainly have our people out there who will encourage all our senior staff to be involved and to make sure that they really fully understand and participate in this initiative. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just recently, the Premier and I and some members of the people in the Sahtu walked the Canol Trail using traditional knowledge. Using traditional knowledge, we

also used the horses. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of ENR in terms of traditional knowledge. Would he report to the House in the future in terms of the effectiveness of the traditional policy that the government has implemented and hit a 10 year mark? Would the Minister then report to the House in terms of that evaluation of the TK policy? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 149-15(6): Traditional Knowledge Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will share all of the findings of our evaluation on the traditional knowledge policy with the Members. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 of the orders of the day.

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. You may return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleagues. I would like to recognize a constituent in the Sahtu. She is from Norman Wells. She is an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories and a good representative of all of the people in the Sahtu, Ms. Ruby MacDonald in the gallery.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 42-15(6): Communities And Diamonds 2006 Annual Report Of The Government Of The Northwest Territories Under The BHP Billiton, Diavik And De Beers Socio-economic Agreements

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I have two documents I would like to table today. I wish to table the following document entitled Communities and Diamonds - 2006 Annual Report of the GNWT under the BHP Billiton, Diavik and De Beers Socio-economic Agreements.

Tabled Document 43-15(6): 2005-2006 NWT Business Development And Investment Corporation Annual Report

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following document entitled 2005-2006 NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. McLeod.

Tabled Document 44-15(6): Youth Programs Annual Report, 2006-2007

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Youth Programs Annual Report, 2006-2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Tabled Document 45-15(6): Report On Developing And Implementing A Methodology For Determining Salary Ranges

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table three documents. The first is a report in developing and implementing a methodology for determining salary ranges related to social service NGOs.

Tabled Document 46-15(6): Press Release Entitled Not For Profit Salaries Woefully Inadequate Under GNWT Contracts - July 24, 2007

The second document would be a related press release dated July 24th.

Tabled Document 47-15(6): Article From Northern News Services Entitled The Lure Of Government Salaries - August 1, 2007

The third document would be a news story from Northern News Services dated August 1st relating to the release of this report, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 48-15(6): Statutory Declaration Of Residence, Dated June 21, 2007, Of Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member For Sahtu

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 14 of the indemnities, allowances and expenses regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the statutory declaration of residence dated June 21, 2007, of Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for the Sahtu.

---Applause

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 17: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Bill 17 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008, be read for the first time. Thank you.

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

---Carried

Bill 18 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 17: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 17 has had second reading and stands referred to the Committee of the Whole. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 18 has had second reading and stands referred to Committee of the Whole. Second reading of bills. Consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bills 9, 10, 17 and 18. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 9-15(6), I hereby resolve the House into Committee of the Whole to sit beyond the hour of adjournment until such time as the committee is ready to report progress, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order today. Members, we have several items before us. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008; Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008; Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007; and Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. We will do that after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. The first order of business is Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008. I would now like to ask the Minister responsible if he would like to introduce the bill. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, I am here to introduce Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008. This bill authorizes the write-off of the debts listed in the schedule to the act.

Pursuant to section 24 of the Financial Administration Act, Legislative Assembly approval is required for the write-off of government assets or debts exceeding \$20,000.

Pursuant to section 82 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of debts owed to a public agency exceeding \$20,000 and the write-off of debts owed to the Workers' Compensation Board exceeding \$50,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

The write-offs being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. They will be charged against allowances for bad debts which were established in department budgets at the time it was determined that collection of the debt would be unlikely.

I wish to emphasize that the write-off of a debt does not relieve a debtor of the liability for repayments. The

government will continue to attempt to collect the outstanding amount.

Through continued reviews by staff, future recovery of the debt may still be achieved. In addition, in the case of debts owed by companies, staff will track the principals of each firm for future credit reference.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland. I would now like to ask the chairperson of the committee that reviewed the bill, Accountability and Oversight, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008, at a meeting on June 8, 2007. Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 9 to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the whole.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 9. Individual Members may have comments or questions as we proceed. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I would now like to ask Minister Roland if he would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does the committee agree that we bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I would now ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses in. Mahsi.

Thank you. Minister Roland, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my right is the secretary to the FMB, Mr. Mark Cleveland; and to my left is Louise Lavoie, assistant comptroller general.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland. Welcome, Mr. Cleveland and Ms. Lavoie, to the proceedings this afternoon. We will now open up Bill 9 to general comments from committee. Any general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Before we consider the clause by clause, there are two clauses, we will defer that and to go the schedule. It's on page 3. We will deal with the schedule first. That's the debts written off, total \$308,305.95.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Now we will go with the clause by clause. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that Bill 9 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Bill 9 is ready for third reading. Thank you, Mr. Minister and officials. Mahsi.

Thank you, committee. We will now deal with Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008. I would like to ask the Minister responsible, Minister Roland, to please introduce the bill.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, I am here to introduce Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008. This bill requests authority for the forgiveness of certain debts listed in the schedule of the act.

Pursuant to section 25 of the Financial Administration Act, the forgiveness of a debt or obligation to the government exceeding \$1,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

When a debt is forgiven, no further collection action shall be pursued.

The forgiveness of certain debts being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. Allowances for doubtful accounts were charged to an appropriation at the time it was determined that collection of the debts was considered unlikely.

The accounts being recommended for forgiveness are the result of bankruptcy, compromise settlements or are in the public interest. In cases where a compromised settlement is reached, the following factors have been considered:

- the possibility of future recoveries;
- the cost to continue legal actions; and
- the value of security associated with the debt.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland. I would now like to ask the chairman of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight to provide a response to the review. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 10 at a meeting on June 8, 2007. Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 10 to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's comments on Bill 10. Individual Members may have comments or questions as we proceed. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Again, before we consider the clause by clause, we will defer the consideration of those clauses until we deal with

the schedule first. Before we go there, the chair will recognize Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time, I would like to declare a conflict of interest. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, I also would like to declare a conflict of interest.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Thank you, committee. We are dealing with Bill 10. I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in some witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my right is the secretary to the FMB, Mr. Mark Cleveland; and to my left is Louise Lavoie, assistant comptroller general.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland. Welcome back. Committee, we are dealing with Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008. As I mentioned earlier, we are going to defer consideration of the clauses and deal with the schedule first. Before we go there, we will go to general comments. Does anybody have any general comments on the bill? No general comments. We will go clause by clause, but, as I mentioned, we will deal with the schedule first and the schedule begins on page 3. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be short. I would like to be consistent though. In cases where we have corporations, I would like to see in the future that we list the board of directors along with the name of the corporation. I have mentioned that a few times to the Minister over the years. I won't say it fell on deaf ears; I am sure it didn't. The board of directors, when we name a list of a certain company itself, we don't know who ran it and sometimes we see names cross-pollinating. We lend them money under one group and a year or two later, they come back and get money from somewhere else. No question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We will now deal with the schedule beginning on page 3, schedule of debts forgiven. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 12

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): And on page 15, a total of \$8,017,825.77. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I will now turn your attention back to page 1, Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. To the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that Bill 10 is ready for third reading.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Bill 10 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank you, Mr. Minister, Ms. Lavoie and Mr. Cleveland. Mahsi.

Thank you, committee. I would now like to draw your attention to Bill 17 and ask the Minister responsible for Bill 17 to please introduce the bill.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007 requests authority for additional appropriations of \$13.486 million for operations expenditures for departmental over-expenditures in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The requests include:

- \$10.395 million to increase the accrual for environmental liabilities related to the estimated costs to remediate NWT contaminated sites that are the responsibility of the GNWT, pursuant to Public Sector Accounting Board requirements; and
- \$3.091 million for over-expenditures in the Department of Health and Social Services related to higher than anticipated costs for out-of-territory hospital and physician services, the Extended Health Benefits Program, and the Metis Health Benefits Program, pursuant to the authorization process for over-expenditure of appropriations in the Financial Administration Act.

That concludes my opening remarks. I am prepared to answer any questions Members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would now like to ask if you would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does committee agree to bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. We will bring in witnesses, Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms.

Thank you, committee. Thank you, Mr. Minister. If you could, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my right is the secretary to the FMB, Mr. Mark Cleveland; and to my left is Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, director of budget evaluation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland, and thank you, committee. Before we deal with the preamble of the clauses, we will go to general comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Clause by clause.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Before we go to the schedule, the preamble and the clauses, we will go to the detail first. So if I could draw your attention, please, to page 5, Financial Management Board Secretariat, operations expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized, government accounting \$10.395 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the need to book this amount in excess of \$10 million has been well explained and well justified. If we know we may have a liability or a future liability or debt, we should flag it now and make sure that it's recorded for openness and accountability.

The detail in this area here is entirely environmental. It relates almost entirely to known or potential contamination from tank farms, fuel facilities, Mr. Chairman. This is not an uncommon situation all over North America, all over

the world. The question I wanted to ask was, as our government took over tank farms, airports and barge landings and various other facilities over the years from the federal government, from the former Northern Canada Power Commission, potentially even from the RCMP from some of the churches, to what extent have we determined that we are actually the ones liable for these potential costs and is there any historic or contingent liability that could, or should, be assessed where a previous owner or previous government may have been the ones who have built the tank farm and had some responsibility for its contamination, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will give you what I am familiar with and then I will go to Mr. Cleveland for more detail. As we looked to properties that have been transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories in previous years by other governments or as we purchased properties for our use, we have done estimates on the potential liabilities and more, at least to where I'm familiar with, negotiate that in a transfer in recognition of that. For more details how that's happened, what may have happened prior to that, I'll go to Mr. Cleveland.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland. I'll now go to Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just briefly, it's clear that environment cleanup, environmental liability has been growing understanding on the part of governments and other organizations. So I would say that over the last few years it's been an item of considerable attention when any transfers occur, and certainly at the present time, when such transfers occur, potential environmental liability is monitored very carefully and discussed with the person we're getting the property from. I would say was a little less attention in the past and as a result, we do have some elements on our books that were transferred in the distant past where we didn't necessarily see a transfer of funding associated with the liability.

We do, wherever possible, pursue funding from the body that transferred us the property if there is any potential at all for recovery, though, even now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much, Mr. Cleveland. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I appreciate that in some of the really longstanding deals before the whole consciousness of environmentalism and liability was really at the fore, that our government probably did not include the kind of contingent liability things that we should have in the transfer. I accept that. The main purpose of my question here is to make sure that on each and every one of these properties that we're dealing with and potentially taking over, that this is one of the criteria that we're looking at to explore whether there was a previous owner/operator and to what extent, if any, can they also be held responsible for the cost of the cleanup. I just want to make sure that that is part of the process that we use when we book these kinds of liabilities. That's all, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is one of the factors now whenever we look at sites or equipment and the potential for environmental liabilities. We go through a process initially for environmental site assessment, and phase one is look at the initial area and the likelihood of site contamination and begin to work on that, identify it, whether it's soil, water, air, and what could be the impact of that contamination. Then we go to phase two of an environmental site assessment where we look at and do an undertaking to provide employment or information on the nature and the extent of that, and that's looking at surface soil types, human impact as well, and then we go to phase three of an assessment where we then estimate the costs of doing remediation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland, and thanks, committee. We're on page 5 of the detail. Financial Management Board Secretariat, operations expenditure, Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized, government accounting, \$10.395 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Total Financial Management Board Secretariat, \$10.395 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total department, \$10.395 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. On to page 6, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, directorate, \$3.091 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question of clarification. The information provided indicates that this amount, \$3 million, is about 50 percent more than the amount originally allocated for this kind of activity here, which basically, Mr. Chairman, relates to rising expenses in out-of-territory hospitals, physicians from outside of the NWT. I just wanted to confirm, am I interpreting this correctly? Are the expenses that are being requested here, the funds being requested, about a 50 percent increase over what was originally budgeted, or can the Minister offer some context for this number?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, no, it is not 50 percent of the actual expenditures. For example, out-of-territorial hospitals, the revised estimates we have is in the neighbourhood of \$13 million; \$13.6 million. Physicians is over \$3 million, and a number of other organizations, Metis health benefits over \$1 million, extended health benefits is \$6.8 million. So there's substantially more being spent already. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the clarification. The detail that we were provided with, Mr. Chairman, explains that this money is needed because of higher than planned expenditures in these four

different categories. This is obviously something that's in front of us every year. I wanted to ask to what extent is this a sustained trend and are we able to forecast and budget for these kind of costs with any more predictability, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, over the years, the estimating has become more accurate and the numbers have reduced, but it's very difficult to try to narrow it right down because if we have a large or a bad season of illnesses and diseases that we end up sending residents out to southern facilities, that can have a significant impact. If we are short on locums or different doctors that take care of our residents here in the Northwest Territories and we end up sending our residents south again to receive that type of service, that also has an impact on us. So it is difficult. We've found, the history here within this area has been one where it's typically under budgeted and one is again trying to do an estimate. You go on previous years and you work forward on that basis, but it's difficult, again, to try to catch all the different impacts that may be having an impact on the final outcome here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Roland. Thank you, committee. We're on page 6, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, directorate, \$3.091 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Total department, \$3.091 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. We'll deal with this in a reversed fashion, folks. On page 3, we'll deal with the schedule first, if we could. So make sure committee is on page 3. To the schedule, part 1, vote 1, operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, \$13.486 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total supplementary appropriation, \$13.486 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We'll now deal with the clause by clause. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 4

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): If we could, to Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007, to the preamble, committee. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much. Does committee agree to the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does the committee agree that Bill 17 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Bill 17 is now ready for third reading. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, gentlemen. What is the wish of committee, Mr. Lafferty?

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I'll now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Ramsay?

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008; Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008; and Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-07, and would like to report that Bills 9, 10 and 17 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of FMBS, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 22: THIRD READING OF BILLS.**Bill 13: Change Of Name Act**

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 13, Change of Name Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 13 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Bill 14: Employment Standards Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledah, that Bill 14, Employment Standards Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 14 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Bill 19: An Act To Amend The Student Financial Assistance Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 19 has had third reading. Third reading of bills.

Members, before I go to the next order of business and we rise from the House today, I would like to draw your attention to junior high school students who have been serving as Pages in the Legislative Assembly this week and providing essential services to the Members and officers of the House.

---Applause

This group of Pages is closely linked to the Assembly because some of them are siblings of Members or staff. Indeed, every one of our Pages has the potential of future leaders or participants in the legislative process. Some of our MLAs and officers of the House have served as Pages during their youth. On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend gratitude to all eight of our Pages in the House this week. From Fort McPherson, Dennis Nerysoo; from Yellowknife, Christina Boggis and Casey Canning. I would like to make special mention of the Pages who are related to Members and staff of the Assembly: Jake Olson, Scott Stirling, Tyler Dent, Ryan Ramsay and Shelby Brothers. Thank you very much for your service to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at 9:00 a.m. Monday morning.

Orders of the day for Monday, August 20, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 6, Workers' Compensation Act

- Bill 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act
- Bill 15, Liquor Act
- Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2,
2007-2008

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008
- Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008
- Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4,
2006-2007

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, August 20, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 13:22 p.m.

