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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 19, 2009****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:36 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 28-16(3):
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
STRATEGIC PLANNING

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, there is much to be said about looking to the past to inform and guide you in determining where to go in the future. I would like to let this Assembly know that staff at Municipal and Community Affairs have begun that process and are working on developing an updated Strategic Plan. Many changes have occurred in recent years and now that the New Deal is firmly part of the way MACA interacts with the communities, the development of a new Strategic Plan to address the changes is opportune at this time.

Workshops for MACA staff are underway and are capturing staff experiences, creative ideas and recommendations. Once a draft departmental strategic plan is prepared, input will be sought from our stakeholders, including the NWT Association of Communities, the Local Government Administrators of the NWT, our sport and recreation partners and others. I will then seek input from the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure to ensure the development of a comprehensive and forward-looking strategic plan that supports community governments well into the future. Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure will also have additional opportunities to comment on the Strategic Plan as it is incorporated into the department's business plan.

Essential components of the Strategic Plan will be the development of specific activities, targets, timelines, and roles and responsibilities. The Strategic Plan will be supported by the development of internal work plans that will help meet goals and complete actions so that the department can report publicly on an annual basis.

I am confident, that in working with all of our partners and Members of this Assembly, the outcome of this strategic planning process will produce a workable framework that ensures the department's planned programs and services meet the needs of our clients, stakeholders, and partners.

While MACA is engaged in its strategic planning exercise, the leadership of each community government, with the assistance of MACA, are also developing their own strategic plans that will lay out their foundations for future actions and directions. This bodes well for the future.

MACA assists communities with governance, infrastructure, capacity building and in helping keep their communities safe. MACA also provides programs for youth and in promoting wellness and physical health. Given the wide scope of MACA's mandate, it is important to plan for the future and ensure that we have a clear framework to guide us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 29-16(3):
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES'
OUTSTANDING PRINCIPALS

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, principals play a vital role in the environment of a school. During the course of a day and definitely over the course of a year, the principal's job varies greatly and is never ending. Principals are the motivators of staff and students. They are the leaders of professional development and the balancers of school budgets. They ensure adequate resources for students. Principals are often called upon to be counsellors for students, parents, staff members, and community members.

They try to inspire and instil structure for student achievement. Principals are educational leaders and they work in partnership with other organizations in our communities on matters of importance for students.

Canada's outstanding principals are chosen through 'the Learning Partnership', a national not-for-profit organization, that brings together business, education, government, labour, policymakers and the community to develop partnerships that strengthen public education in Canada.

This year Angela James, from K'alemi Dene School in Ndilo, has been chosen as one of Canada's outstanding principals. Angela is a very well-respected and experienced principal who is so deserving of this recognition. Being principal of a small northern school has many challenges. As principal, you need to be able to deal with these challenges yourself, and also support your staff and teachers to do the same, and find healthy ways of dealing with stress and anxiety. It is telling that Angela was nominated by her staff for this award. With Angela's leadership, the K'alemi Dene School has become a model of success amongst small community schools.

Angela's philosophy is that there are four components of supporting a child in school. First, you must acknowledge and deal with any trauma that exists in a child's life. You must then find each child's beauty and gifts. You must also celebrate each child's culture and language. Finally, once these other needs have been met, you can work with the child to develop their knowledge in the traditional academic subject areas.

One of the benefits that a small school affords is that principals and teachers have the opportunity to know their students, and Angela is committed to every student at her school. She and her staff are familiar with the details of their students' lives. When children don't make it to class, they take the time to find out why.

In addition to the inspirational work Angela does in her own school, she has also been an integral part of the Educational Leadership Program. This two-phase program provides professional development to other principals in the Northwest Territories who are required to complete the course over two summers. On top of everything else she does, Angela James is also mentor for her peers.

Angela James joins recent outstanding principals such as Mohammed Odeen, from Deninu School in Fort Resolution, and Velma Illasiak of Moose Kerr School in Aklavik in being recognized for this prestigious award. We are very fortunate to have these three great northern leaders and many other

great principals that support our children and families. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER. Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 30-16(3):
CANADIAN COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENT
MINISTERS MEETING

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to update Members on the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers Meeting held in Whitehorse earlier this week. I attended this conference along with the Member from Weledeh, Mr. Bob Bromley.

A range of issues were discussed at the meeting including municipal wastewater effluent, climate change and strategies to reduce packaging and encourage manufacturers to take greater responsibility for the products they manufacture.

I am pleased to advise this House that after six years in development, the majority of CCME members endorsed national standards for municipal wastewater effluent.

In addition, and despite the range of different views and approaches to deal with climate change, all Environment Ministers supported finding common areas of interest so we can work together on this important issue.

Ministers also endorsed the Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Wastewater Effluent and the framework to manage discharges from wastewater facilities in Canada.

We also received updates on the development of a new comprehensive air quality management system for Canada which focuses on national standards as well plans for a study on water conservation and scarcity in the context of climate change.

Members will also be pleased to hear that there was agreement to start national consultations on action plans to reduce packaging and other waste and to develop a comprehensive standard on packaging.

Another important step was made in that the Ministers agreed on the need to develop a strategic national vision on water and priority setting to further guide jurisdictions in their water management. This is a significant development for the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, while in Whitehorse I was able to meet with my colleagues from the Yukon and Nunavut to discuss issues of common concern.

There was strong support for all three northern territories to work together on a number of pressing environmental issues including climate change, water and wildlife management, particularly caribou and polar bear management.

We also agreed to share information on alternative energy technologies and ways to reduce our dependence of fossil fuels.

Our senior officials will now develop a formal process for us to move forward on these important issues. Mahsi cho.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in my four terms in this House and 12 years as a sitting Member, I have never seen the relationship between the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Government of the Northwest Territories at such a low point. Mr. Speaker, after concluding a meeting earlier with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Premier, Minister of Transportation and other officials, I thought it was going to give them an opportunity to sit down and work out their differences, but, Mr. Speaker, all that came out of it was that the Gwich'in do not have any rights in Inuvik and they don't have a land claim in the Inuvik region and this government is going to do as it wishes with regard to the Gwich'in and the people I represent.

The Gwich'in are frustrated to the point they are willing to take this government to court to settle their differences because we cannot sit down and mutually find a way to work out our differences.

Mr. Speaker, this government has not listened to not only Members in this House, but also political leaders that represent a large portion of our population with regard to the First Nations government. Mr. Speaker, it's sad to say the biggest negotiated contract this government has ever had -- a \$100 million contract -- has never been scrutinized in the Gwich'in settlement region. There was a little curling project in my riding of less than \$1 million that went all the way to the court

system, the Construction Association and every other organization in the Northwest Territories was against a sole contractor. Yet, there is a \$100 million project that's in place with contractors from Vancouver to Calgary working in Inuvik, yet local contractors can't get work on the jobsite for a \$100 million project in the Gwich'in settlement region.

They made a decision to build a building in Inuvik, which is half the size of the space that's already in Inuvik, to the tune of 50,000 square feet and this government is competing directly against the Gwich'in Tribal Council where they had an understanding that they were going to allow the Gwich'in Tribal Council to build this facility and now we find out that they put it out to request for proposals.

Mr. Speaker, everything that the Gwich'in Tribal Council are trying to do by way of the Discovery Air deal, this government is running them out of business. I, for one, am frustrated that this...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Krutko, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, to top it off, the Discovery Air deal, which the Gwich'in had some \$15 million invested in, this company is now being told, sorry, you are no longer in the business. You might as well go contract with someone else because you're not wanted because this government bailed the company out to the point where they have already had sound financing.

Mr. Speaker, when it's an aboriginal organization taking this government to court because of fundamental rights that are in their land claim agreements, this government either has to wake up and smell the coffee or try to find a way to sit down and talk out our differences without getting to the point where it frustrates not only myself, the MLA, but the Gwich'in people in the Northwest Territories where this government is totally discriminating against that cultural group because of personalities on that side of the House.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ATCO PROPOSAL TO MERGE WITH NWT POWER CORPORATION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the ATCO

proposal regarding their participation as a power provider for the Northwest Territories.

I understand that the proposal is currently being reviewed and that we will eventually see the review and have our opportunity for input. My intent today is to offer some perspectives for consideration by Cabinet in both the review and the larger framework of energy planning for the NWT.

First, in recalling the theme day on the NWT Power Corporation, Members were expressing their dissatisfaction with the management and lack of innovation of that entity in effectively addressing the costs and methods of power production. Their call was for a review and tune-up of NWT Power Corporation rather than a transfer of this asset to private enterprise. Nevertheless, ATCO has responded with an unsolicited proposal. By agreeing to review the proposal the government has made a tacit and unvetted decision that we are open to privatizing our power provider; essentially a monopoly situation for the NWT. This decision deserves real debate and input from Members of this House.

Secondly, if we are open to privatizing, the government should actively make a call for proposals that is open and inclusive, not just mention it to a few select groups or corporations. As well, a call should include some guidelines, including indications of criteria for power development. That is, why are we doing this and what are we trying to achieve? What development do we wish? I will be very disappointed if we do not take this step before making any decision about moving in the direction of privatizing our power provider.

As the Premier mentioned in the press, ATCO's proposal centres around the development of large hydro for export. We know 10,000 megawatts has been mentioned. This needs some context. Unlike Manitoba and Quebec, the NWT has relatively low precipitation and we have low relief. This means that to generate power on a similar scale we must construct large dams and flood huge areas in order to achieve the same large hydro goals. The costs and impacts are thus much greater. For example, the complete flooding of communities like Jean Marie River and the loss of large tracts of traditional lands along the Mackenzie River.

In contrast, a focus on supplying hydroelectric power to meet the needs of the NWT at lower cost can be achieved with a much more reasonable scale of development and lower impacts. The opportunity to greatly...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley, your time for Member's statement has expired.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: In contrast, a focus on supplying hydroelectric power to meet the needs of the NWT at lower cost can be achieved with a much more reasonable scale of development and lower impacts. The opportunity to greatly increase output from the Taltson hydro development is one such development. Ultimately, truly sustainable development means each region producing its own power. Let's get started.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LIVING

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to highlight the important role of the Yellowknife Association of Community Living. This association is a non-profit organization that helps people with intellectual disabilities and their families live meaningful lives in support of communities. The association provides services in a wide variety of areas to people of all ages. Their programs stress important areas of need in Yellowknife and the North.

The Association of Community Living provides a program support to children who may be affected by or diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Their family project works with families from birth on to bring about change so that the relatives with disabilities are welcomed into community life and can participate and contribute to their community in valuable ways.

The association also provides a planned part-time relief service to families supporting people with disabilities. In partnership with Aurora College their Literacy Outreach Program recruits and trains volunteer literacy tutors to provide inclusive literacy instruction and reaches out by targeting specific hard-to-reach groups.

The Association for Community Living offers a Skills Training in Community Inclusion Program and their successful Employability program partners with Yellowknife businesses to create training and job opportunities for people with disabilities. The program promotes disability awareness and encourages diversity in the northern workforce. It also empowers people to live highly productive lives. The Abe Miller summer cafe offers business and work experience to people with intellectual disabilities and has operated successfully for many

years. Finally, supportive living services help people who choose to live on their own move towards their full potential as members of society.

All of these programs work towards the goal of allowing people with intellectual disabilities to lead meaningful, self-determined lives to the fullest extent possible. They promote dignity, respect, equality, diversity, human rights, mutual responsibility, inclusion, and moral courage. These are virtues society needs more and more and we can be proud of the resources offered to the Northwest Territories by the Yellowknife Association for Community Living.

I encourage Members of this House and people of the Northwest Territories to join me in applauding the hard work of dedicated staff and volunteers of the Association of Community Living and in supporting their continued efforts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JMR BIOMASS ENERGY INITIATIVE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During my recent tour of Nahendeh I met with the chief and leadership of Jean Marie River. They are very enthusiastic about becoming more self-sufficient by using their own natural resources. It was interesting to listen to their ideas about using alternative energy sources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The community wants to install a biomass cogeneration unit in Jean Marie River to produce power for the community. This unit could also be designed to use residual wood from the sawmill to produce wood pellets. In turn, the wood pellets could be used as fuel through gasification, thereby virtually producing their own fuel.

Residual heat from this unit could also be used for a wood kiln to dry lumber from their sawmill. In addition, residual heat is also a good alternative to heat homes and other buildings.

I am pleased to see that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is developing a Biomass Strategy. ENR's budget includes a number of alternative energy programs, including funds for new initiatives in biomass. This project in Jean Marie River is indeed very complementary to this strategy and is a practical fit and will provide a good news story for our government.

Logging has been part of the history of Jean Marie River's economy since 1915 and a sawmill was built in 1965. The Jean Marie River Development Corporation would like the logs and the sawmill to

be part of the project and they see many applications that will support this important aspect of their community. The support and implementation of this community-based initiative for installing a biomass cogeneration unit will provide many benefits for the community and the residents of Jean Marie, the most important of which is to create durable, long-term jobs, economic opportunities, and the potential of lower power rates.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STATE OF CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about the state of consensus government in our Territory. Yesterday we witnessed hundreds of people coming here to demonstrate against Cabinet's proposed Board Reform Initiative. A few weeks back we again had the gallery full with seniors and others opposed to the proposed changes to supplementary health benefits. These two issues and the way in which this government has conducted themselves speaks volumes about what is wrong with consensus government.

In the ranks of the Regular Members we have got to come to work every day and seek consensus amongst ourselves in order to move on with our issues and bring them to the forefront. We have a very capable, intelligent, and experienced group of Members and I'm proud to be part of the team that we've developed amongst the Regular Members. The most beautiful part of this is that we're all free to express our feelings. Of course, Regular Members do not always agree with each other, but we respect each other and Members are free from intimidation, fear, or reprisal. Consensus is alive and well with Regular Members, as many recent motions and yesterday's theme day have shown.

The problem is the government's inability to get over itself. All 19 of us serve in this House in real roles.

AN HON. MEMBER: Real.

MR. RAMSAY: We call ourselves and our system of government consensus. But then why does Cabinet act and behave like a majority government and think like a political party, throwing blind devotion behind the Premier and the Deputy Premier.

I personally don't think it's too late to save our system of government. If we don't take the necessary steps to improve it, party politics will arrive in our Assembly. Many may say it's already

here with Cabinet having no genuine free votes, Cabinet solidarity, and Cabinet Ministers unable to speak their mind. If we had true consensus government, Mr. Speaker, what happened yesterday would have been avoided. We would have better decisions being made, adversarial debate would be minimized, Ministers could represent and speak for their constituents without fear. Yes, decisions may be harder to arrive at, but at the end of the day, those decisions would indeed reflect the true feelings of the people that we represent. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING
PROGRAMS IN TU NEDHE

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the need to deliver environmental monitoring programs for residents of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e. Mr. Speaker, Lutselk'e is a small, isolated community located on the East Arm of the Great Slave Lake. It is right in the heart of the proposed new national park and sees a lot of resource exploration. Fort Resolution is situated on the south shore of the Great Slave Lake near the mouths of the Slave and Taltson rivers, both of which have been impacted by hydro and tar sands projects and is a close neighbour to the former lead/zinc mine in Pine Point.

Mr. Speaker, both communities are located in prime ecological and wildlife treasures. Local residents have inhabited these areas for hundreds and hundreds of years primarily because of the abundance of fish and game which continue to support a subsistence lifestyle for some to this day. However, Mr. Speaker, times have changed; in activities such as resource development like diamond mining and the Fort McMurray tar sands, are having long-lasting negative effects on plants, marine, wildlife, animals, the water and the air.

Mr. Speaker, with all of these activities and recent changes in the climate, we need to do more and need to know more exactly what it is that is being affected. We need to properly and accurately collect records necessary on environmental and wildlife data on a regular basis so that we can measure and better mitigate and adapt to these impacts.

Mr. Speaker, many residents of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e have lived there for generations. Not only are they not planning on leaving any time soon, Mr. Speaker, but these residents are very familiar with the land around their prospective communities.

Mr. Speaker, with all this resource development exploration, the Tu Nedhe people want to protect their environment, their water and their wildlife. They would like opportunities to monitor the land, wildlife and the water.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, they are aware that the environment affects climate and it even affects discussions as far as future land claims and so on. Mr. Speaker, there is a complex environmental assessment process. There is a real need to have a good supply of environmental monitors, and what better candidates are there than those who live in Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of ENR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RISING RENTAL RATES IN THE NORTH

MR. HAWKINS: I would like to talk today about an issue that affects a lot of Northerners. It is an issue about trying to be able to afford basic living here in the North. Whether you are a one-income family or two, everyone needs to be able to afford to live somewhere. In many cases, and not all, but many of these people can't afford to buy and own their own homes so they do what everyone else does in this situation, they rent. Now over the last few years, I have seen rent rates jump 16 percent or more each year here in Yellowknife. I have learned that even in some small communities around our great North, rents have jumped to an impossible rate of 33 percent up. This is just one example I have been informed about.

I don't have an issue with a landlord that needs to cover their costs and most certainly I think that they should be able to make a reasonable profit, Mr. Speaker, but I dare them, I challenge anyone to explain to me and justify a 33 percent increase. I dare them to look me straight in the eye and do so.

Now in Yellowknife, our most recent rentals officer report says we have a vacancy rate of 1.2 percent for 2007. So what options does that leave the average family, a family on a tight budget, to find another place to live? Largely none, Mr. Speaker. Between the costs of the move, the cost of changing address information, the new damage deposit that must be paid up front, it doesn't really leave a lot of room for any type of decision.

Now what do you do when you live in a small community where there are no vacancies? What do you do when you live in a small community and you live in the only apartment or rental complex? Now that is a real rock and a hard place. In the end, you have to pay. Some of you start to make choices that average families shouldn't have to, and then they fight to get by. So what does that mean? Maybe less school clothes for the kids, maybe less meat at the dinner table, perhaps maybe even less food at the kitchen table, but thankfully most of them find ways to get by. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the ball is in the landlord's court. The game is being played by their rules only.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of options before us that could be done to help this average family trying struggling to get by. The options before us are simple. The Residency and Tenancy Act is being reviewed right now. There would be no better time to implement a process to help protect the average family.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence. The Residency and Tenancy Act does not come open every time to discuss the elements of what it means. Mr. Speaker, the Minister will tell you that landlords can raise the rent only once a year. Of course, the Minister will be right about that fact. I will tell you that the way the law is written today, the landlord has every right to raise the rent to whatever percentage they want to. Mr. Speaker, don't be fooled. Some do. Mr. Speaker, let's not call this rent control. Let's call it fair protection for working families trying to get by. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LACK OF HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking on the lack of high school student accommodations. I remember my first days in secondary school a long time ago. It was very scary, new friends, new pressures, and new environment. For most students from small isolated communities, it is a new place to live, due to the fact that most small communities do not have a high school. Many students leave their strong family support network and go to a larger community such as Inuvik. Unfortunately, what seems to be a growing trend in many regional centres is students

are finding it harder and harder to find suitable student accommodations. That is just a shame of this government. These inadequacies are a perfect example of differences between the communities and the lack of government initiatives and an effort to resolve them. We have all heard time and time again one of the pillars of this government is equal accessibility of a high level of education for all northern students. I try not to use the American cliché, leave no child behind policy. So if this is the case, then why is this government not living up to the commitments for both parents and students?

The recent closure of these homes for the students, many regional centres across the Northwest Territories, has emphasized these problems. Students embarking on a new adventure in school, a new place, should not have to worry about having a safe, reliable roof over their heads. The necessities of life must be given to them, must be supported 110 percent by this government. Anything else would only be the shame of this series of derelictions of responsibilities. Many of us who have lived in the North for a long time have all heard the challenges. Problems and statistics related to students in small isolated communities and hearing situations makes me wonder if these are some of the causes and if this government is truly serious about our children's education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEBATE ON BOARD REFORM INITIATIVE

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to speak to the debate held yesterday in regard to the board reform motion. Firstly, I want to thank all of those who came to the Assembly yesterday: the trustees, the employees, the parents and the grandparents, the students, the preschoolers and the babies. They all took the time to show us in person where they stand and how they feel about the proposed Board Reform Initiative.

One of my colleagues called yesterday's debate and the resulting vote democracy in action, and I agree. It was the most fundamental display of democracy that we can have. The debate was enlightening and I was pleased that both the remarks and the Member's actions remained respectful throughout. I have to commend Minister Miltenberger for surviving oral questions. It's got to be tough to be on the hot seat for an hour with a packed gallery hanging on every word and still maintain composure.

As with the supplementary health benefits proposed changes, I sense a willingness on the part of

Members on both sides of the House to find some efficiencies, effect some change in our current board structures and keep most people happy; we're not all going to be happy. I appreciated the remarks to the motion made by the Premier which explained his and Cabinet's position and I take Mr. Roland at his word when he said, "I would say that we would agree there needs to be a different process to this." I take Mr. Roland at his word when he said, "We've heard from Members of this Assembly. We've heard from the people of the Northwest Territories and would say that the motion as it's worded we would be supportive. I look forward to sitting down with Members to try and come up with a better approach as to how we can make it work for the people we represent in the spirit of consensus government." Thank you to the Premier for acknowledging to MLAs and to the public that the motion has value, that the process needs changing and that both Cabinet and Regular Members should work on this difficult issue. Together we can find a solution that is workable for the residents of our Territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REGIONAL HEALTH CARE CENTRE FOR THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the opportunity, along with a constituent of mine, to visit the Stanton Hospital as one of our elderly people was brought in from the region to receive medical care at this hospital. This elderly lady is in her 90s and I've watched these dedicated staff up there, the nurses, take care of her. As she was lying there -- me and my constituent were talking -- I had a vision there in the hospital, Mr. Speaker, in terms of wouldn't it be nice if we had this type of facility in the Sahtu where we could bring our elderly people into the Sahtu region rather than fly all the way to Inuvik or to Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the nurses in the hospital that they do take very good care of our elderly people while they are in these facilities. However, because of the way things are, you have a dedicated group of nurses that are dedicated to the care of our people here. I thought, well, wouldn't it be nice to have this type of facility in the Sahtu where you have a group of dedicated professionals to look after our elderly people in the Sahtu region. I know there is a time when we're going to have further discussions on this. Actually, I phoned the chair of our Sahtu health board and I asked him, is this regional wellness centre or a hospital or whatever you call it, is it still a priority of the

regional board members. He said, yes, it's still a priority.

I'm asking the Minister here if she could take some time to discuss with her staff and have a dedicated person to sit down with the regional health board members and look at options as to how we could fund a regional wellness centre. Certainly they have done it with the Dementia Centre, they have done it with the primary consolidated health clinics in Yellowknife, and they have looked at other avenues in terms of how they can get support from the other hospitals. We are asking for that in the Sahtu region. There are over 250 elders in the Sahtu region and sooner or later a lot of them are going to be needing care like this lady in the hospital. Again, I'm pleading to the department and this government to see if they could put in a regional wellness hospital centre in the Sahtu region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE ALISTAIR GEDDES

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the people of Fort Providence gathered together to say goodbye to a well-known member of the community, Mr. Alistair Geddes, or Sandy as he was better known, who passed away unexpectedly last Friday.

Mr. Speaker, he was born, as he liked to put it, somewhere 60 miles north of Regina on November 9, 1930. He came north to Hay River in the '50s to work as a commercial fisherman and went on to work for NT and also BNR Construction. In the '70s, Mr. Geddes moved to Fort Providence to raise his family and to work in the building construction projects that were going on there. Mr. Speaker, I would venture to say that he was involved in some way in every construction project that was delivered in that community over the last 30 years. Even on his last day of life, Mr. Speaker, at 78 years old, he was out talking to businesses and companies about potential work.

Mr. Speaker, I also had the opportunity to personally work alongside Sandy for many years during the days of the Norman Wells Pipeline Project and I will remember him as a very strong, physically strong man, very intelligent person who could build anything that he put his hands on. He was very good at working with wood, cement, bricks. He could fix furnaces. He did plumbing and heavy equipment. He was truly a jack-of-all-trades. Sandy was very well-respected in the construction industry and by all those who knew him. He was a

very head-strong person but was also, at the same, time very compassionate and committed to his family and his friends. He always kept us on our toes and really every time we saw him he always brought a smile to our face. Mr. Geddes will certainly leave a lasting legacy in our community. He did much to make our community what it is today by his attitude to hard work and setting a pace that others needed to follow.

Mr. Speaker, he is survived by his wife, Harriet, his daughter, Cheryl, his sons, Herbie and Jerry, and many grandchildren. I'd like to offer my condolences to all the members of his family. Thank you.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize Chief Isadore Simon from Jean Marie River who is in the gallery here today. I'm very happy to see him. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. As well, with him is Ms. Nina Firth-Larsson of Heating Technologies Limited. Her company is assisting the chief in the biomass proposal. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I've been looking for a sure sign of spring and I'd like to recognize our local golf professional, Mr. Gord Brayton, back to Yellowknife and to the House today. Welcome.

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

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to recognize Mr. Stuart Hamre, who is working as a Page for us this last couple of weeks and probably will be with us for another couple of weeks yet. Thank you, Stuart, for doing the good job you're doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Welcome everyone to the gallery today. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 158-16(3): COMMUNITY FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, today in my Member's statement I spoke of the need to have environmental monitoring in the Tu Nedhe area around Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. I have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I would like to ask him if he could tell me if ENR has allocated any money in the area of environmental monitoring that could be transferred directly to the communities. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the budget that's currently before the House, there is some money to train Northerners in the area of environmental monitoring mainly focused on the regions that are going to be directly impacted by the proposed pipeline. How the money is going to be allocated has not been finalized, as far as I'm aware, but there is that money in addition to, of course, recognizing that the broader issue of environmental monitoring, especially of the water, is mainly a federal jurisdiction. But we are starting to invest money in there because it's such an important issue. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: There is a limited amount of monitoring going on around both Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. What I'm interested in doing is seeing if the Department of Environment and Natural Resources could expand that environmental monitoring. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would be prepared to have his staff meet with the environmental workers in both Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution so that they could start to develop some sort of plan for the future environmental monitoring in those areas.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: What I'd like to suggest as a first step would be that the Member and myself and the deputy sit down to talk about the issue, frame it out thoroughly, see what's possible, and then map out next steps from there.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. I recognize that we're just going through the budget process now; however, I'm interested in seeing if the Minister can commit to adding more money that's targeted directly to the communities in the area of environmental monitoring.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We'd be prepared to look at that whole issue, as I indicated, with the Member, myself, and the deputy, recognizing that the budget is currently before the House. While there may be some latitude, we may also want to consider how we would best address this through the upcoming business planning process, which will be starting once this particular budget is passed. I am willing to commit to sit down with the Member to look at this issue in its entirety.

MR. BEAULIEU: I recognize that even in the recent federal budget announcement that there is money put in for environmental assessments all pertaining to the Mackenzie Gas Project. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could commit to increasing the GNWT's share of the Interim Resource Management Agreement so that more money can be put into environmental monitoring in the non-settled areas.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Once again we can add that to the list. We'll pull the IRMA agreement. The Member is very familiar with that. As we look at the issue and mapping out next steps, we'll include that as part of the discussion, recognizing that there is also federal money in that mix.

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

QUESTION 159-16(3):
PROVISIONS FOR RENT CONTROLS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Assembly, like many others, will always try to find a special hallmark to hang its hat when they're finished their business at the end of their term. Helping the working family would certainly be a highlight of anyone's career and a certain Assembly. I talked about rent control and my questions are directed to the Minister of Justice, who will be in charge of the overseeing of the Residential Tenancies Act rewrite. Would the Minister be willing to make sure that there is some element in that act that provides protection for renters out there?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Residential Tenancies Act was passed in June of last year. Right now my department's working on the regulations within that act itself. There are areas that we need to look at. One area of controlling the rent has a clause in there that once a year they can raise their rent. The

Member has alluded to that as well. Those are the areas we will be focusing on.

MR. HAWKINS: That certainly puts the average person, whether they're single income, double income, whatever the case may be, at a significant disadvantage because, as I cited today, they've had increases of 16 percent in Yellowknife that have been quite regular over the last few years and certainly have a single example of 33 percent rental increase at an apartment unit. That's barely affordable if it's affordable at all. What is the Minister willing to do to put support behind the average family that's out there trying to rent and get by at the same time?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The thing with the process of having a rental office and rental officer is the main point of contact, if there are disputes from the tenants and the landlords. According to the figures that we have since last year there were no applications made regarding rent increase. If there is such a thing then the rental officer should be notified and in due process they'll follow through with the tenant as well.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm glad the Minister points out that annual report by the rental officer because, I'll tell you, it doesn't point to that. He's quite correct because it's not under the authority of the rental officer. So how would he monitor, gauge, or deal with anything of that nature? That's the whole problem. There's no way to deal with this under the mechanism. If somebody came to the rental officer and said my rent was raised twice within 12 months then the rental officer would have a case to stand on. If somebody came to the rental officer and said the landlord doubled my rent once this year, the rental officer would be forced to say, oh, well. That's the problem. Would the Justice Minister go back and review this situation and recognize that in many jurisdictions, such as B.C., we have a 3.7 percent cap, in Ontario we have a 1.5 percent cap, and other jurisdictions are recognizing this. Would the Minister go back and review this file and take a look at it from the working family point of view?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This particular issue was before the standing committee and even passed in this House. We are working on regulations. There were a lot of questions from the Members and we took those into consideration and made some amendments to the act itself. Like I said earlier, there are rental officers that deal specifically with the issues or concerns from the tenants. There are certain protocols that they need to follow. There is a process through the rental office.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister is right; there are things the tenant can take to the rental officer, such as the heat wasn't there, the power wasn't turned

on, maybe my lock was changed. But there's nothing there about fair rent; fair and reasonable. Yes, I believe a landlord should be able to make a profit. Yes, recognizing that oil and power are going up, those things need to be protected, absolutely. But by raising rent at 33 percent, can the Minister explain to me how that would be considered fair and reasonable and what grounds would a tenant be able to challenge this under the existing rental act? Because there is none. Could the Minister show me how they could challenge that?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: If there is an issue with an increase in rent, there is an avenue. The rental officer can deal with that with the tenants. That's a process that we've initiated with the new act in play. Also we're looking at the regulations. Like I said earlier, there is a process in place. There is a reason why we have a rental office. That's the avenue that the complaints and issues can be brought forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 160-16(3):
STATE OF CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier. It gets back to my Member's statement where I talked about the state of consensus government in our Territory. The two events that I spoke of in my Member's statement, both the proposed changes to the supple health benefits and more recently the initiative on board reform, these two issues just bring to light that there are problems with our system of government here in the Northwest Territories. I mentioned the fact that Regular Members need to form consensus. When we come to work every day that has to happen. But in Cabinet that doesn't seem to be the case. The first question I have for the Premier is, why does Cabinet solidarity exist in our system of government today?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We could probably get into a long orientation about the structure of this government when it first moved up from Ottawa to the Northwest Territories. The Westminster Style of government that this is based on, yes, we call it consensus for the way we share information and work with committees and that we don't have political parties, but the structure of the operation of this House itself is still based on those fundamental principles of Westminster Style of governance. So that's one of the fundamental pieces in place. We share information as we do through budget, legislation, policy, and, as

highlighted here, we'll continue to build on that through a set of protocols that will help clarify the relationship we can have with Members of this Assembly. But it takes everybody to work in a consensus style.

MR. RAMSAY: I look forward to the work that's underway in what the Premier was saying, but I believe we do have to work together. We have to stop driving these wedges between one another. The divisiveness has to stop. The adversarial approach has to stop. The way that I can see that really stopping is with Cabinet; and Cabinet having more free votes, less Cabinet solidarity, Cabinet Ministers able to speak their own mind. I don't know if there's anything written where in our system of government, in a consensus style of government, true consensus, there isn't any Cabinet solidarity and there shouldn't be any Cabinet solidarity. I'd like to ask the Premier whether or not he would investigate whether or not we could take away this Cabinet solidarity and allow Ministers more freedom to speak their mind in this House.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The process we operate under is one that has been existing for quite a number of years. In fact, many of the aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories and aboriginal people say that this style is not representative of the people that live here in the North and that we should take a look at it. In fact, a number of processes were undergone. The 13th Assembly started some work; I believe it started in the 12th Assembly and went on into the 13th Assembly. In fact, I have recently spoken with the Dene national chief, Bill Erasmus, about looking at a process that would look at the Constitution, one, and a constitution of the Northwest Territories because there is not one right now. We operate under the NWT Act. First Nations and aboriginal governments working with self-government arrangements with the federal government, and we're at the table. I would say that I agree that the consensus style of government and the system or, as some Members say, maybe the personalities at the table trying to make this work, we've been having quite a bit of difficulty. We need to take the next step to function and get things done for the people of the Northwest Territories. So I would say here's the opportunity. Let's take it up and let's agree and let's approach the aboriginal governments of the Northwest Territories and set up a new process where we can review how the Northwest Territories will be governed overall.

MR. RAMSAY: I don't know if that necessarily answered my question. I think the Premier is right in one regard. When you do have strong personalities in a system like we have today, just because we have the system today doesn't make it right. But if you have seven individuals on that side of the

House and you've got two or three Members that pretty much run the show and others aren't allowed to express their opinions or speak their mind, that causes problems. Like I said earlier, we want to be able to work together. When we go to P and P in the morning every Member is allowed to speak their mind. When we come to the House we're allowed to speak our mind. And my belief is that if we had a more open system of government where everybody in this room, all 19 of us --18, sorry, Mr. Speaker -- could speak their mind.

I'd like to ask the Premier, how does he think this is going to work? What's his plan going forward on trying to make this work? Does it include loosening up the control that they have on Cabinet?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The Member has a number of times used language in this House that I guess to some degree would be insulting to the ability of the Cabinet elected by this Assembly.

---Applause

The simple fact that we work on initiatives together, we've put items out on the table, and, yes, Members are free to speak their mind, but sometimes there's little fact to when they speak on the issues around the table. We put proposals on the table. The Member said he's willing to work in a consensus style and let's put the personalities aside. Yet again today he fires off with much more rhetoric than substance. The fact is we've put an offer on the table. I've reached out to Members to say let's make this work.

I think even a bigger opportunity here is if the concern about consensus government is real -- and I believe it is -- that we have to look at a structure within the Northwest Territories that does make sense. And it will be more than protocols that will have to be put in place. That's where we look at a new constitutional process that involves aboriginal governments that we put in place that makes something happen for the Northwest Territories, not just recommendations.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't my intent to insult any of the Cabinet Ministers over there. Completely not my intent. That was not my intent and I apologize if some Cabinet Ministers took that the wrong way. What I'm saying is we have the ability on this side of the House. Some of you have served on this side of the House. We share ideas. We respect one another. When we come into this forum we can't do that. There's no free-flowing dialogue because Cabinet Ministers cannot speak like Regular Members. What I'm saying is we need to take a look at how this

government operates and we need to allow Cabinet Ministers the opportunity in this House to speak their own mind. I think that gets us back to the spirit and intent of a true consensus system of government. Again, I'll ask the Premier, how is the Premier going to work with Regular Members to allow something like that to happen? It's not rhetoric; I'm just asking how Regular Members are going to be plugged into this.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: It is one of the things that's always been, I guess at some stage, a point of contention for Members when they consider running for a Cabinet position. It does impact your ability to speak freely about your constituency issues. That doesn't limit the debate that happens at the Cabinet table about initiatives, but the simple fact that the process we're involved in right now is fundamental in the existing framework and establishment we operate in. If we want to change that I think it is so fundamental that if we want to change that structure, then we should really be talking about an overall process that would involve governance in the Northwest Territories in those structures here. I wouldn't say necessarily party politics. Is it a way of consensus government with aboriginal leadership at the table at the same time? What does that take in? I think we have now reached the stage of our evolution in the Northwest Territories, we have one signed self-government agreement in the Northwest Territories, we know that's going to be the base and others will work to that or higher, so we have that in place. We know our structures and the limitations of our structures. So here's the opportunity to take a real run at what the next government might have to look like or might look like or that they might work on implementing. I think in our time frame the best we're going to be able to do is what I've reached out with as let's come up with some protocols on the communication, the information we share, the involvement at committee levels, whether it's joint Cabinet committees, things of that nature. We're working on that and we're working with the Members of this Assembly in trying to come up with a process that will work, and work better for the time frame we have left. Beyond that we will, I believe, need to look at the bigger picture.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 161-16(3):
REVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS' ACCOMMODATIONS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to let you know, I'm here for you.

Today my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Will the

government conduct a thorough review of limited availability and suitable high school student accommodations for students coming from small communities specifically in the Beaufort-Delta?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Currently we do provide funding to the local boards, the regional boards. They offer assistance to the students if the high school will be out of the community. So we do provide assistance through that avenue. If we need to look at the structure of the residents outside of the small communities, then they will have to be part of that process. Whether it be a district education authority or district education at the regional level council, I think we need to have a consultation process in that respect.

MR. JACOBSON: That ain't happening. Will this government allocate the appropriate resources for these accommodation problems to be adequately resolved to ensure the quarterly reviews and benchmarks are carefully monitored in the future?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We need to gather the information from the local district education authorities and district education councils at the regional level. They're the ones who have all the information at the community level and how many students are attending outside their communities to regional centres. We need to gather all the facts and then meet with them. We have our own regional representatives that work for us that can certainly meet with the board, with the MLA, and identify if there are solutions that need to be worked out. I'm more than willing to do that.

MR. JACOBSON: My problem is I have five students from a small community that I represent where two of them have dropped out due to lack of housing. That's my problem. I look forward to seeing that information that you are going to get me. I'll bring it back to my constituents of the community.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That information will likely come from the regional council. Like I said, they have all the information. I'm willing to have my staff meet with the regional representative and provide that information. Whatever information we have from our department perspective we can share with the regional council. But then again, it is the regional council that is responsible for looking after the students based on our funding allocation through the council.

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

QUESTION 162-16(3):

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF ATCO PROPOSAL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question I believe is for the Minister of the Power Corporation or the ATCO proposal. I'm wondering what criteria have been given to the review committee who are looking at the ATCO proposal. Are they asking is it well written, will it reduce power costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase employment, lower environmental impacts? I'm wondering what guidance has been given to that review committee. We certainly didn't have any input to that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess, first of all, the Power Corporation itself is not a part of that process. It is under the Executive branch that we're doing this review on that piece. I've requested some time with committee to sit down and go over it. It is general in nature initially. We want to do the first phase as to what they've put on the table and get some more detail. In fact, the group will be meeting with a couple of the experts in the field coming up, so they can sit down with them to get further indication of what they would want to do. But it's based on what the offer's been put on the table is the initial phase of looking at that.

We have a number of other things within the Power Corporation itself and the review of the Power Corporation around electricity distribution delivery that we're doing some work on as well. Also, the Minister of the Energy Coordinating Committee tabled in the House the Hydro Strategy for the Northwest Territories. All of these pieces will have to fit together as we look at the future of the Northwest Territories and development of energy possibilities.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate those comments. Just for clarification, is there a terms of reference for this ATCO power proposal review committee? Is there a terms of reference for them? If so, would the Minister table that in the House?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: It's one thing to engage with a private sector company and look at a proposal and establish a terms of reference for our crew to have a look at that. I'm prepared to sit down with committee to go over that and present the terms of reference at that time, but I'm not prepared at this time to table them.

MR. BROMLEY: Given that this is clearly a behind-the-scenes, behind-closed-doors process, and we've had no input into it, and we've had repeated calls for a public/private partnership

policy, I'm wondering what guidance this Premier has given along the line in the absence of that policy and exactly what process he will provide the Members on this side of the House for real input that can assure the public that this behind-closed-doors process is a valid one.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I guess clearly the 3P process or work that's beginning is separate from an initiative like this. We're looking at a partnership potentially that could help us. As well, I've said to other groups out there, for example the regional leadership, if they want to put a proposal in, we'd be prepared to look at it. We don't know the levels of partnership that would be involved. But at this time, as I've committed to Members and said a number of times, the initial review of the proposal that was brought forward I'll get a response, I will go back to Cabinet and then committee before any further decisions and decide if this is the right avenue to be going, so Members are well aware of steps that need to be taken or should be considered.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I just have to say if this public government is partnering with a private company, it sounds like 3P policy would be appropriate to have in place to help guide that process. Can the Minister at least assure me that there are strong environmental considerations that the committee has been alerted to, to ensure is part of the review of this unsolicited proposal?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: One of the overall things, our own interest in the Northwest Territories is how we can reduce our footprint when it comes to the environment. The Hydro Strategy that we've put out there is one of those avenues, as this budget also speaks to alternative energy. So we're definitely interested in that piece. As we go forward, looking at those initiatives, it would be the next stage. The first stage is looking at what they've actually brought to the table and what it means in detail for any steps going forward. I'm prepared to sit down with Members on that and go through a process with Members.

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

QUESTION 163-16(3):

FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE STIMULUS FUND

MS. BISARO: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Finance. In the recent federal budget millions of dollars were highlighted that are available to

Canadians for infrastructure and many other projects. Some of that money has been identified as an Infrastructure Stimulus Fund. Possibly \$5 million could accrue to us. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he knows what that money can be used for and when it might be available.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are still waiting for the detail of how these many pots of money are going to roll out. Some are clearer than others. The Building Canada Fund, for example, is an existing program where we're compressing the time frame. This Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, along with their Green Fund and a host of other smaller pots of money that we may be eligible for, we're still awaiting the detail to see what's possible for us in terms of the conditions and criteria, how they apply to us as a Territory and how they may possibly apply to municipalities.

MS. BISARO: Thank you to the Minister for that response. I understand that details are probably not known yet. The federal government is not known for their speed on providing detail. I guess I would like to know if the Minister knows from the general comments that were part of the federal budget whether or not if a project is shovel ready -- to use the federal term -- by the summer of 2009 whether or not that would speed up access to funds from this Infrastructure Stimulus Fund.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Given the federal government's stated commitment for a two-year stimulus and to use it or lose it, the more shovel ready projects we have are design ready, that are ready to be put in on the ground, I think is going to be a key criteria given the short time frames for the fund. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: It is good to hear that. The Minister is probably aware, as are hopefully Members in here that I have an area in my riding that is under almost a state of emergency in terms of replacing their water and sewer infrastructure. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not he would be willing to look to the federal government for some of the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund dollars to have them flow through from GNWT to the City of Yellowknife to assist the Northlands Condo to replace their water and sewer infrastructure. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I will make a commitment on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of MACA, that he would be looking at how this money would flow, working with the City of Yellowknife to make sure that we can access each and every one of these pots even though they may

be project-based or would have to compete with other communities and provinces from across the country. Yes, we will make sure that we work with the City of Yellowknife to see what is possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good to hear. I am really pleased to hear that both MACA and the Minister of Finance are looking to see if we can't assist my residents on this project. I would just ask the Minister whether or not he would be willing to sit down with the City of Yellowknife and myself and the Minister of MACA to try and determine what could be done and how fast it could be done. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: What we will commit to is, of course, to get the very latest information that we have in terms of any detail that would add or allow us to have a fully informed discussion. When we have that, we will share it with the Member and then we can arrange to have the discussions necessary to see not only Yellowknife but across the North where we are in the best position to take best advantage of this funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 164-16(3):
GNWT CONTRACTS WITH
GWICH'IN BUSINESSES

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my statement that there was a meeting earlier today between the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and a couple of the leaders in Inuvik and also in Fort McPherson. Mr. Speaker, in my statement, I have never been so frustrated as I am today realizing that the Gwich'in people that I represent and the claim that I helped negotiate some 17 years ago, I hoped was really going to make a difference but yet, Mr. Speaker, it seems pretty obvious to me that this government is undermining everything that the Gwich'in Tribal Council has worked for for the last 17 years by way of establishment of its retail business, its rental space business, the aviation business that it is in in regards to the Discovery Air deal, a lost opportunity by way of the \$34 million government loan, a construction of \$100 million school in Inuvik where they ended up getting six loads of gravel to the job site.

Mr. Speaker, in Inuvik alone, there are \$140 million worth of capital expenditure. Is this government in

the business of putting aboriginal organizations such as the Gwich'in Tribal Council out of business?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was a part of that meeting as well, as the Member has pointed out. Though there are some differences on some of the contracts that are being looked at and the projects that are in place, this government is not, for the record, undermining aboriginal rights and the processes that have been there. We have worked hard to come up with all the pieces. In fact, if you look at the implementation side of it, as I am aware, my last update is that there are no outstanding issues on the implementation side of the land claim. Self-government process is underway. That will continue to be underway and worked on. The projects the Member has spoken about, those initially were started as joint support from both aboriginal groups in the area. There is some dispute as to the actual authority whether it is a land claim or GNWT under the municipal boundaries of any of our communities involved. In that area, we are going to, as I committed to the president, put our information together on paper and share that with them and see where we can go from there. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, again, as a government, why is this government having to take the position where groups have actually had to take this government to court to get their attention? Don't you think it is easier if we can sit down, talk through our differences and if it comes to that, bring in an arbitrator? If we can't get to that, go to family counselling because I think you definitely need it. Mr. Speaker, the Premier represents the Inuvik region where the Gwich'in Tribal Council is. You'd think, if anything, as the Premier and in his riding, that he would be consulting with the Gwich'in Tribal Council on a daily basis. What is the Premier going to do to avoid the possibility of a court case and work out the differences by way of consultation?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the comment about family counselling, maybe we could all use that in the Northwest Territories in trying to come up with an approach forward. Realistically, Mr. Speaker, we have and we can put on record the many things we have done as a government started in previous governments honoured by this government in working with the aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories. The MOU process is one that started with the Gwich'in is now expanding to other regions and will continue to expand as rights become more clarified. There are times, and unfortunately, there will be times when we will disagree on certain interpretations. At that

time, yes, it may be a process that should go through arbitration but it is also up to the groups if they feel that is not an avenue they want to go with. Unfortunately, the courts are there and they will set absolute clarity for all parties. I would, as well as I mentioned to the president, prefer we try to work something out on coming to a common understanding. If we can't do that, then we do have to look at other options out there. The process we have in place is the MOU through ITI and a contracts issue is still in place and our understanding is that they are going to renegotiate that process for a new one to come in place hopefully after March. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, yes, there is an MOU that used to work and which we find out today it doesn't work. Also, in regards to the issues that I mentioned, this government has put forward a \$100 million negotiating contract in Inuvik. Every negotiating contract has to be brought forward to Cabinet with a list of sub-contractors that are going to be used on that job site. There are companies working in Inuvik right now who weren't on that original list. Again, that is a breach of our policies in government. In regards to the deal and in regards to Discovery Air deal, the \$33 million deal, the government has made it clear, oh, sorry, we didn't do a market disruption review because we didn't think we needed one. Again, that is a breach of government policy. How can this government be trusted to work with aboriginal organizations that basically want to compete in the northern economy but yet are struggling with government decisions on that side of the House? Would the Premier do a review in regards to the issues that were discussed today and bring forth recommendations either by way of how Cabinet can resolve this issue or people in the field so we won't be in the situation where we end up in court? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, as I have said earlier, I committed to the president that I would have the appropriate paperwork and the process clearly put together so that we all have the same paper in front of us and go through that process together. There are existing agreements in place. The MOU is in place and was extended I believe and renegotiation has been committed to. The fact of the \$100 million contract school was debated here in this Assembly with the infrastructure budget put in place and I believe information on the contract list was provided to members. If not, I will request that the Minister responsible provide that to the Member. Again, that project is actually just getting underway. There was a separate contract for the foundation work that was a public tender process. The other thing we do have to realize is if there is either negotiated contract request, that because there are two aboriginal groups in the region, that has to work.

Now the dispute, Mr. Speaker, comes in when one says, well, the community of Inuvik proper belongs in a particular land claim agreement or the other. Our reference material shows the fact that the municipal boundaries, the community of Inuvik is Commissioner's land and operate under the NWT Act and those agreements apply outside and around that within the settlement area proper.

We are going to put the paperwork together. The preferred approach is let us sit down and let us roll up our sleeves and come to an understanding. Where we can't, then it is the arbitration process or further yet, as highlighted, court action. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe one of the key areas of contention is the area around the office building in Inuvik. Again, there was a person in the field who basically made reference that they don't want to get into a negotiated contract in regards to that office building. They are going to go public tender and it was said verbally to one of the community leaders. There was a meeting between the Premier and the Gwich'in Tribal Council leadership. There was a verbal understanding that the Gwich'in were going to negotiate that facility by way of a negotiated contract but yet, now we are already told the contract has been put out. Would the Premier seriously consider pulling that contract until you can work out the dispute with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and continue to move forward? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the issue of the office building as the Member has raised here was debated during the infrastructure budget process. It did come up again this morning. When we were up in Inuvik, the Minister responsible informed the leadership that he was at the stage of going out to a public RP process and informed them today that, in fact, did go out just recently. We would be looking at what options are available, but the simple fact is this process has been out there for quite some time. In fact, both organizations put in unsolicited proposals and neither was accepted at that stage. The government went out on its own proposal once before and that was for a lease option and there was no take-up on that proposal. It was felt that we needed to get moving. There were a couple of years in this process. That is why the department went for a design build approach and have gone the method they have. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 165-16(3):
REGIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS
CENTRE IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about the need for a wellness centre in the Sahtu region. I know the Members have been asking for this for a bit. I would ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if there was ever a report or study done on small communities in terms of facilities in small communities or regions that don't have a facility like other regions that have facilities like the wellness centre.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question and point that he has raised. Mr. Speaker, with respect to a report, it is my understanding that there was a report done a number of years ago for internal use only. We don't have a most recent report done on health care facilities in the Sahtu or the Territories. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to share what she can in terms of the internal report on the types of facilities that are required in small regions? If not, will she be looking at working with the Sahtu Regional Health Board in terms of looking at the needs for such a facility in our region?

HON. SANDY LEE: My understanding is that report is quite outdated. I think the point that the Member is raising is very valid. We do not have the comprehensive report on the capital or facility needs of the Territories in terms of health and social service related capital projects. I think it is one that we need to develop. I have instructed the officials to look into that. I certainly understand that we need to catch up on the work on the capital needs in the Sahtu. I will be happy to make a commitment to the Member that I will work with him and the health board in Sahtu, work toward this initiative. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly appreciate the Minister's willingness to work with the regional health board for the people in the Sahtu. Now that we have some indications from the federal government in terms of funding from the housing initiatives, I know we have a certain amount of time to use this funding. Would the Minister be able to work closely with the Housing Minister to see what possibilities are out there in terms of facilities that are needed desperately in the Sahtu in regards to facilities that I'm asking for?

HON. SANDY LEE: The Member from Sahtu has raised issues for capital projects in terms of a

health facility in Colville Lake, regional wellness centre, a seniors facility in Sahtu and so we would have to do some more work to prioritize. We should also look at what the demands and needs are in the Territories for these facilities and prioritize them. Obviously, all of this work would require on my part to work with all of the Cabinet Members as well as the Members of this House. I will certainly be willing to see the Housing Minister to see if there are any funds there to support us from the federal government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Northwest Territories in terms of health and social services facilities, I see them in different regions. I don't see anything in the Sahtu in terms of emergency shelters, seniors facilities or regional wellness centres. When I spoke to the regional health board CEO, the priority from the board was a regional wellness health centre. I am saying that we can be creative in terms of looking at funding that could be available because this is a long-term facility. We are looking at other options that we could do within the life of this Assembly. So that is what I am asking. Would the Minister put a dedicated person on file to work with the Sahtu Health Board staff to start identifying the details in terms of what facility could be available in the Sahtu in the future?

HON. SANDY LEE: I certainly agree with the Member that the Sahtu is probably...and I have to say I haven't travelled to the Sahtu yet as the Minister of Health and Social Services. I have to go there and see for myself, but my understanding is that Sahtu is one without a long-term care facility for seniors, for example. I know that the health facility in Norman Wells was one that was transferred from the federal government and it is very aged. I will make the commitment to see what we have in Sahtu and work with him and the board to see how we prioritize the needs in the Sahtu and put it into the process. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 166-16(3):
CONSIDERATION OF ATCO PROPOSAL

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Premier today with respect to the ATCO proposal that... just to put it in a little bit of context, Mr. Speaker, we asked this government to look at supplementary health benefits so that the working poor can be looked after. We get a response that takes drastic

measures on a whole lot of other people. We agree in the strategic planning that we want an efficient and an effective government and we get a proposal back from this government to wipe out virtually every board in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we stand up on a theme day and say the cost of power is too high in the Northwest Territories and a few members suggested the private sector seems to be doing a more effective job in delivering that. We get basically a proposal back from this government looking for a lot of manpower into considering just selling the Power Corporation. The rate is too high. Let's just sell the Power Corporation. I know it is only in the investigative process right now, but, Mr. Speaker, it is causing so much angst and so much uncertainty in our community of Hay River. It just seems like this government is just responding to anything that kind of goes flying by. I'm not against constitutional discussions either but we can't just every time something pops into our head...We need some direction.

Back to the issue of the ATCO proposal, Mr. Speaker, what actually precipitated this government's decision to devote resources to analyzing and considering the ATCO proposal? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro, The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the issue over the cost of living has been raised right from the start of this government, that we need to do something. We need to try to find ways to stabilize the cost of living in the Northwest Territories and lower it if at all possible, the theme day here, the Association of Communities making recommendations to this Assembly and to the Minister responsible to have a look at this. This is not just a fly-by-night look at something. This issue is a real one that we have to look at. It so happens that this initiative has come forward and we want to take a serious look at what is actually being put on the table or could be brought to the table. No decisions have been made as to what will happen there. I've committed that I would come back after I get a response to the preliminary work, sit down with Members and discuss what it's looking like and go from there. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, to devote resources to the extent that we have committed to examine the unsolicited proposal from ATCO is a decision in and of itself, because it's not the only option. Another option would have been to take a look at the Power Corporation and do some kind of an analysis of their operations to see, first of all, if there was any way we could do anything differently,

smarter, effectively, efficiently, that could have translated into lower power rates for people of the Northwest Territories. Why wasn't that option considered? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the fact is we are. The other motion is to have a look at the review of the Power Corporation, that is ongoing. Another piece of that is the discussion paper that has gone out to the public around energy generation regulation rates. The structure has gone out for public discussion as well. There are a number of pieces we are looking at. They are not totally isolated from one another. We felt at this point, with an offer on the table, that we should at least have a look at that offer to see what it might mean for the people of the Northwest Territories and ourselves as a government. When you tie those pieces together, we will be looking at efficiency, we will look at things like, for example, a conservation rate, should that be looked at across the Northwest Territories as a way of doing it. Minister Miltenberger, in the past, has talked about dealing with the capital of the Power Corporation much like we deal with it as a GNWT. Those things will all be looked at in that process. The proposal, the initial piece, we'll have a look at it and we'll do a comparison as well to other providers in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, it still seems like a scattered approach to me and in the process we are doing damage in the fact that we are creating uncertainty again amongst a group of people who are starting to talk about, if this is the government's first response to MLAs saying that we need cheaper power rates in the Northwest Territories, it's an overreaction. We should first of all look at whether or not Power Corp operates too arms-length from the government and if there are opportunities to bring it in. Just the fact that somebody can walk up and throw a proposal on our desk and we will then devote resources to investigating that without laying other options out for all of us to consider to me has caused a problem for us now. What does the Premier say to that? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, as I did a statement in this House just the other day about some of the decisions we have to make as Members of the Legislative Assembly, some of those will require some debate and making some tough decisions in the overall interest of the whole of the Northwest Territories. That's the type of information we're trying to get so we can sit down and look at that. Unfortunately, when we do go out through a process and make the public aware that we are doing a review or investigating an initiative or, as the Members have pointed out, a couple of the other ones that have gone out publicly, that

does cause concern in the Northwest Territories. I believe that if we're going to do our job we have to look at the options available to us and at least investigate them to see if we're on the right track. If it does mean cost savings to people in the North and a stabilization of our rates then that is something we should follow up on.

Now, will it mean that? Not sure. What resources do they bring to the table? Not sure. We want to see what they're prepared to put on the table in the sense of helping us stabilize rates and the cost of living and what it means for employment and securing the energy sector in the Northwest Territories and further development of our energy sector as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I just think we can't afford to chase down every trail without first looking at the fact that we own the Power Corporation and perhaps there are things that could be done, not just with the Power Corporation, but through other energy conservation. It's a complex problem.

Mr. Speaker, we keep calling the ATCO proposal the unsolicited proposal. I just want to get to the bottom of was there a meeting between any representative of this government and ATCO that transpired prior to the unsolicited proposal being presented? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the fact that when we sat down as Members of the Assembly looking at some of our initiatives and the impacts of those directions we want to go in and trying to secure areas, cost of living was a big one. That's why we put an initiative committee behind that to try to deal with that. When it comes down to was there a meeting? I had been down to Calgary meeting with a number of groups and sat down with representatives of ATCO in their initial interest and felt that at that point we were not prepared to look at initiatives or anything but I'd be prepared to sit down with Members to see what may come forward. After we had the work in this House and the Association of Communities do motions at their assemblies to do something about the Power Corporation and look at that initiative, then the proposal showed up and we're starting that review. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 167-16(3):
JMR BIOMASS ENERGY INITIATIVE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on my Member's statement and ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources about the biomass initiative and the Biomass Strategy, if he can share some of the details around that. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the intent of the Biomass Strategy is to do a number of things. One of the key areas we are interested in, of course, is lowering the cost of living in the small communities. We're looking at heating; generation and distribution of electricity are two main areas. We are of the opinion that there is great potential and there is technology that is currently in existence. We know that the Member's community of Jean Marie River has been very active in this area. We are very interested, should the budget be approved, to move forward to find a smaller community that could be used as a demonstration or a pilot project that would allow us to look at the type of technology that would work best in there, and to work with the community to, in fact, get it up and running. If it works then we'd be able to see how we could roll out the biomass potential all the way through the boreal forest area, which takes us almost up to Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member supplementary questions. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to thank the Minister for that answer. As well, in terms of should we get to the feasibility or planning stages, are all the funding and resources available only in his department or are there other resources in other departments that can be accessed to move this proposal forward? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the budget speaks about \$60 million basically over four years with this year to be the start-up year. The Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, chaired by Minister Bob McLeod, is overseeing the projects. The money would be located in different departments as we look at moving forward. The intent, though, is to have it coordinated through the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee to ensure that the whole range of projects move ahead, be it hydro, mini-hydro and wind and such. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I would also ask the Minister at this time for any assistance accessing any federal dollars that can be used for this fund. I'm not too sure what specifically is in the federal budget but I'm sure that his staff can assist us in identifying the exact program that may fit this proposal. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The one fund that we're aware of is there's a billion dollar Green Fund that the federal government has money for. It's project-based. Once again, once the criteria is clear, we believe that we have a number of projects that may be eligible. We'll have to get in line with every other province and territory across the land, but we believe we have two things: we have our share and we have projects that we think would be considered, by the federal terminology, as shovel ready. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 8.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Ms. Bromley.

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 168-16(3): FEDERAL NAVIGABLE WATERS ACT

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I think people are aware that the federal government has proposed an amendment to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. It's really a measure that guts the environmental protection of recreational and traditionally used streams and rivers. I'm wondering if the Department of ENR has a position on that. I'm certainly aware that the Department of Transportation does. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that this act is being updated; it is very old. There are some things that we believe are of benefit to us. I've heard the concerns raised on the radio and I've seen the press release by the Member of Parliament, but at this point I don't have much more detail than that. I know the Minister of

Transportation has been looking at this and has been dealing with that issue. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for those rather startling comments from the Minister of ENR. I would assure the Minister that this is an issue worthy of his attention. I'm wondering if the Minister would commit to learning promptly about this issue and offering comment to the federal government in a way that protects the long-held protection of traditional and recreational use of small rivers, which also happen to be the most productive water bodies that we have, these small, especially small, shallow and ephemeral streams. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will ensure that by this time tomorrow that I am conversant on this issue and able to engage in a meaningful discourse with the Member. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I very much appreciate that commitment on the part of this Minister. This is something that has been put through very speedily by the federal government, this particular federal government, in a low profile way that has prevented substantive input such as this. I'm wondering if the Minister would commit to making his department's position on this clear for the public, as well, and my concerned constituents. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I will look at this. I'll talk to my colleagues and we would be more than willing and ready to share the government's position on what's being proposed for the upgrades to the Navigable Waters Act. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: I was particularly asking about this department's perspective. I'm sure the government will once again follow the developer's perspective and get rid of any environmental protection such as is offered by this act for these small streams. I'd be very interested in the department's perspective as well as this government's perspective. Will the Minister commit to providing that? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that on these issues where the territorial government deals with the federal government, that the positions we are trying to make sure are consistent and one and the same so that we don't send out confusing messages as a government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 169-16(3):
PROCESS FOR LETTING
NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works and Services in regard to a comment that was made in regard to one of the community leaders in which the staffer in Inuvik made reference: well, we don't like negotiated contracts, it takes too long, so basically that's not the process we like to follow. I'd like to ask the Minister who makes the decision on a negotiated contract. Is it someone in the field or is it Cabinet?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the process requires that Cabinet review the request by the community with the required support letters and documents and that decision is made by Cabinet. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he could maybe direct his staff to avoid making those comments and to clarify that the position of this government is that negotiated contracts are the responsibility of Cabinet, not someone in the field, and that decision is made at the Cabinet table. I think it sends the wrong message and then you wonder why we're having problems in the Inuvik region. I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd personally get involved or get his deputy involved to talk to the staff and notify them that they should not be making those comments to political leaders in light of we have a policy in place and they should be following these policies.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we did have a sit down meeting with the Gwich'in leadership and one of the chiefs did raise some concern with a staff position and comments made. We will look into the situation and we will take the advice of the Member and provide the guidelines to all our staff. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there is going to be any reprimand to this but I think that there should be some consequences to those types of statements, especially when it does have a direct implication on that decision which caused grief at the top level and could have been avoided. If anything, we have to work together going forward. I'd like to ask the Minister, can he get back to me

on exactly what the outcome of the discussions are with those individuals? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this issue was raised by the Gwich'in leadership. We will look into the situation and take the opportunity to talk to the Member in that area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 170-16(3):
PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS
AFFECTING ATCO PROPOSAL

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to get into the proposal that was brought forward in regard to ATCO. I, for one, being a previous Minister, know pretty well that ATCO has been trying to get their foot in the door in the North but that they already have their foot in the door. I'm just wondering why is it that this government is not in discussions with Northland Utilities, which is a northern company in partnership with ATCO but yet nowhere has there been any discussions with Northland Utilities in regard to their joint venture with the Dene Development Corporation. Why is that discussion not taking place?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, just to make Members aware of the situation, Northland Utilities is a subsidiary of ATCO company. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: I like to hear that from the Premier. I had a discussion with the president of the Dene Development Corporation who is the partner of Northland Utilities which is a partner of ATCO in which they have had not one phone call. They have been trying to get in contact with Nancy Sutherland, president of ATCO Frontec, with no response back by way of wondering what the arrangement is with their deal. They have a deal with ATCO in regard to their partnership to distribute power in the Northwest Territories, Hay River, Yellowknife, Providence, and other communities in the Northwest Territories. There's an agreement in place with that organization. But they are not being consulted on what's going on with this proposal. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would personally make a call to Darrel Beaulieu of the Dene Development Corporation and ask him what role they are playing in regard to this proposal that you received from ATCO.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The business arrangements of ATCO and Northland Utilities and Dene Development Corporation is that they have

an arrangement and we don't have the detail to that. When it comes to dealing with the Dene Development Corporation itself on this matter sure, there's no problems there. I'll make the call.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, that clearly shows this government is leaving aboriginal organizations and development corporations out of the decision making process of this government. There are other partnership arrangements between the Government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal companies with regard to power distribution, residual heat, and other types of projects. I'd like to ask the Premier why other aboriginal groups are not given the same ability to submit a proposal on their ability to buy into the power corporation instead of having a southern company do it for us.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: At the regional leadership meeting held with aboriginal leaders in Fort Simpson this issue came up. I, at that point, said if they are interested in submitting a proposal we would have a look at that as well.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the \$80 million purchase, what is ATCO purchasing? Are they purchasing the assets of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation or are they purchasing the future potential that the power corporation has, some 15,000 megawatts of hydro power, the potential in regard to hydro, or the potential to win the potential for biomass? What are they buying into for \$80 million?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Those are good questions and the fact that we've provided initial correspondence to committee to sit down and have a discussion about this and questions of that nature are the areas that we are going to do an investigation on. Again, we want to sit down with committee. We want to go through this process and do that due diligence first before we start to deal with it in any further steps.

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

QUESTION 171-16(3):
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened to CKLB on the radio the other day when the Premier was meeting with the chiefs and they were talking about a number of issues with the Premier. I got to thinking in terms of his dialogue this afternoon with the Member for Kam Lake about a going forward basis within the life of this Assembly here. I would ask the Premier if there's enough discussion from the chiefs and other

aboriginal governments to look at the Northwest Territories, as he was saying, in terms of the possibility of having discussions about constitution reforms and how the Northwest Territories can become a real partner in the confederation of Canada. Do we take the next step in terms of having that type of discussion? Or is that too big of a piece to bite on right now with respect to the pressing issues we have to deal with in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm aware that at the Dene leadership meetings the topic of constitutional reform has come up. I've had discussions with the Dene National chief on the issue and I asked or he had requested that we look at trying to establish a joint process and that we undertake approaching the federal government to see if they would be party to that. I told him that we should be looking at what opportunities we have available working together in the Northwest Territories and be prepared to bring that to Members to have further discussion on.

MR. YAKELEYA: In terms of the joint process and how to approach the federal government and the opportunities so all people in the Northwest Territories can have the opportunity to work together, is the Premier and his Cabinet, as well as the Members on this side here, going to see an opportunities paper or discussion paper saying this is over the last several discussions with leaderships right across the North, I think we're ready to move on with this issue here to approach the federal government. Has the Premier thought about this in terms of a time frame of when this can happen?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: There hasn't been any time lines or discussion papers put in place. It has been a number of discussions at this point. I'd be prepared to get the material and the work that's been done before and sit down with committee to go through what has been done and should we look at the opportunity. It depends on, for example, I understand the Dene leadership will do a motion on the subject, is my understanding. It depends on the results of that and the wishes of this Assembly as well.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly look forward to when we can have potentially this discussion about the constitutional reform in the Northwest Territories. When the Premier receives a motion from the Dene chiefs will that be enough to push him forward to say I have the chief in the Northwest Territories asking for a constitution reform. Would that be enough to bring some form of discussion on this side to say we need to look at how we're going to

shape the Northwest Territories and how we want to put it into the confederation rightly in Canada.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I said, there has been no commitment and times established. This has been a couple of discussions. As I said, I'm prepared to sit down with Members of the Assembly committee to discuss previous work that was done, where that went, and if there's agreement that we should look at this process and get further involved or should we put it on the agenda of the next government.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Premier's discussions with the other Premiers has this type of discussion ever come up in terms of having the Northwest Territories play a greater role in the confederation of Canada in terms of asking for what we want rather than being treated like an orphan of the federal government? We are moving out of that or hoping we're going to move out of that frame of mind with the federal government. Has the Premier had any support in discussions with the other Premiers?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We haven't had any discussions around constitutional development. The areas we have had discussions on is devolution and resource revenue sharing and getting their support for those initiatives that we've put on the table. That work continues, but we've not entered into the field of constitution development.

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

QUESTION 172-16(3):
CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of constitutional development is certainly a huge issue. It has been briefly mentioned in some of the discussions with the results of the fallout from the Board Reform Initiative, but I must say that I'm extremely surprised to hear the Premier's comments on this today. I'd like to ask the Premier if this is something that's been discussed around the Cabinet table. Embarking on a full-fledged constitutional reform?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, it hasn't.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I've had the opportunity to be involved in some of the constitutional forums

of the past, starting with the Western Constitutional Forum way back when chaired by Mr. Robert McQuarrie. These are huge undertakings and I kind of had the impression that we were kind of making it up as we went along here today. I'm a little bit unnerved with that, just given some of the other priorities we need to focus on right now. We've got some huge economic issues out there in the Northwest Territories. We've got some huge cost of living issues. I guess I just don't want to give people out there in the Northwest Territories the wrong impression that we're off to Ottawa right now to embark on a full-fledged constitutional forum. What he says carries weight, I mean, he is the Premier. Could he give me a little bit more idea of what he's talking about here when he talks about constitutional discussions?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The fact that this issue was raised at the Dene leadership meeting, so in responding to the aboriginal leaders across the North about this issue we haven't had a discussion. There is no position right now. There is some discussion about trying to get into a process and we'll need to come and sit down with Members to discuss if there's such a process we would engage in, to what level we would engage in, and how we would try to find partners; for example, the federal government would be key to this and what the First Nations would bring to the table as well. There is no paper in place. This is not a march to Ottawa at this stage. This is an issue that has been raised by the Dene leadership. We're responding in a sense to some of their concerns and reactions, as well as some of the Members, about consensus government in the North. Just put it out there for discussion.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: We all know that too many priorities is no priority. Certainly there will be a time when constitutional development will be timely and it will be appropriate to discuss that. Was there a motion or any resolution passed at the Dene Nation this week with regard to constitutional development?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I know it was under discussion at the table. My understanding is they were going to prepare it as one of the motions that had to be discussed and voted on. I'm not sure the outcome of that.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier commit to not taking any further action on this unless a proposal or resolution does come from the Dene National Assembly to this government, at which time would he please ask us what we would think of our government perhaps leading an initiative on something like this? I don't

know how that would all take place, but I think it does bear some discussion as a full Caucus.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I said earlier, before any decision is made, before any discussion happens we'll have to sit down as Members. I absolutely agree, this would be a good Caucus discussion item.

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

QUESTION 173-16(3): CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to also ask the Premier when all the chiefs of the Northwest Territories gather and if they are going to draft a motion in terms of having some serious discussions on constitutional reform, there's land claims settlements, there's self-government settlements negotiated, that the Premier takes the motion very seriously for our people back in our communities who are represented by the leadership of the chiefs here in terms of bringing forward to, like Mrs. Groenewegen has indicated, the Assembly so we can have discussions. These are our chiefs that are speaking about this motion.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The relationship we have with aboriginal governments we take very seriously. In fact, that is why we've established the regional leaders meetings that we take part in with the grand chiefs and presidents of aboriginal government across the Territory. We have a joint ability to put items on the agenda. So those discussions and motions that are made are taken seriously. There are not all times we can agree with what's put on the table. We let them know. But we continue to try to work on best efforts to strengthen our position from the Territory. Far too many times we find ourselves at odds and not moving ahead because Ottawa continues to tell us and make decisions in the North that have long-term impacts here. We're starting to see the fact that we need to work together and pull our resources together and have that discussion. So yes, we do take their motion seriously.

MR. YAKELEYA: In my question to the Premier regarding the constitution issue, certainly as he said Ottawa takes a lot of resources out of the Northwest Territories. In his discussions with devolution and resource revenue sharing, that is possibly a signal in terms of the development of a constitution and protection of constitutional rights in the Northwest Territories. In his discussions with those two specific areas, is that where this

government and Cabinet is looking at how we can evolve into getting stronger constitutional protection rights for the Northwest Territories where we can stand up and say yes, we are truly a partner in Canada.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The process we're involved in exists within the framework we operate under. The NWT Act, our relationship with the federal government, this would not establish, it's not the work of a constitutional process. It is within the existing framework that we have. If we're going to enter into that area I think we do, as Members have stated, need to get to the table, have a discussion, work with the aboriginal leadership across the North, and see if we can come forward with a common process and understanding and who would take part, to what level, where the funds would come from, so on and so forth. That's all very early stages. We might not have any discussion in that area. Our work is in the existing framework that we have to live with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to the opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy; Committee Report 2-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Matters Referred to the Committee; Committee Report 3-16(3), Report on the Use of Laptop Computers and Blackberry Devices in the Legislative Assembly; Tabled Document 11-16(3), NWT Main Estimates 2009-2010; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act; Bill 3, International Interest in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act; Bill 4, Public Library Act; Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act with Mr. Abernethy in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We're reviewing Tabled Document 7-16(3), Committee Report 2-16(3), Committee Report 3-16(3), Tabled Document 11-16(3), Bills 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wish of the committee today is to

deal with Committee Report 3-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Use of Laptop Computers and Blackberry Devices in the Legislative Assembly. And then after that to continue on with consideration of the budget for the NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, time permitting.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We'll commence with that as soon as we've taken a short break. Is committee agreed? Sorry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Okay. We'll go with that once we have a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break, committee agreed that we would consider Committee Report 3-16(3), Report on the Use of Laptop Computers and BlackBerry Devices in the Legislative Assembly. I would like to go to the chair of Rules and Procedures for some opening comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures tabled Committee Report 3-16(3) on February 11, 2009. This report on the use of laptop computers and BlackBerry devices in the Legislative Assembly was read into the record and a motion was passed to move the report into Committee of the Whole. Members may recall that the report recommended that laptop computers be allowed during the Committee of the Whole proceedings during the sitting of the Legislative Assembly and that the use of laptops be evaluated.

The committee is also recommending that the standing and special committees of the Assembly allow the use of laptops during committee meetings. The committee further recommends that the issue of the purchase of laptops, the planning and installation of supporting infrastructure, required changes to operational procedures and the implementation plan be all developed.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, the committee is recommending that the use of BlackBerry devices be permitted but, similar to the use of cell phones, they must not disrupt Members' activities.

Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to make the three motions as recommended by the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures in the report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. You can proceed with your motion.

COMMITTEE MOTION 3-16(3):
USE OF LAPTOPS IN COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE DURING THE WINTER 2009 SESSION
CARRIED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that Members be permitted to use laptops during Committee of the Whole proceedings during the winter 2009 session only, after which their use will be evaluated;

And further, that communication devices cannot be used by a Member who has the floor; and that a Member who has the floor must have his or her laptop closed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A motion is on the floor and is being distributed now.

The motion has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is an exciting day for me because I have been trying to promote the use of laptops in Committee of the Whole for a long time. I've looked around Canada and I've seen that most Legislatures, including the House of Commons, allow the use of laptops in their proceedings and allow them to do the work required at the same time as normal House business goes on.

Mr. Chairman, I think this is a bit scary for some Members and it certainly would be new for others, but the thing here is it would allow Members to do work at the same time. I see it as a working tool brought into the House during what I would perceive as the least disruptive manner. Thinking green, Mr. Chairman, this allows us to type our Member's statements instead of writing them out by hand, then taking them upstairs and retyping them. It also allows us to look towards the future through an e-process which allows us to get motions e-mailed to us as well as other committee documents, so it would mean less printing of paper in a needless way.

Mr. Chairman, in a working matter, this would also allow us to respond to e-mails while we are sitting here in Committee of the Whole and other Members are questioning the Minister through that process. So this could save a lot of additional time. At this time if we proceeded in this manner, this wouldn't cost the Assembly anything additional in any way because it would simply be a test to the

process and Members can bring their own personal laptops down to the House.

As I understand it, it's already wired, which means it can facilitate laptops to be done in a seamless way...Sorry, brought into the process in a seamless way and, of course, if the test proved to be worthy of proceeding further in the future, then we could look at logistics, working with the Board of Management.

I am just going to close and allow Members to have some debate, but this really opens the door to a new way of thinking and a new way of doing business. In my view, this doesn't detract in any way from how we do business. This just enhances it with the tools we have at our fingertips now which would simply be a laptop and, of course, the BlackBerries. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will close debate at that time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on my list is Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to support the motion because it's for a trial session only and there are other motions here that I will speak to later in regard to laptop usage in committee meetings. My own view on this is because the advent of technology and the BlackBerry-type devices in Committee of the Whole can and should be used by Members to receive e-mails and maybe keep us in the House instead of going back to our offices to check our e-mail. To me, that's the most important aspect of it. If it ever did come down to a vote, and I think it's something we should try and I will support the Rules committee on the trial run on laptops, but I don't think permanently that laptops have any place in the House itself. I could be convinced otherwise about committee meetings, but I guess I am old fashioned in the sense that we are here to work, to speak on behalf of the people we represent, and distractions are distractions whether they are newspapers or computers or whatever. The less amount of distractions we have, the better.

Again, I am going to support the motion, but in the long run, I think with BlackBerries now...Laptops in here is a non-starter for me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on my list is Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much there, Mr. Chair. I, too, will be voting in favour of this motion. I think the key thing for the writing of the motion is to evaluate how it works. Much has been said that other jurisdictions allow it and the time that we are looking at is not in the formal sitting of the House. It's during Committee of the Whole, which is considered as the Lower House in our Assembly

and a little bit more informal. We can loosen our ties, sit without our jackets, it's not really that formal. So it goes with the communication devices as well, because I, for one, often find that I write a lot of my letters and memos while other Members are addressing their concerns in Committee of the Whole. I feel that a laptop would be just doing the same thing. I think the key thing is we should at least evaluate it and assess how it works during this winter session and that's why I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next on my list is Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the work of this committee and I know they've given lots of thought and debate and discussion to this controversial recommendation. I do not support this motion and I don't take the use of it by other governments, all of which engage in party politics, as a model that we should necessarily follow or a reason for following this model.

Primarily I find the use of such devices to be disruptive and to reflect a lack of due diligence and due degree of attention in the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole in this House. Ultimately, of course, the most important tools we have to bring to the table are our minds, our awareness and our full attention and focus. The action proposed in this motion would detract from this focus either for those using it or those sitting adjacent.

There is one instrument that I have become aware of that I think would also address the expense of this approach and this would be an expensive approach and our communications, despite some of the challenges we face in this House are becoming more and more expensive as this government allows additional tools to be used. A tool to consider might be the e-readers, which are an electronic reader and can be embedded in the surface of our desk. They are very unobtrusive. We wouldn't be typing on it but you could call up documents under consideration. It would allow increased focus and attention to the discussion.

I am a firm believer that we should be listening to others' perspective on issues in their constituencies. After all, we are Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. We have a responsibility to be addressing the concerns of all the people of the Northwest Territories and, of course, with particular focus on our constituents' concerns.

So I do not support this motion for those reasons and thank you for this opportunity to comment, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on my list is Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak in favour of this motion. The chair of the committee, Member Hawkins, mentioned that he's been fighting for this since day one of his office. I can say that I wanted to have laptops be used in committees as well as in Committee of the Whole since I came into office in '99. We've had numerous debates on this and I would like to thank the committee and chair for bringing this to this stage. I believe that this recommendation is about making the laptops available during Committee of the Whole, not during formal session, respecting the formality of the House here.

Also, I know that for many years the biggest argument or the largest critic of this proposal is we wouldn't be paying attention to each other if the laptops were in use. I have to disagree with that notion. If we could have laptops down here, it would be great to have all the Members here all the time except when you have to take a break for biological reasons. I think we've all learned how to pay attention. We live in a computer age. Actually my dream for a facility like this is to be paperless sometime down the road.

I have to say it's not just the Canadian Legislatures that are fully equipped with laptops and other technologies. I have had the occasion to visit other Parliaments in Asia and Europe. There are many, many Parliaments where votes are taken electronically and all the documents are transmitted and viewed electronically. If I just think about the papers we produce often, all the Members here get a piece of paper in the morning on the same document, same speech, same motion. There must be 10 or 15 copies of the same thing that gets circulated. You know, computers are here and they are here to stay. Of course, all technology requires us to be responsible. Having a laptop in front of us does not say that we leave etiquette; that we leave the respect we have for each other at the door. I think it is possible that we are adult enough and responsible enough that we will use this technology to help us do our work and not interfere with other people's work or in any way decrease the respect and decorum that we expect to have in this House. I think this is an important first step.

When I was a Regular Member, I used to treat it as a policy where -- I can't do that right now -- I had my CA scan every document into my computer because I didn't want to have any paper. I put them on disc.

Technology is here to stay and I think we should maximize our technology. We can develop protocols as we go along so that we are not

interfering with each other. Our rules in the House are our rules and we are allowed to change those. I don't think having access to laptops or a BlackBerry is any more disruptive than talking to each other loudly or reading newspapers or not paying attention. We could be looking at each other and not paying attention. We could have a laptop in front of us and pay attention to each other.

I think this is a step in the right direction and I support it. At least we are going to have an opportunity to have a pilot. I would ask all the Members, if this passes, to participate and try to make good use of it so we can have good recommendations coming out of it and move forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lee. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, as a Member of the Rules committee, have debated this motion and the consideration of what motion to bring forward within the committee. I do support the motion. I have some reservations. I am willing to go forward with this at the moment especially because it is a trial and it's going to be a trial period. I think we need to see whether or not it's going to work.

I have my reservations because I am concerned that it will be a distraction for some Members to work on the computer instead of paying attention to the work before the Committee of the Whole, whatever that happens to be. But I also temper that by thinking about how many people are not in the House when we are in Committee of the Whole at any one time on a regular basis. So we play one off against the other. I am not sure which is worse.

I am concerned that somebody working on a laptop next to another Member could be a distraction. But, again, I think we need the trial period to figure out whether or not that's going to be a problem.

Probably my main reason for supporting this is I am, like Ms. Lee, not wanting to contribute to the waste of our trees. It boggles my mind how much paper we use and how much paper we throw away and how much paper we unnecessarily print more than once.

So I see this as an opportunity for us to allow the Assembly, us as Members, to evolve towards e-documents, and e-documents hopefully on a constant basis. We wouldn't be able to do that if we don't have some sort of a communication device for us to be able to look up documents. But even the motions, these motions as they are presented to us, we don't really need to see them on a piece of paper. We could be looking at them on a screen. Complicated documents, that's a little different, but when it's a simple motion...One of the examples

that just drives me crazy is the Premier will get up and announce the absence of a Minister and it's a three-line statement but we have to have it on a piece of paper and we take that piece of paper and we turf it, hopefully recycle it.

So those sorts of things are a concern for me and I think for us to try it out, this particular suggestion, may prove that, yes, some things are okay and maybe there are drawbacks, but we're never going to know if we don't try it, so that's why I am in support. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just quickly. I will be supporting the motion. I think that if the laptops could make work easier for some of the Members in the House, doing Member's statements on the laptop or whatever; it is to do some work in here as they wish to do. I have no problem with that. I am not sure that it would be disruptive. It may. I support it because it is for this session only. I think that if, like I said, it can make people's work easier, than I am in favour of that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on my list is Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to support the motion, Mr. Chairman, for now. If I find anybody is not listening to me when I am talking and they are looking at their computer, then I will have to rethink my support. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the risk of disagreements with my Cabinet colleagues, I will as well support the motion. This is a trial period. I appreciate the concern of Mr. Bromley. I was once a traditionalist too.

---Laughter

I have accepted the reality of the IT generation that is upon us. So I will support this motion. Let's see how it works. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next on my list is Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also I am a member of the Rules committee and I support this motion. Personally I don't see the need for a trial period. I think we should go right into having wholehearted use of it but if the committee

would like to see a trial period, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. To the motion. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Certainly there are some hesitations with respect to having technologies in this Assembly. At the same time, it is a trial basis. I am more concerned about the costs at a later time when it has been researched. I support it on a going-forward basis, on a temporary basis. Once the cost factor comes into play, I guess there will be debates on that. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought about this and am going to remain with my previous comments to this discussion that we had, that I am not going to be supporting this motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Minister Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. To demonstrate, I am willing to live with the will of this House. I was considering abstaining but...

---Laughter

Mr. Chairman, I think the time has come that we have to introduce new technology, whether it is BlackBerries or laptops. I think we should try it out and really monitor how well it works. If it is something that we need to introduce for the long term, then we will do that. We need to make sure that we police it well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. To the motion. As there are no other individuals on the list, we will go to Mr. Hawkins to conclude debate on the motion.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to the defining vote on this issue. I just want to thank the traditionalists who have changed their mind and are willing to give this a try. That is all I will say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Question has been called.

---Carried

To the next motion, Mr. Hawkins.

COMMITTEE MOTION 4-16(3):
ISSUES RELATED TO LAPTOP COMPUTERS
CARRIED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Board of Management and the Office of the Clerk examine the issues related to:

- (a) the purchase of laptop computers for Members;
- (b) planning and installation and additional infrastructure to support the connections; and
- (c) planning for the changes to operational procedures and websites to support the increased use of e-documents in committees and the Assembly and return with a plan and schedule to develop and implement the changes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is on the floor. The Motion is being distributed. The motion has been distributed. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Question has been called.

---Carried

Mr. Hawkins.

COMMITTEE MOTION 5-16(3):
USE OF BLACKBERRY DEVICES AND
LAPTOP COMPUTERS IN COMMITTEES
CARRIED AS AMENDED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that all standing or special committees of the Assembly consider allowing the use of BlackBerries in a manner similar to cell phones; that is, disruption of Members' activities is not allowed;

And further, that the use of laptops be permitted by committee members and staff.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is on the floor and has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there is an issue in some of our committee rooms with technology and there is going to be a cost

associated with getting committee rooms up to speed with Internet connections and whatnot. I am not sure if this motion speaks to Members using laptops without Internet connections or with Internet connections, because the two are very different things.

I know committee rooms may only have one live Internet connection, so is it the first Member through the door that gets to plug their computer into that live Internet connection or are we going to do any further work on trying to find out what it costs?

Again, I think BlackBerries and the usage of BlackBerries and what they bring to a Member's ability to check their e-mail and receive e-mails or answer back in a moment's notice, I think that, to me, answers what we are trying to look at. I don't know why we need to go to laptops in committee meetings. I don't agree with laptops in committee meetings, personally.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would like some clarification on the motion. If Mr. Ramsay's understanding is that this is referencing laptops, that is not my understanding. It is talking only about the use of BlackBerries in standing and special committees. Laptops would only be...Oh, it does say laptops. I beg your pardon. I was thinking it was only for staff.

I do have a problem with laptops in committees, because I think committee work requires our minds even more, perhaps, than the House. There is not as much...I don't think we have as much room for laptops and so on. At this point, I am willing to see. If I read the motion right, it simply recommends that committees consider it, so I think this is leaving it up to each committee to determine. I think that individual committees may determine that, yes, they want laptops or, no, they don't. We can have that debate within each committee. I guess having said all that and round and round and round and round, I am in support of this motion because it allows each committee to make their own decision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also disagree with the use of laptops in committees and I will be voting against this motion. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue, really, the key word here, is to "consider" and what this does is facilitate that type of discussion in a committee. Although laptops and BlackBerries were broken out into two separate, distinct paragraphs here, the intent, as I recall the Rules committee, was to allow us to facilitate this opportunity to have them within that type of committee. Ultimately, the committee itself will have the overbearing position of being able to say, look, this is going to be an allowable device or not. By the Assembly here approving this doesn't mean that a committee can't rule and say it is not.

The last point I want to emphasize on this is this allows the facilitation of any further investigation. As we know now, not every committee room such as committee room 'B' has Internet connection, but this allows this type of discussion to move on to the next phase. Is this considered reasonable? What are the costs? Does it really work? Those types of things.

Mr. Chairman, if I am to underscore one point it is to say that the independence of each committee is still allowed to govern itself. Just by now passing a rule that this is now an acceptable item, committee can say that they didn't want this. They could strike it down if that is what they want. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Ramsay

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My reading of the motion isn't that something different. I would like to propose an amendment. I think after the use of BlackBerries, maybe we could include "and laptops" and take out that last paragraph. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): He did speak to the motion twice. That is my fault. Did he just say he wanted to amend the motion? Amending the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move an amendment to the motion. I would like to strike out the last paragraph and include the word "laptop" after BlackBerries in the first paragraph.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We just need to take a quick break in order to make an amendment to the motion and we will come back and follow through on that motion.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We'll go to Mr. Ramsay, to the amendment to the motion.

MOTION TO AMEND
COMMITTEE MOTION 5-16(3):
CARRIED

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I move that Committee Motion 5-16(3) be amended by adding the words "and laptop computers" after the word "BlackBerries".

And further, that the second paragraph be deleted.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The motion is on the floor. The motion is being distributed.

The motion has now been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick question. I'd like to know whether or not this motion is going to inhibit the use of laptops by committee staff since we've taken out that second paragraph.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We're actually in the process of debating the motion and we can't ask questions. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Question has been called.

---Carried

To the motion as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Question has been called.

---Carried

Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 3-16(3) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, committee. Committee Report 3-16(3) is concluded.

As recommended, we're going to be moving on to Tabled Document 11-16(3), to continue our debate on the Housing Corp. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Minister McLeod, do you have witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Can I please get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witness, please?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I have Jeff Anderson and Revi Lau-a with me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Yesterday when we finished off we were on page 5-43, information item, corporate summary, operations expenditure item. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, I'm just looking for clarification from the Minister. I didn't understand his answer. I was asking about where we're at with core needs, at meeting core needs and I think the Minister mentioned 36 percent in one area and 70-some percent in another area. I was asking about Ndilo and Dettah and the NWT as a whole. I'm not totally sure what those percentages refer to. Perhaps I could just get a clarification or a little bit of interpretation of what that actually means. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the core need assessment looks at the adequacy, suitability and affordability issues in the communities. The community of Dettah, I mentioned yesterday was over 30 percent. It's actually at 42 percent. The last survey was done in 2004 and we have another one going on right now. We anticipate to have all the results compiled for public review by the early summer.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, just so I really understand this concept, is that a rating on one measure for the three combined aspects of equitability, no, sorry, equity, suitability, and affordability? Is it a measure of that and is 42 percent...Are we looking to get to 100 percent or to zero?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it would be really nice to get to zero, but I don't think that would ever happen. The national average is actually 12 percent and that's the goal that we are striving towards. We have 2,200 families right now in core need across the Territories. That's the rating we use. We look at and analyze people in the communities in terms of the different measurements for suitability, overcrowding, things of that nature.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We're on page 5-43, information item, corporate summary, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 5-44, information item, active positions by region.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 5-47, also an information item, executive, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 5-49, information item, finance and infrastructure services, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Page 5-50. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: I'll hold off for now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We're on page 5-50, information item, finance and infrastructure services, grants and contributions. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Support for the Homeownership Programs, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Fire damage repairs and winter road you had in previous years \$187,000 and for '09-10 there's nothing. Is that just the way the funding is arranged with the Crown corporation here in terms of \$187,000 not being in this year's budget?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this was an area that was reduced as part of the reduction process. We expect we'd be able to accommodate this program through our repair program.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, including this program here, so this program was somewhere in your new design of the funding that this program will be included as part of the criteria, requirements that when this issue comes up that the Housing Corporation will be able to satisfy, say yes, we can deal with this in this area. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Member is referring to a program that we've decided to eliminate as part of our budget reduction

program and also as part of our desire to incorporate the many programs that we had historically into a smaller grouping. This will be built into each region's budget and will be able to be covered off through the different programs that we have. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The other question I have is on contributions and federal and territorial funding. I'm very curious as to why it here it says urban native fully targeted. Can I get a brief explanation as to what that is all about?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Minister. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$3.4 million that we've set aside under that is part of the funds that we received from the federal government that came with the 1997 Social Housing Agreement where the federal government transferred projects that they had administered to our organization as part of that exercise. That includes non-profits. Targeted means they're income tested and it includes funding we provide to co-ops and mortgage write-downs and some of the non-profit organizations across the Territories. It represents about 500 units across the Territories that we provide this federal funding towards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, is it possible to get a copy of these 500 units that they administrate across the Northwest Territories? Because certainly I would be interested in asking further questions on this. Certainly in some of my communities people aren't making any profits, so I don't know if they would be qualified under that. This here, in terms of the funding, it seems like it's been a...I don't know. I'll wait until I make my conclusion, but I need to see some more information as to this funding here for the 500 units.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, these are all programs that we had inherited historically from the federal government. We do have a listing and we'd be glad to share it with the Members.

MR. YAKELEYA: Is it possible to also get an idea as to a description on the urban native fully targeted in terms of what the Minister and officials from the Crown corporation has said? I wouldn't mind getting some information to read before I could ask a few more questions if I had to.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we'd be glad to give a definition on each one and give the location and the projects that we're doing in the different regions. I would also be glad to sit down with the Member if he had further interest in some of these areas.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I know that much has been said about providing housing for staff. It's something that's been pressing for our regions and communities for many, many years and I'm pleased to see that there's a line item in here. I'm just curious, Mr. Chair, about how do people access this funding. Is it already designated for the different regions and communities that are out there or is it proposal-specific? I understand that the...I think it might have been the education council in Nahendeh or the Dehcho education council may have had a specific proposal. I don't know if they're accessing this particular fund, but I would be curious to know some of the answers to those questions. Firstly, how do people access it? Is it proposal-driven or is it based on per region, Mr. Chair? Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, this is an initiative that the Refocusing Government has been working on. We're also working with the Executive to develop a program that would go out to the communities. There are still a number of issues that we have to work out before we come forward with an actual package. These dollars have been placed in the budget as a placeholder. We'd like to start delivering this program as soon as possible but there are a number of challenges and some legal issues that we have to overcome.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Hopefully, we can get around some of these issues, because that's something that I know in the community of Fort Liard are challenged with. That annually, teachers are hired in the springtime but they show up in the fall time only to find out they're having challenges with the units that are available. It's something that I would urge the Minister and government to try to put in place and even create some units this coming summer. Once again, I am glad to see that line item there. Maybe I can shift gears here a little bit.

I know that Mr. Yakeleya was talking specifically about urban native fully targeted line item here just above that, but I think some of the concerns from the communities that I heard is that some of the housing dollars that the Housing Corporation get are earmarked, for lack of a better word, for the urban native, because we don't have reserve

systems here. Some of the communities have actually asked how our specific band access funding from the band corporations, if they are getting aboriginal dollars for housing. So my thoughts around that actually were, can we create a program or look at establishing some of our funds to specifically give it to the band organizations out there to build some houses or create some houses which they can manage if they so choose. It is one thing to say we can manage our own housing but the other thing is the same as the government is facing, yes, you are giving us money for houses but it is the O and M that is the real kicker, that is a drawback. I believe that discussions should occur. I believe that we should actually look at some type of programming that identifies, for our different bands out there, to address this concern. At the same time, I think we need a complementary strategy with the federal government too. Just because they are providing some dollars doesn't mean that they also can't provide some aboriginal housing dollars for, I think it is called, off-reserve housing, I think is the word the federal government uses. I don't know what kind of discussions that maybe the Minister can touch on that he had with his last visit with the federal Housing Minister on this particular topic and he may have represented himself as only GNWT funding, but at the same time there is funding necessary for our aboriginal communities. So I would just like to see how the Minister worked his way around that, what are his thoughts on that, and I don't think it is about devolving all the housing corporations but it is about addressing the needs and concerns of the aboriginal communities and the band councils out there, about delivering some of their own homeownership programs. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. The urban native fully targeted dollars that you see in the budget here was a federal program that was transferred to us. This program no longer exists except for these revenues that have an agreement in the North Slave. There is no other dollars in our budgets that reference any aboriginal or band funding per se.

Having said that, we do have universal partnership agreements with many bands. We are talking to at least one community in the Member's riding about delivering some of these programs. We do have a number of asks from other band councils to see how we can work together to better address some delivery in the communities and operation of our units. We will continue to move that forward.

The Member has also asked about federal discussions. We did not engage in a discussion about aboriginal housing at our last meeting with the federal government. I have historically raised it. The previous Liberal government had shown some interest in putting a program together, but that went

by the wayside and this new government has not really picked it up. The aboriginal communities are still quite concerned over this and it is something we have to flag as we move forward and have further discussions.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I was just wondering, I am sure that the Minister and his staff have looked at the federal budget when they talk about aboriginal housing. I don't know if it's specifically mentioned in this new budget about off-reserve housing at all or how it impacts our Territory. Maybe I will get the Minister's thoughts on that. Is there ability for us to access any aboriginal dollars from the federal government or does it have to come, or is it our only reserve? It might be just Hay River and, of course, Fort Smith. Are they the only ones that have the ability to access any of those federal dollars?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We are just checking to see if we had the latest update on any discussions we have had with the federal government. Up to now, all our discussions on housing infrastructure on aboriginal lands or aboriginal reserves and the funding that flows and other jurisdictions get are not available to the Northwest Territories. Our dollars are presented through a Northern Housing Program. The last Northern Trust and also these new dollars that are flowing are geared to that. With the federal government, I think today we are able to nail down a date that we will be able to have things wrapped up and ready for presentation. It looks like we should have some agreements signed off by March 2.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Yes, I just wanted to raise with the Minister that there is a desire out there, maybe create, like I said, maybe a line item that can help our aboriginal communities. Basically we are off-reserve housing and just keep that in mind for any discussions or any new announcements on federal initiatives and how they plan to role that out. I know somehow our government should be able to make the case to the federal government that there must be a way in order for us to access those additional dollars that will certainly go a long ways in helping us out there, Mr. Chairman. Thanks.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: It is something that we need to engage in. This is an issue that has been raised by many of the band councils across the Northwest Territories and we will commit to doing that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up on my colleague Mr. Menicoche's comment on the housing for staff. I

am also very happy to see this in the budget and I am looking forward to the plan for how this will be administered, the strategy for allocation, in a way that will maximize the benefit from it. I am wondering, do we have a target, a number of homes or houses that we are trying to support with this amount yet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Our target is \$1.5 million. We don't have it all rolled out yet for presentation and we haven't got as far as calculating how many houses this will build. That is going to be difficult until we start identifying the areas that we are going in, which communities we are going to work with first and the costing is different in each community. So this, I expect, will be an annual program that will be there for the long term. We are certainly not going to meet all the demands and all of the need out there with this budget, but we need to start somewhere.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you to the Minister for those comments. Absolutely, I totally agree with him. I am wondering, I guess, is the plan to actually build the houses or is it to supplement the communities' resources towards getting houses in place and sort of extending the benefit of this \$1.5 million dollars. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. I guess, in a nutshell, the program will probably...We expect will be designed to support communities to enter into loans or borrow the money from financial institutions and also provide some type of incentive. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure where this question should be asked so I will ask it here and hopefully it is alright. We discussed during a review of business plans that the infrastructure, the way our infrastructure is determined within the government was being looked at, was being evaluated. Public Works and Services and the Housing Corporation were looking at possibly setting up an infrastructure department. I just wondered if there had been any progress on that initiative or the revamping of that structure since November when we talked about it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had anticipated that we would be

part of the process for next year, so that is what we are working towards.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. As a note, pages 5-62 through 5-65 are related to infrastructure acquisition. The question might be more appropriate there, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will just ask for clarification from the Minister. When it says next year, does that mean implementation in 2010-11? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask questions on housing for staff as well. I have most of the Hansard as the people ask the questions. I guess I will ask about the Market Housing Program. I am curious about how the Market Housing Program...I am trying to figure out the difference between housing for staff and the Housing Program. Maybe just a little explanation on those to start with, please, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Market Housing Program was set up so that we could buy a number of mobile units, waive the BIP policy on it and put them in the communities where there was a demand and have them available for operation by the LHOs and/or for sale. That was the design of it. I think we bought 42 units overall over a couple of years and then didn't carry it out any longer. The housing for staff is more towards trying to provide incentive to communities, development corporations and businesses in the communities, band councils or municipal councils to invest into providing units for people that are in the workforce and, along with that, we would be looking at potential loan guarantees or some type of initiatives that we may be able to provide.

MR. BEAULIEU: On the housing for staff, I guess I should just talk about my scenario. In both communities they have capable contractors or capable contractors can be brought into the community to build housing for staff. Would this budget be available for not only leveraging or financing, but also for providing equity to individuals? The problem with building staff housing is that your capital carrying costs are so high in non-market communities that is not feasible unless the staff is prepared to pay a large amount of rent per month. Usually these are rented to teachers who only need to rent 10 months of the year. It is

hard to go to the bank with a lease agreement that is for one year long and it is really in 10-month chunks. How does the NWT Housing Corporation hope to address that issue: high capital carrying costs plus a difficulty in obtaining a lease that will allow them to leverage financing? By "them" I mean the contractor.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: It is difficult to answer that question. We are not completely done with our discussions with the executive. There are a number of issues that are potentially out there that we need to be very careful we don't breach. There is a collective bargaining discussion going on. There are also other legal risks that we have to work out before we move forward. We would be glad to lay out the program design to the Members, hopefully in a couple of weeks, as to all the details and how we expect to move forward. Those areas that were raised by the Member are the areas that we are exploring right now.

MR. BEAULIEU: The Minister touched on something here that I would like to explore a little further. On the collective bargaining issue, it has always been my understanding that it wasn't a union issue in negotiating because if you are providing subsidized housing to someone in a non-market community where, like I said, it is difficult to provide staff housing for staff because of high carrying capital costs and so on and so forth, it is difficult to get contractors on. I am curious to know what type of actual collective bargaining issue this creates, because I can't see how the people in market communities that are staff could possibly have an issue with this. I know that has been an outstanding hurdle that, obviously, we haven't cleared yet. I am wondering if the Minister could explain just what the issue is.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: That is probably a question better posed to the Department of Human Resources. The areas that are of concern under the collective bargaining are the issues of potential or what could be viewed as potential subsidy and the other issue is availability of units once we enter a program that may be required to be provided for everyone. So those are issues that need to be looked at and understood properly before we move forward.

MR. BEAULIEU: I would just make a comment, not to the Minister of Housing but probably to the Minister of Human Resources. If this continues to be an issue, offer this benefit to people provided they are prepared to go into non-market communities. I could never understand how this was an issue. If it is considered a subsidy by people in non-market communities, or anywhere for that matter, then offer that to them provided they are prepared to work in a non-market community where

this type of subsidy viewed as a subsidy is being offered. Thank you. That is just a comment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. We are on page 5-50 which is an information item, finance and infrastructure services, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Okay. We are moving on to page 5-53, information item, debt repayment, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, on the debt repayment, I might be not too sure about the question here. In terms of the housing rental in our communities in terms of our debt, is this the place to ask questions on rental collections or is this a whole other issue with the federal government in terms of social housing in terms of debt repayment?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this pertains to the area of dollars that we owe to the federal government.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Minister McLeod. I didn't see that. It does have to do with the federal government. Maybe the Minister can explain it to me. Some people have been asking, how is it that we are in debt to the federal government under this Canada Mortgage Agreement here? We always seem to be in debt. How is that? That is my question, Mr. Chairman.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I will have Mr. Anderson, who has a better grasp on the history on this, to explain why it is. Mr. Chairman, this amount here is the amount that we are repaying on our debt. The federal government also puts in \$9 million that flows through us to repay the debt. Right now, as of April 1st, our debt will be at \$66 million. Mr. Anderson would be pleased to talk about the history.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, if you go back to the 1970s, the federal government provided loans to the NWT Housing Corporation. At that point they were 90 percent of the cost of a house and the Government of the Northwest Territories contributed 10 percent. Those loans are linked to the subsidies that we get on the operating, the shared costs on the operating costs of our public housing portfolio. As the money on the O and M falls off the table, the debts get retired at the same pace. As Minister McLeod said, the federal

government pays the lion's share of those interest costs on that money as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: When will the Government of the Northwest Territories be debt free from this loan or these loans that have been here for a bit? Do they have a forecast?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we are anticipating that by 2038 we will no longer have the debt.

Mr. Chairman, this is the issue of dispute from our side of things, including other jurisdictions, that as the money falls off the table we would expect the federal government does realize this as a savings now to put it back into social housing. They have not agreed to do that at this point, so it is really affecting our ability to increase our housing stock. As I indicated to Mr. Bromley with this question, we are very much short of what we need in public housing. These are the dollars that allow us to operate our units. It is something that is going to be an increasing issue.

MR. YAKELEYA: Today may not be such an urgent issue but as we get closer to 2038, this is very serious. I am just wondering within the life of this Assembly. Do we want to pass this on to the next Assembly here? Are there some things in play here that we should be aware of as MLAs in terms of urgency to get some movement with the federal government? I know the social housing issue -- he is right -- is going to be a big issue here in terms of what we are dealing with right now. Our hands are pretty well tied in terms of how we operate.

I don't want to stay too long on this subject here. It does raise some red flags. Do we need to have a greater discussion at another table on this issue here? This is more of a comment. If the Minister has a reply for me, I will appreciate it. That will be my last question, Mr. Chairman.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I will certainly have to agree with the Member's comments. It is an issue. It is not our issue. We are not alone in this. All jurisdictions across Canada are being treated the same. We have partnered up with all the other jurisdictions including other organizations in the South and in the other two territories to combine our forces and strengthen our arguments to the federal government. We have had, so far this year, one discussion on this issue. We intend to move forward with the new federal government to raise it and see if we can find a solution to this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a quick question on this page. I am wondering if the Housing Corporation and the government has given any thought to trying to take the Housing Corporation a little bit further away from government, a little bit more arm's length. I have been thinking about this because housing is political. It is a political beast and constituents come to their MLAs and they want MLAs to intervene on their behalf whether it is arrears or other issues related to housing. I have given this some thought. It seems to me if you take the Housing Corporation as it is today and put it a little bit further away, would we be able to collect more arrears? Would we be able to address things without the political intervention that takes place? Whether we like it or not, it does happen. I'm not sure if the corporation itself has done any work at looking at maybe different models or ways in which it could operate under a different set of circumstances than currently exists today. That is the question I have, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, that is an ongoing issue that we wrestle with. How do we keep the politics out of trying to deliver the units, the houses and the programs that are required in communities? We haven't looked at trying to make it more arm's length. I think that's going to be very difficult at this point. But we have looked at trying to find solutions where our constituents are not running on a daily basis to the MLAs, so we are introducing more training and to our staff and in the communities. We are offering more communication so the people know what the programs are, know where the deadlines are going to be and what to expect. We are also introducing an appeals mechanism so that people that feel they were hard done by through an application or a program that they didn't qualify for or for some reason whether they felt that somebody sat on the board and didn't like them or was related to them, we could have an arm's-length setup. Those things we are coming forward with this coming year.

As to having the Housing Corporation completely independent, I don't know how that would work right now. I don't have an answer for that because there are politicians from all walks of life that contact our offices for exemptions to programs for special recognition. I think it would be very difficult. Until we can find avenues where people are satisfied that they are being heard and have an independent system or analysis of their complaints, we are going to struggle with this issue.

MR. RAMSAY: I just wanted to put that out there. I don't know if it would be a better way, but there has to be some way or avenue that the Housing Corporation could go down that would allow it to collect more in terms of arrears.

Another thing, too, while I have the floor and I won't take the full 10 minutes, but the social housing in ECE is still an issue. I just got another phone call today from someone who is in big arrears to Housing or through ECE now. The issue is with ECE. It was never an issue before. The issue, as I see it, is through ECE. Regular Members have asked time and time again, revisit that decision. There are 14 positions that the government...It was the last government that hired the 14 positions at ECE to deliver the social housing. However, it seems to me, and other Members up and down this aisle will tell you, it's just not working. We need to revisit that decision and the sooner, the better. Government's looking for suggestions and this is a suggestion that I'll throw out there. It's one that used to work in the past. Now we're spending one and a half million dollars more on something that is not working. We haven't seen the evidence from ECE that would justify what they're doing and how they're doing it. There are problems out there. I think, just a suggestion, but we've got to, you know, if we want to save one and a half million dollars...I mean, nobody wants to...I'm not sure what would happen with the 14 employees that we've hired over there at ECE but something has to be done there because of all the decisions that have been made here, that one made by the last government was a decision that ranks right up there with one of the worst ones I've seen. We have an opportunity to correct it. This government has an opportunity to correct it.

I can't speak for all the other Regular Members, but we've moved motions. I don't know what else we have to do to tell the government that housing was doing it, they were doing a good job at it and they should be allowed to continue. Take it away from ECE. Obviously, they're having some trouble and some difficulty in doing it. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I believe it's been three years now that this initiative to blend all the subsidy programs under one roof took place. We did hear the Members raise the issue. We have heard the concerns. We had recently met with ECE and we are working towards putting together an analysis or a review of how well it's working. ECE has provided me with some information that I had not seen before, so I'm reviewing that and we will be getting together to decide how we will do a review. We are anticipating it would be an independent body that we would hire to do an analysis of it. Right now, that's where we're at.

We still have a little bit of work to do between the two departments, the Housing Corporation and the department, but we anticipate we will have that process in place this year fairly quick.

MR. RAMSAY: I know the Housing Corporation is under the purview of the EDI committee and ECE is under the Social Programs committee, but to my recollection the work, the review that was supposed to be done that the Minister is talking about, between both departments, we were supposed to get that work I think it was back in February. A year ago. We still haven't got it, which would suggest to me that there are some problems there. I don't know why we haven't got it yet. I'm not on the Social Programs committee so maybe the Social Programs committee members that are here would know if that information has come forward.

The committee meetings that I have attended, I haven't seen that review. Like I said, it's a year later. I hope the work's getting done, just like the next guy, but we have to get something on the table so that the government and the Regular Members can make a decision on what to do with it. If the problem still exists, we really have to take a look at it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it's the first time that I'm committing to do a review. I've been here seven months and I was not aware that there were other commitments made. I know ECE did some work that was worked on also by the Housing Corporation, but I don't believe it's the same review that the Member is talking about. It was on this process but more how to tweak the system that's in place to make it more effective. What we're talking about is doing a complete analysis along the same lines that the Member is referring to. We'd be glad to share this information with the committee. I'm not sure where the other information went. I think it went to Social Programs.

MR. RAMSAY: I just got a note from one of the Social Programs committee members and they've got a written update from ECE suggesting there are still some problems there. I know the two reviews are different.

I just wanted to say -- and I promised I wouldn't use my 10 minutes but I'm coming close -- but the fact remains, I just want to give the Minister and the Housing Corporation some kudos. There's been a lot of good work done in the time I've been here, in the Housing Corporation. I think the management has done a good job to turn things around. We are, I believe, headed in the right direction when it comes to housing. There are some hiccups, yes, and there are some things we need to take a look at like the Social Housing Policy, but overall, Mr. Chairman, I'm quite satisfied with the management

at the Housing Corporation and the Minister's performance in that portfolio. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I appreciate the Member's remarks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is something I was going to ask later on but I can't really find a better place. I suppose this might be on the debt repayment; that might be the spot to do it. As we all know, we are dealing with a declining fund from CMHC. I'm wondering if the Housing Corporation has developed a strategy on how they're going to address the issue of the loss of O and M dollars as the loan gets paid off. Are you going to reduce the amount of public housing? Are you going to take money from capital and put it into O and M or ask this Assembly for more money to continue to administer 2,200 to 2,400 houses? Just curious if there's thought of a strategy, if there is a strategy or what's going to happen with the fact that the money is declining. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, the Member raises a very good issue. It's a real issue that we need to face right now. Our strategy has been to try to convince the federal government that they need to change their position. We're working at the FPT table. We've joined forces with other jurisdictions and we're hoping that we're going to be successful on that front. Mr. Chairman, the reality is if we're not successful, we're really going to have to rethink how we do business in the social housing area. Will we be able to convert capital? I'm not sure that's the solution. Raising rents? We are already hearing the rents are too high. The other option is, of course, to reduce our public housing stock. It's a really tough situation that we're in and we're hoping that we're going to make a convincing argument to the federal government that will allow us to continue on with social housing.

MR. BEAULIEU: For the record, I feel the best strategy is to fix the public housing units and give them away in non-market communities and sell them in market communities, by the way. I think that is a good thing. But the best solution, of course, is to get the federal government to remain in the process of continuing to fund social housing. Just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Member's opinion. My personal opinion is create a better economy where we wouldn't need as much social housing. Create a lot of jobs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We're on page 5-53, debt repayment, which is an information item, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that this is probably more of an FMB question but I'm just curious from the Housing point of view, from the Housing Minister. The debt in the department of Housing is carried on the territorial overall debt, or debt wall. I'm just wondering what work, if any work, is done from the Housing Corporation point of view to see if that debt will come off our debt wall as reportable debt that the territorial government carries. As I understand it, it's money that's being funded directly from Canada to pay for that. To me, it's an in and out and I've often wondered why we have to carry it on our debt wall. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I think as this is my second go-round as Housing Corporation Minister and I have raised it every year with the finance people of our government. The response is that we are legally obligated to recognize it in our books as a debt and we don't have a lot of room to change that.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the Finance Minister changed since that original question came forward and how much work has been done from a legal/accounting perspective to see if that is actually accurate? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure how many Finance Ministers were asked the same question, and it has been reviewed very recently and the response has not changed.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specific to debt repayment of course, what is the actual outstanding debt that Canada is picking up for us in total? As I understand it, I think it is in the range of \$80 million dollars, but I will let the Minister say it for the record, the actual debt amount. I see what we are doing as a repayment this year, but that money is funded through Canada. So if the Minister could put it on the record, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The total debt that we have on the books of the corporation is about \$66 million. The portion that is fully funded by the federal government is about \$45 million. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the detail. Has the department ever sought a secondary accounting position to find out if we should be carrying that liability directly on our books? Because it is being paid separately by another agency, such as the federal government. I mean, it would seem obvious to me that we shouldn't have to wear that liability if it is being fully funded. It was created by someone else and it is being paid off by someone else. It just seems odd that, with all due respect, our Housing Minister is just taking what our Finance Minister is saying is the truth and that is how we are proceeding. No one is sort of looking at it from a different perspective, because I don't believe that it is appropriate that it is carried on our debt in this manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that has been looked at in various manners including with the Auditor General, so we totally agree that the finance recommendation is correct.

MR. HAWKINS: My apologies to belabour the point. What was the position that the Auditor General had, and did they have correspondence to that effect and, if so, would the Minister be able to forward on a copy of that on to my office? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would have to see what kind of documents we have. The Auditor General audits our books and they feel that this is proper. The federal government will cover about \$45 million. We have the rest on our books, about \$23 million, and we can go back and see what kind of documents we have that would shed some light onto the question that the Member was raising.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Would the Minister be willing to forward something on that he is able to dig up, to my office, because I have heard from accountants in the community that they are not quite sure that this is a debt that we should be shouldering, considering it is a liability we are carrying on behalf of someone else and they are also paying. I would kind of like to take a serious look at it and to get some information to compare to some information I have been told. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we will do a little bit of digging and find out what we have in terms of documents that could shed some light on the questions that the Member is raising. Mr. Chairman, once again, it should be clear that we only carry the balance of what the federal

government is paying and what we are paying, so there is \$23 million that goes against the debt wall and the rest is covered by the feds.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We are on page 5-53, information item, debt repayment, operations expenditure summary. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving on to page 5-55. Noting the clock, committee members, I will now rise and report progress.

Thank you, Minister McLeod and thank you and your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have a report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 3-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Use of Laptop Computers and BlackBerry Devices in the Legislative Assembly, and Tabled Document 11-16(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2009 and 2010. I would like to report progress, with three motions being adopted and that Committee Report 3-16(3) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? Honourable Member from Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 20.

MR. SPEAKER: Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 20, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We will return to item 20, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mr. Abernethy in the chair. By the authority given me as Speaker by Motion 10-16(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Mr. Abernethy in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, committee. I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order, and as the first order of business, let's take a break for dinner.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are considering Tabled Document 7-16(3), Committee Report 2-16(3), Tabled Document 11-16(3), Bills 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to continue with NWT Housing Corporation as well as the Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Does committee agree that we continue with Tabled Document 11-16(3) with the Housing Corp?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We left off on page 5-55, information item, programs and district operations, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Moving along to page 5-56, also an information item, programs and district operations, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to confirm, are we still page 5-54?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We finished page 5-54 and 5-53, 5-55 and we are moving on to 5-56 now. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. Could I get agreement, Mr. Chair, to go back to page 5-54?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): The Member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to 5-55. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Are there any nays? Alright. We'll go back to 5-55. Mr. Beaulieu

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, I have a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Go ahead, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MOTION 6-16(3):
INCREASES TO INCOME THRESHOLDS
CARRIED**

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee strongly recommends that the Housing Corporation take immediate and comprehensive action to assess all housing association programs with a view to increasing the income thresholds that are used to determine client access to the various housing programs; and further, that the Housing Corporation establish reasonable income thresholds that better reflect the current state of the northern economy particularly the high cost of living in small communities and that the programs be designed to address affordability, suitability and adequacy of housing stock by encouraging self-reliance in meeting these housing needs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. A motion is on the floor and is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was not going to speak to the motion. The motion is fairly self-explanatory but just a couple of small points to make. The main issue seems to be that the Housing Corporation is able to build homes faster than they are able to find clients. So what's happening is a lot of the clientele is unable to access the homes as the current income situation stands, core need income thresholds, I should say. With the income thresholds, they are either too low on one hand or too high at the other hand. Let me see, right; too high at the bottom end and too low at the upper end. So what this motion is trying to do is to not move the window this way, so that people on the bottom are also given opportunities that are just not making enough but with the proper counselling would be able to get into these programs and people at the upper end that are just over the current income thresholds but for that reason are not able to access and are also unable to access other types of financing at the levels of subsidy that are being offered. So we recognize that the majority of these housing programs are bank funded now, privately funded, so what is happening is the income is just not sufficient enough for the individuals to go to bank financing easily and the subsidy portions are not big enough to allow that to occur. So this is indicating that we need to look at the high cost of living again and maybe open up the window a bit more at both ends and allow people into the program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on the list is Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be voting in favour of the motion. That is something that my constituency and residents of my constituency have always said, is that when they go to apply for NWT Housing Corporation programming, often they are saying they are making too much. This frustrates Nahendeh residents to no end, because the reality is that there are dual income households out there. There is a good reason for that, Mr. Chairman. It is only because they are trying to address their high cost of living and they are working hard to achieve those ends. A lot of them, too, are not only...Well, the majority of the workforce in my riding is, of course, government, but a lot of them are in the private sector. A lot of them are business owners. For them, too, the guidelines kind of discourage them from using our program.

We just had a discussion earlier with this department about the ability to recover rent and revenue from Housing Corporation clients. If we are looking for new clients, Mr. Chairman, and looking for stable revenue, then who better to approve for our programming than somebody that does have a steady income, maybe dual income? These are the people that want help and we should be helping but our current policy dictates that our community income thresholds are a certain range. I cannot believe that range is so small. I know that people are being turned away or denied. In some cases they know they make too much so they don't even bother taking an application. That frustrates me too, Mr. Chairman, because everybody is entitled to due diligence. I believe that applications should be taken.

I would like us to have a good look at it. In fact, I am expecting that this motion will pass, Mr. Chairman. I would like to see it effective April 1st. We have a new cycle of programming that is going to happen come April 1st, new people applying. Many of them are actually the same people but at the same time there are dual income families out there, and they could be single as well but they are exceeding the threshold. This gives them the ability for us to deliver our housing programs right now. That is a fact that we are building houses but nobody is qualifying for them, Mr. Chairman. This is one of the reasons; you either make too much or else you make too little. We have to expand and increase the range of the income threshold and allow more of our people to access these programs.

I think one of the frustrating things is in the communities, people walking by empty units. They have been empty for about a year and knowing that they almost qualified or else they didn't qualify

because they made too much but they are staying in overcrowded situations and their own homes. Maybe it is their children or cousins that may now be allowed to qualify, thereby increasing or lowering our frustration about overcrowded homes. That is why I will be voting in favour of this motion.

I would just like to say to the Minister and to the government that, look at implementation date of April 1, 2009. It is a policy change. It can be done. That is something we really should look at doing immediately and I sure hate to have government just take it under advisement, Mr. Chairman. That is something that is important. It needs action. I believe that we should get action on it. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next on my list is Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be supporting this motion. As I have come to be aware over the last few years of the government here, it is not unusual for the department to put houses in communities that we can't put anybody in and so these houses sit empty. It becomes a real eyesore to the community. It bothers them that they are sitting there and nobody is in there. If this adjustment by playing with the threshold we can get one more family into a safe and secure household, then I certainly think it is certainly worth looking at. It is a noble effort. Mr. Chairman, that is all I will be saying.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to focus in on the last phrase of this motion and highlight that and my support for it. I think we had a number of discussions in the House and in committee on what the opportunities are for encouraging self-reliance in housing programs and to meet housing needs. I think there really is a huge opportunity here and that can address our costs as well as our broader goals of bumping up skills development and self-esteem and so on; the things that go along with developing self-reliance and additional skills. I hope that that would be a prominent aspect of this program review.

There are a lot of people in our communities in social housing that are not employed and yet they are physically and mentally quite capable. This is an opportunity to, rather than just throw money at it, throw some innovation, some well-designed programs that capture that resource and put them to work in ways that benefit both our housing needs and our broader goals. I will be supporting the motion and appreciate the Member from Tu Nedhe for bringing this forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Question has been called. I will call upon Mr. Beaulieu to conclude debate on the motion.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I don't have a whole lot to add to it. I think the majority of what had to be said here has been said. I think this will also help the government, because allowing more people into homeownership does create a bit of a market. A better private market we have in all of our communities, the better off we all are.

As people know in the Housing Corporation, communities with markets have much lower needs, on a percentage basis, than non-market communities. Some of the communities where there is absolutely no market, the needs are very high to extremely high. If this could work towards creating more homeownership in the communities and works towards building a little bit of a market, then we will have achieved our goal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Question has already been called.

---Carried

We are on page 5-55, information item, programs and district operations, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering where we are at in the energy evaluations of the 100 homes, and if there is anything the Minister can report on what the results are to date, and if there is an estimate of what the renovation costs will be on average to get those homes up to EGH 80 standard. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we will have Mr. Anderson respond to that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, we are working through getting the information together for our Modernization and Improvement Program. We have been training our technical staff to be home energy evaluators. They have gone through the first phase of training for that. They are getting the skill sets to do a proper evaluation of the upgrades that are required. We anticipate it is probably going to be in

the range of \$30,000 to \$40,000 per unit to get them up to the EnerGuide 80 standard. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you to Mr. Anderson for those comments. Do we know how many units have been completed to date? Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: By the end of March, we will have the 100 evaluations completed by the end of this fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that response. On the adequacy of housing, has this now been built in as a criteria in the measurement of housing adequacy where it is a sort of thing in energy efficiency terms? Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: The approach that we take, whether it is our own public housing units or homeownership units, we first look at health and safety as our first priority and then we have to look at structural issues, foundations, roofing systems, things of that nature, and energy efficiency is the third part of that process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, just on the adequacy, suitability and affordability problems in our regions, I know that Nahendeh and the Sahtu have pretty high core need numbers percentage-wise. I guess what I want to ask the Minister in terms of bringing down these numbers in these two different regions under these programs and district operations, is this the goal of this corporation to look at where there are high needs? They continue to be high until we have adequate funding to build in these regions because there are very unique challenges in the regions in terms of delivery, isolation and also there are, as the Minister indicated, some land tenure issues. Is this a goal of this Minister? The numbers seem to be yet quite astonishing in Colville Lake where there is the definition of suitability, affordability and adequacy. According to your definition, this is horrible for this 76 percent. I just want to see if it is the goal of the corporation to look at these significant numbers and add some resources where it would be satisfactory to the Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, that is our goal, to reduce the need in all the different areas. The numbers the Member is referring to, the 76 percent and the core need rating was from four years ago. We have, since then, put a lot of units on the ground in the last three years. We put close to 500 units in the communities. We expect the 2009 core need rating to be significantly different.

We still will set our budgets according to the core need based on unit costs and the different construction needs in the area.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, I should have made a clarification. The numbers I am using are 2004. We had a discussion yesterday with the Minister and we look forward to the 2009 core needs report.

I also know that, through the Affordable Housing Initiative, they target Sahtu for 94 houses or units. I'm not too sure if they met that target yet. I think it is pretty close to it. I understand that there are some units that couldn't be built in Colville Lake and some of the communities because of challenges that the corporation couldn't resolve in time, so they had to make some decisions. I also understand that the increase in construction in some of our isolated communities causes some problems in terms of construction in the communities, so other units are being transferred from some agreements to other communities. That is why I am asking, because we have certain challenges in the Sahtu in terms of the ice road, the isolation, the barging.

Sometimes these packages don't come fully equipped with the right window or door or something is missing. There are other stories that I think the Minister will be aware of. That is why I am asking with these high core needs in our communities. I could be proven wrong in a couple of months by the 2009 survey, but I don't think I am not too far off in terms of our core needs. We have not come along that far. We are still along with Nahendeh to be the highest regions in terms of dollars being spent on housing as when I read the housing report that other regions seem to be receiving more dollars in terms of funding for units that are well below the core needs percentage in the Sahtu. That also contributes the number of those factors in terms of how this is spread out there. I would like to ask the Minister again, would he make a concerted effort to put dollars where there is most need under the definition of the Housing Corporation's suitability, affordability and the adequacy of homes? Would the Minister give some consideration to go the extra mile to make sure that these numbers do come down and stay down?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we do, indeed, follow the core need assessment to allocate our budget. It is a measurement that allows us to see where the actual needs are in the community and in what areas. It is difficult to tie dollars for repair or for homeownership based on percentages related to core need. For example, 76 percent of Colville has demonstrated they are in core need, but that is 25 families. Overall, we have 2,300 units

that have been identified as core need and 240 of them are in the Sahtu, so that is only 10 percent.

Mr. Chairman, we try to invest in all the different areas that need to be addressed. We use this measurement as a guide for us to try to distribute it fairly. The need is high across the North. We recognize that. We are in a situation where we have more dollars than we have had historically. We will try to make the best use of that. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Fair enough. I guess we can always say that we can interpret these numbers however we want to justify our decisions as to where we spend money. I would say that, in the areas where the core needs are down, some of the areas that have an all-weather road system are easier. It's cheaper to get materials to and from communities where there is accessibility to electricians, plumbers and carpenters and they don't have to use the barging system. I guess what I'm asking with these numbers that you have produced is how these monies are distributed with your core need. I certainly would see that in Colville Lake; 25 families. These families are fairly large in Colville Lake. They don't have the traditional two or three kids. They have a packed house, even in the community of Tulita. There are families there that have six or seven children who live in three-bedroom houses. I think we need to look at those and see where it really counts in terms of providing these houses and look at Tulita when the winter road finishes in March, the first barge season if we are lucky, if NTCL could be there by the end of June or July and we don't know what material will be, so there are lots of things to consider.

I think the Minister has indicated that they are looking at different ways they can bring in material. Sometime, Mr. Chairman, these materials, the whole package is not quite complete when they arrive in communities like Fort Good Hope. They have to wait, and when they do wait for the material, it is already fall time. So there are lots of challenges. I don't think he is a stranger to the uniqueness of building in the communities and I think it is taken into consideration that costs escalate when you have to look at these different factors.

I agree with the Minister in looking at these different challenges, but also I think his department staff needs to look at these unique challenges sometimes. I think they do. I just hope they could put a little more emphasis on what areas need to be paid a little more attention, because these houses are certainly needed in all communities, I agree with you. Some of them are needed more than others. We've got health conditions piled on that. I am running out of time, so I don't want to get into that. I want to leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I didn't actually hear a question. Does the Minister want to respond to his comments?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Member raises a lot of issues. We totally agree there is a need to look at unique situations. When we do look at the core need and we adjust for a number of varying factors including transportation, the condition of units, overcrowding, costs, we also look at the condition ratings, the waiting lists and the LHOs and we try to make our decisions accordingly. This year, probably in a couple of weeks, we will be coming back to the committee to show what the plans for this year are, with the new dollars also included. There are a number of other requests that we need to report on and we will provide all that information to committee as soon as we can.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on the list is Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sure the Minister gets this question in his travels, but I do have constituents that raise it with me, that work throughout the Northwest Territories in areas related to housing. When will the government bring back the HAP program and I wonder if the Minister can tell us if that is something that might be under consideration and/or if there is an equivalent program out there. But it certainly seems to be something that people are interested in. In particular, I think, part of the attraction for us should be the fact that, again, it helps increase the skills of the homeowners and their ability to maintain it and so on. There are a lot of good reasons to like that program and I would appreciate any perspective from the Minister on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, right now with our housing program choices, we don't have any intention of bringing the HAP program back per se. We are bringing a close cousin to this program. We haven't titled it or given it any name yet. It is probably a basic housing package or traditional housing package that would allow people to work with us and build their own home, something that would fall within the criteria of forgivable mortgage. It has been raised by a number of the Members, Mr. Yakeleya and Mr. Krutko, and also members of the Small Communities committee, so we are trying to put a design together for presentation for consideration for committee to look at and see and give us their input of what they think. It will be a very basic, very simple design and something that people with low incomes, with small families could live in at a relatively cheap cost.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good to hear and thank you for those remarks. Would that be for implementation in this coming fiscal year?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we would like to have it out for this year. That is what we are aiming for. I can't say for certain that we will. We will be bringing something forward to committee for consideration when we start looking at the other initiatives and issues including budget allocations, we will have the first chance to present it to committee for their input and feedback.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another issue that my constituents have brought forward involved in work, other people, is the issue -- and I may have brought this up last year and I don't know what has happened on it -- but some LHOs, local housing organizations that achieve energy efficiencies, for example, and thus savings, they generate reduced costs, are then given budgets that are reduced the following year and are in effect being penalized for the efficiencies that they have gained. They would enjoy the opportunity to use those efficiencies the following year and maybe generate larger savings eventually towards their reduced budget. Is the Minister familiar with this issue and would he have any perspective to offer on it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of utilities, the amount of effort that we put into modernization and improvements, and with the additional funds we will be receiving from the federal government, we will be looking to put forward a very significant program for this year. With that, we are going to see some savings, we believe, in utilities. But the way we have been running the program to date is that we keep that money in the pool for the whole Public Housing Program, because there are cases where we have to move money between one organization and another and if you end up with significant deficits in your budgets in one local housing organization, it is very difficult to have those savings moved over to a different organization. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, I can certainly understand but, of course, without dealing with it in a more effective and creative way, you are losing your motivation to be effective and efficient and achieve some of those long-term energy or cost reductions. So, maybe just as a comment, I am hoping that some more thinking goes into that so that people don't get penalized for being efficient

and lose the benefits we are hoping to accumulate. I will leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on the list is Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, the district offices that deliver these programs to our communities through the local housing authorities, they have the staff members, maintenance people. Is it something within the mandate and the plans for this government to look at ways that they could improve the efficiencies of these maintenance workers in the communities? That is probably one of my biggest complaints, is that the public housing units or the private housing units -- I know that is under a different program -- should be looked at because of the conditions they are in. The amount of workers, given the budgets that the LHOs have, the amount of hours they have per day, especially when it gets to minus 45 or minus 50 below, when the phones really start ringing and because of the location of the houses or the situation, is that something that this Minister is looking at in terms of how we improve the maintenance in our communities, especially with the elderly people? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it is certainly a challenge. The number of people on the ground doing the front-line work in terms of keeping the facilities running and responding to emergencies is always very difficult and quite expensive to run. The people we do have we always encourage to upgrade, whether it's through internal programs or external programs. We've really encouraged our staff to broaden their horizons in terms of dealing with new issues and issues that are starting to become common, such as mould issues. We're also encouraging our staff to be able to deal with the energy efficiency, as our president has indicated. We are certainly wanting our staff to be able to do more and looking at ways that we can put more people on the ground, but at this point it's quite challenging. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I know it's a real challenge in our small communities. We were trying to figure out how we can best utilize the maintenance people that are on the ground right now and also, at the same time, educate the tenants in those public or private units. It works both ways. Some things the tenants are doing that are not quite correct, but they are used to picking up the phone if something goes wrong. Usually it goes to the local housing authority and they dispatch a worker and that means pulling them off the job to go there. Sometimes it's quite hectic for them. I guess what I'm looking at is sort of like an implementation of a plan in the community with all

the regional maintenance workers that can get together and say, okay, we have this issue in this community, is it in other communities and how can we fix it.

One thing we looked at in Tulita was with the elders. There are about 47 elders who are 60 years and over. I don't know have the numbers in front of me of private homes or public homes, but there should be a dedicated person that they could use just to look after seniors only in the communities, because the maintenance workers are so busy with other public housing units. For us to give some comfort and security to the seniors, they can only call one person or that company to call to look at their furnace, frozen pipes or whatever. I think we should give that kind of safety and security for the elders.

I'm looking at these kinds of ways on how we can help with the local housing authority, otherwise we will continue to send letters, e-mails, phone the Minister in terms of how we work on these issues here. I'm looking at bringing some solutions back to the Sahtu. Maybe there are other regions that feel the same way to look at how we start making use of the dollars that we have for our maintenance workers training. Are there ways that we could farm out some of the work that would free up more time for our maintenance workers to look after needs in the community?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I think we do most of what the Member is indicating. We do have some ability for the maintenance staff to get together at the regional level to share ideas, to talk about best practices. We also really are mounting, I'm hoping, a high profile campaign to educate the general public as to what we have in terms of programs. We do have programs under the CARE heading on preventative maintenance that people can tap into and they can hire private companies or private individuals or the band can help them deliver these programs for them. We've also embarked on getting apprentices on board. We have, I believe, 12 positions, and two of them are in the Sahtu, the Member's riding. We've really tried to step it up in terms of maintenance and awareness. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I wanted to see what the Minister has in terms of the seniors maintenance program. I know this program is out there and seniors can tap into it. There are already policies and regulations set in place. Would the Minister look at having this reviewed and see if there's a possibility of having the corporation, band council, development corporation or a person in the community that they feel comfortable with will dedicate 100 percent of his time, the corporation's time, to look after the seniors who are in homes and

be sort of like their only sole client. That way, we could give some comfort to the seniors that there's an entity that's only there for them to look after some of the units. Because seniors need the extra care, the extra reassurance of their homes in terms of feeling comfortable there. I'm not too sure how the corporation would feel about this. Maybe they think they're already doing it, but when I go back to the Sahtu, there's a different reality there. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'll answer that question again, Mr. Chairman. I indicated earlier that we did this year set aside \$2,000 per community to assist some of the communities to deal with the issues challenging the seniors in terms of preventative maintenance, furnaces, water tanks, things of that nature. We have also opened up our programs so that it's more accommodating for seniors. We no longer provide a cap on the amount that they can apply for; they can apply for the whole \$90,000 that's available for repairs. Mr. Chairman, we always place the seniors and the disabled at the top of the priority list when applications come in. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Well, maybe, Mr. Chair, I'm not saying it the way that I want to say it and I know the Minister has talked about the \$2,000 per community. Is that correct?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I should correct my statement. It's \$2,000 per senior for preventative maintenance. Sorry.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Then with the amount of time that I have here, Mr. Chairman, would the Minister look at this amount of dollars per senior and direct his regional office to look at proposals from communities to say we want this contract for the seniors? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Our staff are already aware of this so they'll be accommodating to that concept.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We're on page 5-55, information item, programs and district operations, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 5-56, also an information item, programs and district operations, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 5-59, also an information item, local housing organizations, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: A couple questions on the local housing organizations in terms of the collections. Again, it's been brought up by several Members that when the LHOs were in the old system, they were pretty successful at collecting rents and when they moved into the new system under the Education, Culture and Employment, the collection percentage went down quite considerably. I'm not too sure what the trend is now in terms of the collections. I say this because with the percentage of collections that go down from the local housing authority, that has an impact on their funding in terms of a surplus or a deficit and it hurts the community. I guess I'm trying to figure out something that is hurting our local housing authority in terms of the programs they are supposed to be providing for the communities. That's a real issue for me and that's an issue for my local housing authority in the Sahtu and they brought it up as an issue they wanted me to raise with the Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, once again, the collection rate has gone back to where it was historically. We did have one bad year where it dropped down to 76 percent, but we're back up to close to what we were collecting in 2004-05, which is close to the 90 percent mark. We're actually at 87 percent.

MR. YAKELEYA: It's good news. I don't know what they've done but it seems to have been brought up. I guess historically the LHOs in my region -- and I could be wrong on this one here -- collected up to 90 percent of the collections and this still has an impact. In regard to the funding, I'll have to wait and see, I guess, for another couple of years to see where it will go but...I'll wait a couple more months to see the numbers but this is what I've been asked to say on behalf of the people in my community on this issue. They are quite concerned. The Minister has said that it's going back up again so...I'd like to ask the Minister, overall in the Northwest Territories, are all the numbers coming up, on average? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, most of the Members' communities exceed 90 percent, some are close to 100 percent. We have one community that is having some challenges and we will be working with them.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly wasn't aware of these numbers here as the Minister has indicated. These numbers that I'm going by were given to me by Housing here, so I hope that these new numbers can be shared with us.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we'd be pleased to share the numbers that we have in

terms of collection and receivables from his riding if the Member would like. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A very quick question for the Minister; on the \$39.544 million, is that the amount of money that's going from the Housing Corporation to ECE?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we'll have Mr. Anderson explain the details of the \$39 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$39 million is the full allocation to our local housing organizations. That's made up of about \$5.4 million in rent collected from the tenants. We have some money that we received from the GNWT to support apprentices. The rest of it is the ECE funds. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: So the Education, Culture and Employment is the difference between the amount of rent that's assessed to the client that's collected, like the \$5 million or whatever it is, and the maximum rent. The difference comes from ECE if the client's go down there and file their income. Is that correct? Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: The contribution, as it stands right now, from the Department of Education is about \$32.5 million of the cost of running that portfolio. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. We're on page 5-59, information item, local housing organizations, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 5-60, information item. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I'm just following the power numbers as well as the heating numbers and the water and sanitation numbers, and what I'm noticing is that water and sanitation seems to be higher than power. I mean, in the bigger picture it looks like the fuel cost is almost identical to water costs. I know it's less than a million, but when you try to compare apples to apples here in this

scenario -- no bananas or oranges this time around -- the costs seem quite significant. Do you do any auditing to find out why water costs and why power costs are so high, and certainly fuel? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the reason for that is the communities charge the NWT Housing Corporation a different rate than they do all of the other residents. We pay full, either full government rate or full commercial rate, which is considerably higher than the individuals or the private individuals that live in the community.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I've heard that before, so it's kind of nice to hear officially that it's true. Is that considered right or reasonable from the government's point of view, that we're paying a full commercial rate or the highest rate possible on things like power or water? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Member is asking my opinion whether I think it's right. All I can say is that public housing units are charged the government water rate, which is three times the actual residential rate.

MR. HAWKINS: Is that based on some type of policy and, if it is, when did that get instituted? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, just trying to figure out how long this has been going on, I think it's always been the case that the Housing Corporation units, public housing units are charged more than the residential rates. It certainly cuts into our budget and our ability to operate our units, but that's been the practice and that's what the communities are doing. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: If I'm approximately correct in that, three times the amount is how much more we're paying than the normal rate. So if our water bill is almost \$6 million, then a normal bill in this regard should -- the combined water bills, that is, when I refer to a normal water bill -- only be around \$2 million. If we're just using it as to subsidize the communities, why aren't we just funnelling this money through MACA through some sort as opposed to doing it through the back door? It seems like a flawed policy that we're inflating one side of the equation just to hide income under another process. Why isn't it revisited on that basis? It should be under MACA as a direct grant. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it is a concern and it is on our agenda to sit down with the NWT Association of Communities and also to talk to MACA about looking at some solutions. Mr.

Chairman, we know why the communities are doing it; they use the money to offset their costs, but I think the real reason is they know we get a subsidy or have been getting a subsidy from the federal government that they are also tapping into in a roundabout way.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, what type of auditing is being done on consumption? I have to tell you, I've been to different houses through public housing units and if you're only paying \$10, \$20...Well, I don't even know how much some people are paying. I know it's very low, in some cases, just a few hundred dollars to be there. Sometimes there's a disincentive to worry about consuming electricity in a reasonable manner, and perhaps on the same ticket would be the usage of fuel and water, when you don't actually have to pay the real costs. What type of work is done through the local housing authorities to encourage people to use power, heat and water in a reasonable manner or in a...I'm searching for a word here. I guess I'm trying to say in a responsible way, to ensure that the people are being as responsible as possible as opposed to heating houses with the windows open, which I've seen in a number of cases, or leaving the lights on when people leave. What is the department doing to help educate the users of our system, so they act in a responsible way, help curb costs? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, a number of questions there. We do monitor the consumption on all areas including fuel, water and power usage. We do provide for programs that encourage people to become more educated around energy use. We do try to set the standard, for example, in the area of water usage and look at the other standards that are out there from the national organizations such as Health Canada where they recognize 65 litres of water per person per day. We are well below that. The amount allocated, the average set by MACA is 90 litres per person per day and we are certainly below that. So we do try to keep on top of consumption in all the different areas.

Mr. Chairman, the incentive, especially in the area of water, most of our houses are on tank systems so if you use too much water, you are going to have to go without for a couple of days, so most people really watch close in the communities.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a relief that at least people are taking an eye to this concern and maybe it's not so bad in some areas. I am certainly glad to hear that. What does the department do when it comes to power consumption? I mean, in the context of power bills, do they take a look at those and monitor those and say you have four people in your house, how

come...Do they compare that to an average household usage somewhere in the range of 700 to 1,200 kilowatts a month? Do they do that type of analysis? The reason I am asking this is if they are funding public housing and people aren't paying a user-pay system, they are paying the actual, they end up forgetting about how important it is to use things like utilities responsibly. They have no responsibility for them at all. So I am trying to find out what is Housing doing in the area of utility bills such as power. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, all our clients are required to pay a portion of their power bill, so most clients are very diligent about how much power they use.

MR. HAWKINS: What portion do they have to pay? Can you explain that in a percentage or is that a flat rate? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it's a flat rate. Each client is required to pay six cents a kilowatt hour.

MR. HAWKINS: Does that have a ceiling amount or is it just six cents no matter how many kilowatts they use? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it's a flat rate; six cents no matter how many they use.

MR. HAWKINS: What would be the average usage per household? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I am told it's around 600 to 700 per household on the average.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I am just trying to get a sense of it. Was that a power bill cost or was that how much the person pays or was he referring to kilowatts, 600 kilowatts? If he could explain that a little further as to what the actual person pays. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Member asked about how many kilowatts on the average was used per household. It's 600 to 700 kilowatts per household on the average and each individual or each client is required to pay six cents per kilowatt.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, the issue of units I have talked about in my region. I guess you need to upgrade some of the units. Just on this issue here, power, heating; some of the units, when you go into them you can see a half an inch to a quarter inch, you can see light under the door when you close the door. One of the complaints is you still

have to pay for the power that they use to heat their houses and that. I think the Minister knows this type of issue follows in our communities. I guess those units need to be fixed up. I am going to ask the Minister about working with the tenants. They are pretty well energy conscience, but sometimes it's out of their hands because of how their units are built and they move with the freezing and thawing of the ground and it causes more difficulties. Is the Minister going to look at some of these units that need desperate repairs in terms of how to conserve energy? Have we looked at having some of these homes energy efficient, particularly the ones that have large families in their units that are overcrowded?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I am not 100 percent sure how that is relevant to the budget page we are working on, but I will go to the Minister for a response. If we could keep our questions focused on the pages we are dealing with, that would be great. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, to the Member's question, the answer is yes. The focus and the priority this time around, we are hoping, will be on upgrades to our public housing stock for energy purposes and also for suitability purposes.

Mr. Chairman, the Member also asked if we take that into consideration. We do condition rates on our units and that is factored into the rent and any time there are conditions that fall below 60 percent, we take a certain amount of money off for every percentage that it drops below that.

MR. YAKELEYA: I am on page 5-60. I hope my questions...They may seem like they are alluding page 5-60. Are we on 5-60?

---Interjection

MR. YAKELEYA: I just want to get clarification on what I heard. I want to ask again in terms of these units, over a number of years some of my residents have not seen improvements in their units. They are charged a high percentage of income off their cheques and they are getting quite frustrated because there are no improvements to some of their units. Doors are not shutting properly, windows are kept open on top because of the extreme amount of hot air that is going up to the second floor. The bottom floor is pretty cold. There are lots of things that I hope the Minister can do to rectify it. This has been ongoing. This is not something new. These complaints have come over a number of years from the same tenants hoping that they would get their house fixed. That's why I am asking these questions. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, that's the same question. I already indicated, yes, this

time around we are going to focus on repairs as a priority. The Member has indicated a lot of concern there. We acknowledge that our housing stock is getting old. Over the last while, it's been very difficult to do the required maintenance, so we have certainly a lot of deferred maintenance to tend to. I think the Member will be pleased, as we put our budgets together with this budget here and the federal budget, to see the investment in the different regions and different ridings including his.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I look forward to that, Minister. Mr. Chairman, in the proposed budget, how he is going to rectify some of these issues, the houses are old. The assessments are done on a different level to pay for these units in terms of rental units. I can point out a few in my region that they said yes, we will look at this and we will do something. That is all they did. When I look at it, nothing has been done. That is why I keep bringing it up. So the answer I am giving to the...I am letting the Minister know that his answers are old too. He is saying yes. He is saying yes. I need to see where there is going to be some significant improvements on these old spots and that is why I am bringing this up. If it wasn't an issue in my region, I wouldn't be sitting here passionately talking about it. It would have been done already but it keeps coming up. We keep getting calls. We have been talking about it and talking about it in our communities about these houses, what they can get done. I know there is a limit on the amount of budget, but the money we see sometimes are not going where it should be going. I understand that. I know he is under a lot of stress. The government is under a lot of pressure, but that is why I keep saying let's do something. I am going to leave it at that, Mr. Chairman. I am hoping that we can certainly see some difference with the housing.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I think this is my first time in front of committee as Housing Minister. I take his issues very seriously. We intend to deal with the repairs and also replacement of some units that are too old to be repaired. The difference is, Mr. Chairman, that we are intending to focus a good portion of our budget of new monies, once we get it sorted out, towards upgrade of our public housing stock. That includes repairs in his riding and replacing some of the units in his riding that cannot be repaired. I think it is going to be a breath of fresh air for all the communities across the Territories to see the amount of work that will be available and that will be done to these units.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We are on page 5-60, information item, local housing organizations, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 5-61, information item, lease commitments - infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 5-62, also an information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 5-63, information item, infrastructure acquisition plan. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just looking under Fort Simpson. We have lots of major retrofits and they are probably very needed mid-life retrofits, et cetera. But in our infrastructure acquisition plan, I don't see one new unit, so maybe if the Minister can address the reason for it. Is there an additional plan or strategy that they have in terms of adding additional units to Fort Simpson? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this budget was put together prior to the federal money being announced. We are not in a position to revise it as we have not formally entered an agreement. We are still sorting out the detail. We expect to have something in place by March 2nd, and per our financial FMB rules, we have to just present what we have dollars planned to spend. There will be a change when we bring forward the new dollars that will be spread over two years. That will be focussed on a little more than just homeownership.

Mr. Chairman, this was the reality of the day with the dollars that we had in our budget for this coming year. This will be increased, the investment, by \$25 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We are on page 5-63, information item, infrastructure acquisition plan. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarity here, this does not include the carry-over dollars from the Affordable Housing Initiative, for example for Ndilo and Dettah.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, no, it doesn't. There is still \$60 million earmarked for this coming year that is carried over.

MR. BROMLEY: Perhaps we can get that confirmed. I am wondering also on the one new unit indicated for Dettah and Ndilo, if we have a land tenure figured out for that unit. There are two questions. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I have to retract my comment. It says 60 units earmarked for this year.

---Laughter

It comes out to about \$12 million, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. And to the second part of the question, the Member asked about the one unit in Dettah, if the land issues have been dealt with. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we will ask Mr. Anderson, who has been dealing with this issue, to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: We did a little bit of follow-up since we were here yesterday. We are reasonably confident that we are going to be able to resolve the land tenure issues to get these units on the ground. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that, Mr. Chairman. Just to confirm, those 60 units, I think...Is it 34 or 38 that are scheduled for Ndilo and Dettah?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I will have to ask Mr. Anderson to see if he has that information. Mr. Chairman, I would just add that the issue with Dettah and Ndilo, the meetings continue to happen. In fact, they are meeting tonight again to see if they can resolve some of these issues with some of our Housing Corporation staff.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are looking at putting in two five-plexes into the two communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: That sounds like a reduction. My understanding was we were planning something like 34 or 38 units for Ndilo and Dettah. Is that correct? Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: No, for the Dettah and Ndilo the original allocation was 14. Some money was moved to repairs and because of the time delay and that the cost of putting housing on the ground has gone up over the years, we feel we still have enough resources to do 10. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I have nothing further.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We are on page 5-63, which is an information item, infrastructure acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 5-64, also an information item, also an infrastructure acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Page 5-65, information item, infrastructure acquisition plan. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I just have one question in terms of this Crown corporation. In terms of these units we just went through, is the Minister open to a negotiating process with the requests that come from the communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we already do some of these projects in that fashion. We would be open to that, providing all of the ingredients or all the components of doing the contract in that fashion are there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Page 5-65, information item, infrastructure acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. We'll go back to page 5-41, which is also an information item, fiscal summary information for the NWT Housing Corp. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Does committee agree that consideration for the NWT Housing Corporation is complete?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Are you going to dismiss the people?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thanks to the Minister and witnesses. If we can please get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out, that would be great.

Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I will rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 11-16(3), NWT Main Estimates 2009-2010, and would like to report progress, with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, item 23, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, February 20, 2009, at 10:00 a.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

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9. Returns to Written Questions ---Applause
10. Replies to Opening Address **MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 20, 2009, at 10:00 a.m.
11. Petitions ---ADJOURNMENT
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees The House adjourned at 7:44 p.m.
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
- Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy
 - Tabled Document 11-16(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2009-2010
 - Committee Report 2-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Matters Referred to the Committee
 - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act
 - Bill 3 International Interest in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act
 - Bill 4, Public Library Act
 - Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day