



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**16<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, February 26, 2009**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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(Frame Lake)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, February 26, 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 Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 41-16(3):  
NWT QUITLINE**

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to announce a new Tobacco Cessation Initiative in support of our Territorial Tobacco Strategy.

The most recent youth survey has shown an encouraging trend downward in the number of young people who are starting to smoke. I believe our successful programs such as the "Don't Be a Butthead" campaign and the school-based tobacco media program "Smoke Screening" are contributing to the decreasing numbers.

We are now about to put more supports in place for smokers who want to quit. Beginning on March 1, 2009, we will be launching the NWT Quitline, a toll-free service that will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is in addition to our current Tele-Care Health Line. Translation services will be available in all NWT languages. The NWT Quitline will have funding support from Health Canada for 2009-10 in the amount of \$44,000.

This initiative is also in line with federal plans for 2010, which call for a 1-800 number to be printed on all cigarette packs that would direct the caller to a cessation line in their own province or territory. When that initiative is up and running, we will be ready.

The NWT Quitline will be staffed by registered nurses or cessation counsellors who are specifically

trained to help people quit smoking. It will feature personalized call back options based on the client's needs.

A caller can receive up to five calls from a counsellor to support their own quitting process at times that are convenient for them. Phone line counselling will also be supplemented by a mail-out of support materials.

The launch of this support line is an important step towards fulfilling our cessation goals identified in the Territorial Tobacco Strategy. We expect that this additional tool will help us to continue the downward trend in our population's addiction to tobacco. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-16(3):  
LAUNCH OF BIZPAL IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise my colleagues of the launch tomorrow of BizPaL in the Northwest Territories.

This on-line service will officially be available tomorrow in Hay River and Fort Smith. It will provide entrepreneurs and prospective business owners in these two communities with one-stop access to permit and licence information. Information for all levels of government in the Northwest Territories and across Canada.

Individuals seeking to start or expand a business will need only to answer a series of questions on the type of business they want to operate. The BizPaL system will then provide the start-up information they require within seconds.

For each permit and licence identified, users will also be provided pertinent information such as fees, processing and renewal times, contacts and links to sites where they can learn more.

Future plans will see the addition of on-line application and payment capabilities to further increase efficiencies and reduce costs even more.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is reliant on the economic diversification that is provided by the small business sector. They are the backbone of our northern economy.

BizPaL will allow Northwest Territories residents to reduce paperwork and assist them in pursuing their dream of owning and operating a small business.

Hay River and Fort Smith are just the beginning of our initiative to provide this important tool to all businesses and communities in the Northwest Territories.

This work reflects our stated priority to support the development of small businesses and sustainable local economies. It is also providing a more client-focused, service-oriented approach to delivering government information to Northwest Territories residents. All of this information is easily and conveniently accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr. Speaker, this important initiative is the result of ongoing collaboration between the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and the federal Department of Industry.

I look forward to expanding the Northwest Territories BizPaL network in coming months in support of Northwest Territories business in every one of our 33 communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-16(3):  
SUMMIT ON ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** It is good to be back, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to provide Members with highlights of an important and historical event that took place earlier this week in Saskatoon. For the first time ever, Ministers of Education from across the country met as a group with the leaders of the national and regional aboriginal organizations to discuss aboriginal education. The summit hosted by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada provided an opportunity for a pan-Canadian dialogue among the participants on eliminating the achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

I wish to thank Betty Villebrun, president, Northwest Territory Metis Nation and Bill Enge, president, North Slave Metis Alliance for joining me at this conference. The Dene Nation and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation were not able to join us at this event but they have conveyed their strong interest

in this important topic. I also want to thank Mr. Robert Hawkins, Member for Yellowknife Centre, for joining me at the summit.

Aboriginal leaders from across the country spoke with great passion about the concerns and the challenges they face in their communities with respect to education. Some of the issues are more particular to situations related to education of students on reserves, for example. However, there were a number of common elements that the leaders identified in their presentations to the Ministers. These include the need to strengthen aboriginal language and culture in the schools, the need to include aboriginal history in school curriculum, the need for early childhood programs that help young people get a good start in life, and the need to provide supports to students who wish to pursue post-secondary studies.

The summit gave me an opportunity to reflect on a number of the programs and supports that we have in the Northwest Territories that support aboriginal education. We have early childhood programs that include aboriginal language nests to provide young people with an opportunity to learn their aboriginal language. We are working on curriculum for our schools to provide students with further opportunities to learn their culture and language and we are developing resource materials that support the languages. The history of our aboriginal people is also included in various curriculum including social studies and northern studies, with northern studies being a compulsory course to meet graduation requirements.

The Literacy Strategy that we recently released spans the lifespan and includes goals and objectives to improve literacy levels for all ages and also aims to support aboriginal language literacy. We have a Teacher Education Program that leads to a full degree and we also have an Aboriginal Language and Culture Instructor Program that prepares educators to teach aboriginal languages. The curricula for these programs have been reviewed and adapted to ensure aboriginal perspectives are included. We are also undertaking work to renew the Aboriginal Languages Strategy in which we will be working closely with our aboriginal language partners to enhance, revitalize and promote our nine official aboriginal languages. As Members are aware, we have also launched a new initiative to work with various partners in the Northwest Territories, including aboriginal governments, to identify initiatives that will help eliminate the education achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

Mr. Speaker, the summit participants all agreed that improving aboriginal education achievement is a responsibility for everyone and that we can address

many challenges by working closely in partnership. Participants also agreed that improvement in education for aboriginal people is not only beneficial to aboriginal people but is beneficial to Canada as a whole. Aboriginal people are the youngest and fastest growing segment of the population. With an aging workforce in many parts of the country, it is clear that aboriginal students today will be a significant portion of Canada's future workforce. Having a well-educated aboriginal workforce is of significant importance for Canada's future economic and social well-being.

In business, they say success is based on location, location, location. For education, I believe that the focus of success is the student, the student, the student. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AIR CARRIER SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about air transportation and how important these services are in our northern communities. Our true northern air carriers are Canadian North and First Air. These companies service communities outside of Yellowknife, the area of the Beaufort-Delta. We need to thank them for the commitment to providing this service into these smaller communities. They provide this service 12 months of the year during the busy seasons and the quiet times. Many Northerners do not have any alternative methods of transportation, so air services are essential services. It's our only method of transportation for a trip south of the community. Most of us can't drive down the highway or take a bus out of town like Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Simpson.

Southern companies like Air Canada have shown us that they have no interest in providing service to the rest of the communities in the Northwest Territories or outside of Yellowknife. WestJet will start a seasonal service to Yellowknife in May of this year. That extra service will have a significant impact on northern carriers because of the way they will be impacting services to communities outside of Yellowknife.

The new carriers such as Air Canada and WestJet, Mr. Speaker, are cherry picking the marketplace by providing services on only some routes. They do

not consider the damage that they can cause and the viability of the services into the communities.

Northerners in Nunakput can spend \$1,000 just to leave town on a flight south. We don't need these flights to become more expensive and less frequent, Mr. Speaker.

I hope the Minister of Transportation understands his responsibility to protect and support our northern air carriers and smaller communities. I expect the Minister of Transportation has quality activities in place to support our true northern air carriers who provide services in the small communities. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION COMMISSION SERVICE DELIVERY PRACTICES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about some issues my constituents are having in their interactions with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, in particular I would like to share some of the insights of an injured worker during his journey through the process after a permanent injury suffered over a year ago. It includes suggestions on how the WSCC could improve their service for the betterment of injured workers.

In 2006, the Workers' Compensation Board was audited and a number of recommendations from the Auditor General indicated how they could improve delivery of services to injured workers. A key one was: "The board should present its policies to workers more clearly and comprehensively specifying what is covered and what is not and explaining its rules, procedures and, most importantly, its limitations."

Although the board responded positively, two years later they are still failing to fully inform workers as to what their rights are as laid out by the Workers' Compensation Act. Indeed, after many and repeated interactions with WSCC and then finally going through the act itself, my constituent discovered a number of rights he had not been informed of. He found that while the worker's handbook does give basic information about filing a claim, it is by no means a comprehensive document. There is much room for improvement here.

Another source of problems is the recent change from a worker's advocate to a worker's advisor. Workers should have an advocate working for

them, not just someone to give them advice. As my constituent has discovered, disputing a claim can be difficult for someone who is out of work and has reduced capacity for physical labour. While the WSCC is armed with lawyers and doctors and authority, the injured person is provided with no such free access to these resources. While a hard working worker's advisor can try to help, this position does not offer legal expertise. The ultimate purpose of the WSCC is to help injured workers and we need to ensure that the people they employ are there to do just that, not to make it difficult for workers to effectively assert their right to compensation.

It is only through repeated, costly, and often difficult and fruitless meetings with WSCC that my constituent eventually learned of the full range of options available to him. More free-flowing information and a helpful approach would go a long way to address this situation. Statistics clearly etch out a record of failure on appeals, so while oft referred to, appeals are seldom a real possibility for those who, through injury on the job, no longer have the financial resources to command the expertise that would match the deep pockets of government. I call on the Minister to make the changes required to address this situation.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFORMS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICE DELIVERY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk a bit about our health care system. Across Canada and including here in the North. For some 20 years now we've been telling ourselves to do more with less, except in health care, and northern health care is no exception. As Members know, health care costs are constantly on the rise. In a recent speech by Dr. Robert Ouellet, the current president of the Canadian Medical Association, he spoke of the need for "a strategic, considered, and focused plan for improving care for patients."

The NWT health care system struggles to provide excellent and accessible service and still keep the health budget in check. Keeping our costs under control is no mean feat given our huge geographic obstacles and our small population, which is often widely spread and isolated.

There is a new model for the provision of health care under discussion which could revamp Canada's health care system and improve services. To quote from CBC Radio, February 15<sup>th</sup>, in describing this model they said, "Under this reform, all services carried out by this hospital, including

not only patient care, diagnostics, and all manner of procedures, but also teaching and research, were converted into revenue-generating activities." How is that different from what we do now? Well, now the current practice is to fund our hospitals and health authorities on a global funding model. That means that authorities receive an annual budget allotment and funds are not tied to numbers of patients or quality of service measures. It doesn't matter if the number of patients seen drops by 25 or 30 percent. The presumably unused funds are not clawed back.

Changing to patient focused funding is a fundamental shift in policy relative to the delivery of health care, but some change is necessary for our current good levels of service to survive and, where it's needed, to get better. And we must seriously consider this model.

Funding hospitals and health centres for services delivered and paying doctors by salary instead of on a fee-for-service basis has been proven to work and to work successfully. Admittedly, there are problems with this model. There are expenses associated with the transition from one model to the next, and our smallest communities may not fit into this model, but we have to at least think about it.

I look forward to discussing this idea with the Department of Health and my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the economic times we're in, I think it's more important than ever for this government to do whatever it can to stimulate our local economies in regard to capital planning and also allow for communities to have the ability to deal with high unemployment, especially when people are being laid off in the different sectors, such as mining and oil and gas. As a government, we do have to stimulate our communities and local economies.

Reviewing the capital planning from this government, the majority of the expenditures between now and 2012 will be spent primarily in the larger centres such as Yellowknife, Hay River, and Inuvik. We do have to work with our local communities to stimulate their economies in light of the capital expenditures mentioned by the government of some \$700 million over the next number of years. The majority of that is being spent in three communities.

I think it's important to realize that we have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories and we do have to find ways to stimulate those economies. The majority of the communities have work by way of seasonal employment. In most cases the work that is in our communities is based on the housing initiative that was put out where we got 500-some units on the ground. That was a good start. We now have \$50 million for housing that I think we have to find a way to make the number one priority to implement those funds while realizing that we need to stimulate our economy in our smaller communities where there are already high unemployment rates and no other options like in larger regional centres. We have to do whatever we can to find ways to generate those programs.

I, for one, fully supported the previous government's initiative to build community capacity by allowing communities to identify projects that they'd like to deliver through a formula which was base-plus funding so that communities were able to take on projects that they felt they didn't have an opportunity to put forward such as the Main Street Chipseal Program, which was there to assist communities. This program was eliminated.

I will be asking the Premier questions on this matter later, on how we're building capacity in our small communities.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACTS OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk a little bit about the proposed tax increase identified by the Minister of Finance. I agree with the increases in the so-called sin taxes. If we're going to be increasing taxes on anything, the best place to start is on luxury items as opposed to taxing essentials. The \$11.20 increase on a carton of cigarettes starting on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, is a good move. If the increase encourages people to reduce or quit smoking it will help reduce the cost of health care in the Northwest Territories, which is obviously good. For those individuals who don't quit smoking it will result in increased revenues for the GNWT which can be used to help us continue to provide the high-quality health and other services currently delivered by the GNWT.

In principle, I also agree with the 10 percent average increase on alcohol for many of the same reasons. However, I do have one little concern. Specifically, how will this increase affect the hospitality industry? I've heard from a number of owners of licensed establishments -- bars,

restaurants, hotels, et cetera -- and they have indicated that according to the NWT Liquor Act they are already required to pay a 5 percent surcharge on the purchase of liquor and that they must purchase liquor from the warehouse. Now they have to pay the additional 10 percent tax as well. In this industry, the hospitality industry, where profit margins are already tight, this 10 percent could be the difference between success and failure.

The hospitality industry employs the larger number of people in the Northwest Territories. Alcohol sales are one of the areas where they can recognize profit, which allows the employers to hire and maintain staff who pay taxes in the Northwest Territories. Yes, I mean, of course they can increase their prices, which will offset some of their potential losses, but it may also result in a direct decrease in sales not just on alcohol but for food and non-alcoholic drinks as well, as fewer people choose to go out for food or drink. This could mean that businesses will have to reduce staff numbers in order to make ends meet.

In these tight economic times, I'm worried that this change, without some consultation with the industry, could backfire and result in more people on social assistance. Although I agree with the increased sin tax, I worry that not enough consideration was taken into account regarding the effects that the liquor increases may have on the economy. I'm worried that the hospitality industry was never consulted on the options that may support the 10 percent increase while at the same time offset some of the damages it may cost to the industry itself.

At the appropriate time I will have some questions for the Minister of Finance.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY-BASED WELLNESS PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Last year has been hard on many family budgets and businesses have been hit hard. This government has made efforts to offset the effects of economic crisis. At the community level in our smaller communities the recent economic turmoil has added to a more serious community issue. I'm talking about the overall well-being of the individuals and the community.

In my riding community wellness is a concern for many residents. They feel current systems and practices are not doing a lot to solve the root causes of the problems and issues. Sure, they

address and treat symptoms, but the problems are not going away.

The communities in my riding have a high aboriginal population, residents that speak the aboriginal language and residents that continue to lead traditional lifestyles. In these communities, there is a different perspective on the outside world. Life is simpler. Their needs are simpler. It is a different way of life. The culture is significantly different than life in the larger non-aboriginal communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is a big part of the reason why current mental health and addiction treatment programs have limited success. The current system focuses on treating the physical symptoms of an individual. Healing involves a mental, emotional and spiritual well-being and it means addressing all of these issues at the same time, not individually, not one by a psychologist, another by a physician, but all at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, the community is no different when it comes to healing. A classic case is of the powerful story of Alkali Lake Indian Band in British Columbia. Mr. Speaker, under the current system, there are no resources, no programs or any formal recognition of healing the community. I think we need to look at implementing something like this.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken time and time again about the addiction and mental health problems that continue to plague Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e. I think it is time and long overdue for this government to look at other community alternatives. Community wellness is one such program we need to look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WATER CLARITY AND QUALITY ISSUES IN JEAN MARIE RIVER

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Water is one of the most critical and essential resources that we have. Here in the Northwest Territories we are fortunate to have some of my best quality of fresh water in the world. I also would like to say our government has an acceptable strategy to provide water reservoirs for our communities. Even with this abundant resource right at our doorstep and creation of large water infrastructure systems, people still have trouble accessing good quality drinking water. This is the case in Jean Marie River for residents have been dealing with discoloured, mineral-like tasting water for some time. They no longer drink the water that comes from the community reservoir. Instead they rely on bottled water at great expense and cost.

They ensure that trips for groceries to Fort Simpson include a good week's supply of purchased water. This is necessary for them.

Mr. Speaker, the water has been tested over and over again. The people of Jean Marie River have been told that the water is good. It does meet the requirements of the NWT Public Health Act and the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality, but, Mr. Speaker, they aren't drinking the water because they don't trust it. The bottom line is don't tell people their water is good if they are not drinking it. I say work with the community towards quality water that they can use daily and that they can trust. The community is looking for some innovative short-term solutions until the problem can be resolved on a permanent basis. There are a number of ways people could have access to clean tap water, like filters on their taps or trucking in water from another source. At the same time the community needs the systems from the government to identify a strategy to address their drinking water and to resolve this issue for the long term.

Mr. Speaker, the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly passed a motion on the right to water. It stated, and I quote, "Water is integral to the ecological, social, cultural and economic fabric of the health of the Northwest Territories. Water is a renewable resource that, if managed wisely, will sustain the people and the ecosystems of the NWT far into the future."

Mr. Speaker, that right extends to good quality drinking water for our residents. I urge the government to work with the community of Jean Marie River to take action to resolve this problem. Mahsi cho.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EQUITY POSITION IN MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about the Mackenzie Gas Project. I have spoken in support of this project in the past and I want to stand up here today again and reiterate my support for the project.

Mr. Speaker, I do respect the regulatory process that is at play and look forward to the report from the Joint Review Panel when it becomes available. Mr. Speaker, it may be taking too long for some, but the work needs to be completed. I believe the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline can and will be built in a manner which will minimize the impacts on the environment. It will bring much needed economic development and activity for our communities and the residents, especially in the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta.

The Mackenzie Gas Project is not without competition, Mr. Speaker. There is much pressure on the new Obama administration in Washington to find billions of dollars in support of a new Alaskan pipeline. I applaud the efforts of the federal Environment Minister, Mr. Jim Prentice, and the federal government for realizing what is at risk. The stakes are very high, Mr. Speaker. The national economy and the economy here in the Northwest Territories could certainly use the investment this \$16 billion mega-project would bring. I support Minister Bob McLeod and his Department of ITI in their efforts to support the Mackenzie Gas Project.

Anything I can do to lend support to this, I would be more than happy to do, Mr. Speaker. In the five and a half years I have been here, I have seen our government spend millions of dollars getting ready for the pipeline. In my estimation, in that time between the positions, the pipeline office and other expenses, it is close to \$50 million. This is a substantial investment. However, our government seems to be the only one without an equity stake in the pipeline. The federal government has stepped up. The details of this are a bit sketchy, but where is our government in all of these discussions, Mr. Speaker?

The pipeline will be constructed down the very heart of our Territory. Mr. Speaker, it is about time we start discussing what the returns will be to the residents here in the Northwest Territories. Like the oil companies and like the federal government are going to get, our government needs to get an equity position in this pipeline. I will have some questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT COST-CUTTING INITIATIVES IN TIMES OF DECLINING REVENUES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know we can't stop living just because there is a recession going on out there, but like so many people have had to do in their personal finances, we, as a government, need to start thinking about what we can live without. What are the things that a family or individual looks at when they know that they may be encountering a change in their household income? They look for things that can be reduced or removed from their spending that does not impact or threaten their basic needs or overall quality of life. I think it is safe to say that the level of corporate tax revenue that our government receives is likely to decrease in the next while.

I didn't really appreciate the approach to reductions that our government took or tried to take during our

last budget session. That is why we saw an unprecedented number of motions with regard to that budget. To be constructive in our approach to any potential reductions in last year's budget, Regular Members spent considerable time coming up with a list of areas where we thought savings or efficiencies could be realized. That list didn't get much attention from this government. But looking forward, Mr. Speaker, it is always a good time to look for ways of doing things smarter and doing things better, but especially in view of some of the economic news which is getting closer to home now. We need to think about these things again.

I don't support a percentage across the board approach to reductions. I don't support viewing our public service as an easy target for reductions. I believe in putting people first in any approach to looking for savings. I think we need to draw on the ideas and suggestions of our public and our public service when we are looking for areas of wasted or misplaced resources.

If I can give you a few examples, things like running off to every federal/provincial/territorial Ministers meeting regardless of the topic is something we should take a look at. I don't support spending \$3 million going to the 2010 Olympics for this small government. These are just to name a couple of things.

We cannot be seen to be spending excessively, oblivious of the realities being faced by our northern businesses and residents. Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Finance on the ongoing efforts of this government in light of potential future decreased revenues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REGIONAL APPROACH TO THE MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was reading a book. I read in the book there is a quote here that says, "Give me a lever and a place to stand and I will move the world," so said Archimedes. Mr. Speaker, I was looking at this quote here. I was wondering about this quote here. I want to talk somewhat on the Mackenzie Valley Highway construction. I was having some of the thoughts last night and certainly had been dreaming about roads last night and looking at the future where the people can give the world an opportunity to look at how we can build the Mackenzie Valley Highway from a Sahtu point of view.

I looked at the solutions in the Sahtu, and as the Member spoke about, some of our community

members are very skilled in labour in terms of operating equipment, in terms of designs and in terms of work. I want to ask the Minister later on today in terms of his creativity and his challenges and to come to our region, come to the Sahtu communities and talk about the options, the opportunities, how they can build a Mackenzie Valley Highway through a community approach, through a regional approach.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway will pass through the Sahtu. About 80 percent of the land mass will be taken in the Sahtu and the numbers that I've reviewed are from the departments of Transportation and Public Works, and certainly these have to be updated in terms of knowing what the reality of the costs are going to be today. For example, when I read the report, the Bear River Bridge was \$12 million. Now, today, this bridge is considered around \$50 to \$60 million. I would ask the Minister if he would be willing to look at other programs and services that this department has in terms of looking at community approaches in terms of long-term economic stimulus in terms of having the people gain some capacity, gain some skills and start building the Mackenzie Valley Highway as it's been duly noted by some other programs within this department such as the Tuk-Inuvik winter access road. That's a start there, but there are other areas that we certainly could look at in due time.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time now that you can get the resources and come to the Sahtu and talk to the good people in the Sahtu as to how to build a real road down the Mackenzie Valley. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PARENTING AFTER MARITAL SEPARATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sadly there are times out there when a family relationship has come to an end and a divorce is imminent. Each experience is unique to its own process that has led to the final chapter. It is my view, and by all accounts, this can be one of the saddest experiences a family can go through. Only second, of course, to the untimely death of a loved one that comes far too soon.

In the closing chapters, sometimes in these sad events what is far too often overlooked is the stress and the impacts it has on young children. They stand innocently by as the erosion of a once special relationship and a world falls apart in front of them. In their view, nothing but bitter conflict is all they now see.

Children of all ages, Mr. Speaker, have a unique talent. They can find ways that we could never conceive of. They can find ways of believing that they are the focus of the blame and they are the reason why these sad events must be happening. They have a talent to say things like did Mommy buy these shoes for me I needed or even wanted for school and now we don't have any money, so was it my fault that things are bad.

Mr. Speaker, once the spiralling fall begins, many of us know so many examples of where the destruction seems to find no end and, regardless of the objectives, collateral damage of the children often happens. Oddly enough, these campaigns are launched in the names of these children. Now, not all relationships, in fairness, and in the wake of destruction some are able to find a peaceful end without scorch and burn, but these blessings are often examples that are far too uncommon.

To no surprise, this Legislature, even with its best intentions, could not save every marriage. Today I rise to talk about this matter not because I want to talk about failed marriages, but rather I want to talk about the impacts it has on children and what can be done. In Alberta and British Columbia there is a court-ordered program called Parenting After Separation. Mr. Speaker, I brought this issue to the Department of Justice and they're certainly looking at it right now. It is a program that works with parents to help them learn and understand that their actions, their words and their behaviour has a significant impact on their children.

I don't have time to go through the statistics of what happens to children in broken homes, but, Mr. Speaker, we can come to the aid of these families when no one else will. Mr. Speaker, this program promotes positive communication. Mr. Speaker, let's bring a little hope back to families during this crisis. Mr. Speaker, we can do better. Let's help everyone through these times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome to everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

**Oral Questions****QUESTION 208-16(3):  
IMPACT OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASES  
ON THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance and are related to my Member's statement from earlier today. I talked about the hospitality industry and the increase to liquor. Were any groups from the hospitality industry engaged in discussions with the Minister's department on the proposed 10 percent increase on liquor? Specifically, did they have an official opportunity to express concerns and offer alternatives for consideration? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the course of the revenue options exercise, documents were sent out far and wide, input was solicited. As well, we had a round table last fall where there were 22 different groups that had representatives there including the tourism folks and the chamber people. We, as well, got a number of e-mails and quite a few submissions to us giving a lot of very frank opinions about taxes. I could point out to the Member that one consistent set of taxes that people seem to be willing to consider were the sin taxes.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** I know that that document did go out and I know that you did get feedback. I'm curious if you got anything specific from the hospitality industry itself. I also support the sin taxes. I think if we're going to be taxing something, the sin tax is something we should be looking at. But the hospitality industry is going to be affected. In order to ensure that the hospitality industry remains healthy and an employer of many Northerners, has the Minister of Finance considered maintaining the 10 percent increase to the taxes and modifying the Liquor Act by reducing the 5 percent surcharge on the purchase of liquor for businesses in the North? Meet the industry half-way, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** That particular offset has not been considered. I will commit to the Member that I will have the department review it to see what the cost would be and what the impact would be in terms of the relatively modest amount of revenue that we're proposing to generate. I think it was about \$7.3 or \$7.5 million. Thank you.

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

**QUESTION 209-16(3):  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk about the motion that was passed yesterday and I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation: Would the Minister initiate consultation processes with most of the affected communities or regions that will be impacted by the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway as this was done on June 8, 1998, in Norman Wells with territorial stakeholders?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see that the Member is very anxious to get going. We just passed the motion yesterday and I haven't really had a chance to digest it, Mr. Speaker. I certainly expect there's a lot of anticipation and a lot of information that people in the communities have to share. We've actually had a meeting with one of the MLAs and some people from one of the land claims areas in the NWT this morning -- quite keen to talk about the Mackenzie Valley Highway. From the government's standpoint, we haven't had a chance to really regroup since this motion has been passed and have a good discussion with my Cabinet colleagues. I would commit to doing that as soon as possible and start laying out a plan of where do we go next.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, the people in the Sahtu can just taste the Mackenzie Valley Highway, so we're anxious to get going here. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister dust off the old studies of the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway and look at initiating an advisory committee to examine the entire project, even initiating regional advisory committees to begin to initiate the possibilities on areas they can contribute to the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** That's certainly an option for us to consider. We've already had other options brought forward in terms of do we set up working groups for each portion of the highway or do we look at phased in? This is an option we will certainly bring forward to our discussions.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. We have to develop a strategy. How do we get the attention of the federal government? I'll certainly keep the Member informed of the next steps.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Certainly we have some opinions of how to get the attention of the federal government. I hope the Minister will review those opinions. I understand there's a huge document in the Department of Transportation office sometimes

referred to as the Bible of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Can the Minister review and possibly discuss with other Ministers, as he said earlier here, as to where there are existing programs that can be directed to the communities or regions to initiate the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway as we have done with the Tuk-Inuvik access road?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** That is our intention, to review all the information. We have been looking at all the different avenues that we have used to try to attract investment in this important piece of infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. We're also doing some additional work in the area of studies and baseline assessments. We want to compile all the different pieces of information, all the different areas that we've done assessments and maybe have to upgrade a few things. But we want to package it up and have a discussion with my colleagues on this side of the House and the Regular Members and standing committee. I would expect we would hear, as we are already, from different organizations and people across the Territories.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my research I've noted that pre-engineering and design to complete the Mackenzie Valley Highway was ready to go to tender package for most of the highway. I appreciate the Minister's enthusiasm to see this project off and running. I would ask the Minister if he would seriously consider the community approach in terms of building this highway as a long-term economic stimulus in our regions and working closely with his counterparts in terms of meeting with the people in the affected communities at the existing, sorry, the government's existing programs such as the Opportunities Fund as something they could look at to construct some of the access roads that would have to go into the main highway.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We have not come to any kind of firm conclusion of how we're going to approach and move forward. That is being done at this point. I think we have to get a better handle on what the cost estimates are. As the Member has stated, we have done a lot of work in the area of surveys and estimation and we have a pretty good idea on the scope of work that's required. It's all conceptual at this point. There have been some suggestions that have come forward that suggest maybe there's a better way to do it, maybe there's a different route. We'd have to look at all these things before I can make any commitments to start going into the communities and talking about potential work and contracts and business opportunities. I think that's a little bit early. We have to hear and see what the federal government's level of interest

is there. There are many things to cover before we can make any firm commitments.

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

QUESTION 210-16(3):  
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION  
COMMISSION'S SERVICE DELIVERY  
PRACTICES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. I want to preface my questions by saying that I've appreciated the assistance of this Minister in dealing with constituent issues and in learning about the operations of this institution.

My questions here attempt to deal with the bigger picture. On a case-by-case basis I realize that the Minister must be at arm's length, but I think ultimately there's an important role of oversight and tune-ups when needed. The Minister is clearly in control. Would the Minister commit to working with the commission to improve communications with their clients such that rather than rote answers, have employees sit down and explore the unique situations that individuals represent. In other words, an actual discussion in reply to their questions that gets to the layers of issues and the real meaning behind their questions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for the Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to finally get some questions on the WSCC. I was starting to feel like the Maytag repairman.

---Laughter

The question posed by the Member there, it is WSCC has listened to the recommendations made by the committee in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly into improving their work with the injured workers. They have gone a long way in trying to implement that. It's important to note that of all the claims that are filed, very few go to an appeal stage. It's for these few people that we have to sit down and iron out the details and hopefully get a better plan of communication going with the injured workers.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'd like to note that I also deal with stress through a sense of humour from time to time. So I appreciate the Minister's answer.

I believe what I will do is send the Minister a copy of my statement because he clearly missed the point.

That is, the reasons these situations arrived is because the communication is not happening. To claim that there are just a few oddballs out there is missing the point. Again, I appreciate the Minister's response. I think he did offer to try to deal with it a little more in-depth. I'd like to move on to my next question, which is, in the change from worker's advocate to worker's advisor, obviously a change in title there. What were the changes in the mandate of those positions with that change in title?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I live in one of the greatest places in the country. I have no stress. I can assure the Member of that. It's just something I always do. I don't think that I referred to anyone that we deal with as an oddball. I just want to make those points clear. Okay. The skin is just getting no thicker here so I'll go on to answer.

The worker's advisor is not in a position to give legal advice, but they are there to help the workers try to navigate their way through the workers' compensation application and appeals process.

**MR. BROMLEY:** So that infers that the worker's advocate was in a position to give legal advice as opposed to the current situation. Is that correct? And if so, I would ask why this government is taking away from the rights of an injured worker. Obviously with an injury there is reduced capacity for income and a reduced ability to go out and seek and pay for legal advice on their own. This is the situation of many of my constituents, or those that come to me with these issues. I'd like clarification on that.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The worker's advisor is a position that helps them to navigate through the whole process. I would assume that would include seeking legal advice. As to providing actual legal advice itself, I'm not sure that would have been the job of the worker's advisor. I hope that answers the Member's question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the comments from the Minister. I think at the basis here is that legal assistance is required for an appeal. The Minister has said we're doing great because there are no appeals. Well, there's no wonder there are no appeals. So what will the Minister do to help address the situation so it's not a David and Goliath situation here if the worker is indeed wanting to make an appeal and if there is a real basis for appeal, which there could be. I know in situations, for example, where there's a new injury that hasn't been classified before, there is a precedent being set for all subsequent people who have that type of injury. Here's where an appeal might serve both the client and the government, but

there's no assistance to the client. How can the Minister commit to providing that legal expertise where it really should be there?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** In the story of David and Goliath I think Goliath the giant got slain. This is something we would have to go back and have a look at. The worker's advisor would help the worker navigate through the whole process, which can be a complicated process as we all well know from the many cases that were out there. There are appeals that are happening and I don't think I meant to say there were absolutely no appeals, but there are some appeals that are happening. The worker's advisor would help the workers try to navigate their way through the whole system. I can go back and speak to WSCC and get some clarification on this and pass that on to the Members so we're both on the same page as far as this whole appeals and worker's advisors process goes.

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

QUESTION 211-16(3):  
IMPACTS OF GLOBAL RECESSION  
ON GNWT REVENUES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance. Our government is supported and funded through various sources of revenue. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he feels that in view of the global recession are any of those major sources of revenue at risk of decreasing at this time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my budget address, we anticipate there is going to be significant downward pressure on our revenues. We've all heard the news about the diamond mine layoffs, Laurelton Diamonds, the credit issues, the drying up of the exploration, the commodity market going down, the fact that we have sunsetted programs on health, that funding we have yet to negotiate an extension to, the CMHC funding is going to take another \$3 million hit next year. We already have some diminished population statistics in the works that are going to affect our formula funding. So, yes, we do anticipate our revenues are going to be squeezed significantly.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'd like to ask the Finance Minister what specific actions he is undertaking in anticipation of these lower revenues going forward. Are we just carrying on business as usual or are we burning the midnight oil trying to

make sure that we do not find ourselves in an untenable financial situation?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We're doing a number of things, recognizing pressures from a number of quarters. The issue of reducing services, protecting the service levels, trying to minimize in this time of turmoil and layoffs in other sectors, the amount of layoffs we have here, looking at the program pressures, not wanting to raise taxes, at the same time trying to offset the decreased revenues, it's going to take all our ingenuity and collective efforts to deal with that issue. I've been saying publicly and I've been saying to Members opposite already that by this fall we're going to be gathering around the table to reassess where we sit fiscally.

Yes, we are currently looking at options to control our costs. We did have the good sense collectively to unanimously agree to a budget in 2008 that helped us bring our costs somewhat under control, but those pressures have not relented and they have in fact been exacerbated by the economic downturn.

So, yes, we are looking at various other scenarios and by fall, collectively we will be gathering around the table and intend to share our quarterly variance reports with committee going forward here so we can all track the expenses of government and we're going to have to put our heads together.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'd like to ask the Minister if it's possible for our government to expend our resources in a way that continues to be a significant economic stimulus in our northern economies, but at the same time is prudent enough to keep ourselves out of financial peril, really.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I think we have to look at what we see as the role of government in this time of economic turmoil when we're in a flat out, big, ugly recession that's getting worse. The role of government to provide stability, to be an anchor during the storm here, as the economic, the private sector struggles with all the things that are going on with commodity prices and layoffs. We, like every other government, are going to be forced to look at how do we maintain programs, how do we control our costs recognizing that we may have to go into deficit as we are going to do in this budget, but not in a very controlled short-term way as we work our way through what we hope will be a two to three-year process before the private sector once again rebounds.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been my experience that I always find good

advice from people who are perhaps in the public or the public service who are seemingly very good at pointing out things that maybe we don't recognize or things that we spend money on that we don't really need to. Can the Minister think of any way to engage perhaps the public service or the public-at-large in a process that could help us to identify areas where we could reduce spending and not have a negative impact further on our economy?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** There are a number of ways we are engaging with the people of the Northwest Territories and the business sector. The Minister of ITI just had his advisory panel gather around the table. We've committed through Finance to our own roundtable in the fall to look at the budget, to look at the state of the economy and where do we go from here. We've had discussions in this House about the need for fundamental things on the ground for smaller things like the Green Teams that are forming in government to look at our own government costs. There are, I would suggest, probably tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars of savings just on the simple things that have been talked about in this House, like timers on coffee pots and having computers shut off at night instead of having thousands of computers and monitors and printers running quietly all night long. Very simple things. We are going to have to look at the whole range going forward. This budget before this House gets us through 2009-2010, but by halfway we're going to be looking at how to readjust.

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

QUESTION 212-16(3):  
AIR CARRIER SERVICES IN  
SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have for the Minister going back to my Member's statement on air transportation. How does the Minister ensure there are adequate and affordable air services in the NWT communities?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The airlines in Canada are not regulated, so we let the market decide.

**MR. JACOBSON:** What kind of support does the government provide to northern carriers which fly into small communities?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** The aircraft carriers that are recognized as northern carriers and are BIPed as such are supported by this government by

requiring most of our travel to be conducted with these airlines and not the others.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Why is this government removing counter space at the Yellowknife Airport from our northern carriers and giving them to temporary carriers like WestJet?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** This department is mandated to work with all carriers and that is what we're doing with WestJet. We're ensuring that the transition is effective and efficient as possible, without placing undue burden on other space that is required by other air carriers.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been advised that both airlines have been asked to give up their counter space. If they have leased space, then why is the department making them do this? That's not right. Both these airlines are good corporate citizens.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** If we had another option for more space we would probably not be requesting the other companies to give up space. For the most part this is counter space that is not being fully utilized or only used on interim or certain flights. We don't think it's going to be an impact. We're getting some reluctance from companies that don't feel this company should be coming in. We don't have a choice in the matter. It's a system that's not regulated in Canada and we have to find some way to accommodate them.

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

QUESTION 213-16(3):  
EQUITY POSITION IN  
MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my Member's statement I spoke of the importance the Mackenzie Gas Project will mean not just to the territorial economy here in the Northwest Territories but in fact the entire country of Canada. In January the federal Environment Minister, Jim Prentice, announced that the federal government was going to offer an undisclosed amount to the \$16.2 billion project's infrastructure and pre-construction costs, thus sharing in the risks and possible returns on that pipeline. I'd like to ask our Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment if our government knows to what extent the federal government is coming to the table on the MGP.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government, what we know we've heard through third parties. We've had discussions with Minister Prentice and he's indicated that his preference is that they let the deal arrangements be worked out and then we can go public with information.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Considering the pipeline is being built down the Mackenzie Valley and not anywhere near the Rideau Canal in Ottawa, I think it's important that our government be at the table when these type of discussions are going on, that we know exactly what the federal government is putting on the table, and it gets back to my other point I was trying to make in my Member's statement. The Government of the Northwest Territories throughout this process, even though we've invested at close to \$50 million over the time that I've been here, we don't have an equity stake in this project. If the federal government is going to come to the table, the pipeline is going to be built in our backyard. Where is our government when it comes to an equity position in this pipeline?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Certainly I share the Member's enthusiasm for our government to get involved and take equity pieces on development, because that makes us a real player. But too often we don't have a shared vision that everybody will buy into. Secondly, we don't have devolution and resource revenue sharing.

The federal government has the responsibility for oil and gas development. The federal government collects all the royalties. If we were like Newfoundland, we could legislate a percentage share of the pipeline. We could back in and collect royalties so that we could get a piece of the action. But we're not Newfoundland. We don't have devolution. We are focusing our investments on the people of the Northwest Territories so that they get training so that we can get ready for the pipeline.

**MR. RAMSAY:** The bottom line remains that these are our resources. They're located in the Northwest Territories. Once this pipeline is built the residents in the Northwest Territories are going to have to live with that piece of infrastructure in our Territory for decades to come. It would seem to me that our government has an obligation, on behalf of everybody here in the Northwest Territories, to get a seat at that table. If the federal government is throwing around all this cash, aren't we going to get anything out of the fact that that pipeline is going to be located in the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories? What price is our government going to put on that piece of infrastructure being constructed in our Territory for the future of our residents?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We have provided qualified support to the pipeline and we have always said

that we support it subject to regulatory approval. I'm not sure where the Member is getting the figure of \$50 million from, but certainly our government has been investing approximately a couple million or \$1.5 million to prepare for the pipeline. We see the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline as a basin opening project for the Northwest Territories. Once oil and gas companies can see that they explore and discover oil and gas and they can export it to get immediate returns, you'll see a dramatic increase in exploration.

Alberta, for example, drills about 27,000 wells a year. This year in the Northwest Territories we're drilling two wells. And it stops at the border. The only reason it stops at the border is there's no transmission facility for oil and gas to be exported out of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Minister on the support for the pipeline. I agree with the Minister on the economics of it and the fact that it will open up other opportunities for oil and gas development in our Territory. However, this opportunity is only going to come around once in our lifetime. It's not every day that you talk about building a \$16 billion pipeline down the heart of your Territory. I think we're missing the boat if we're not in the room with the federal government, if we are not demanding of the federal government that they give us an equity position in this pipeline, because at the end of the day it is going to be in our backyard. My final question to the Minister: What will it take for this government to get us an equity position in the Mackenzie Gas Project?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I've had the opportunity to discuss the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline with Minister Prentice on a number of occasions, and the federal government does have the responsibility for dealing with the fiscal arrangements to allow the pipeline to go ahead. Certainly he's assured us that we will be involved and we expect to be involved. The only thing that's holding us up from getting an equity piece of the pipeline is money. If we get money and recognizing that the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline is a \$16.2 billion project, APG, for example, will be getting a 10 percent share of the pipeline. So for us to say...Let's say we get a 1 percent share of the pipeline. That's \$1.6 billion. So not only do we have to pay on the expenditures side, then we would collect on the revenue side, and that's where it's good to have an equity piece. But the main issue is the availability of money.

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

QUESTION 214-16(3):  
PARENTING AFTER MARITAL SEPARATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about a parenting after separation course. It's a program offered in Alberta and Saskatchewan. I know this is not a flashy issue for most and it doesn't create a lot of controversy, and it will probably get zero attention through the media process because there's no kicking and screaming. But the fact remains about this issue is I hope it doesn't lose the chance that we have for promoting a positive relationship when parents go through a divorce to help children.

I brought the issue to the attention of the Minister of Justice and he forwarded me on to his staff members to bring the idea to them. They had heard about it. I had an excellent meeting with his staff and I think it was very productive about this. I'd like to hear from the Minister of Justice about this issue, to see if they've done any work on a possible program called Parenting After Separation to help parents communicate, learn a little bit about themselves, and learn a lot about their behaviour and the impact it has on children. What work has been done through the Department of Justice?

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly our programs within the Justice department, the Family Law Program, all have goals of reducing the separation and divorce impact on children. Specifically to the program the Member has alluded to, he did raise those questions in the House during the previous session and we did follow up as a department. I'm glad to stand up today and highlight that we're going to be offering a pilot program to deal with this particular issue. That will be slated for this fiscal year. It will be kick started. We are looking forward to that as well, and will continue to look at options on a long-term basis. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could elaborate what the pilot program will mean. Are they going to promote the program publicly? The reason this program works, Mr. Speaker, is one of the key elements...I guess I will say it this way. It is court ordered. That is through legislation. The judiciary doesn't have a choice whether they do it or not. They say, if you are going through a divorce with children, you have to take this program that teaches you how to communicate. I am just curious about how the pilot project will work, recognizing these special elements that are key to the success of this program. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, certainly this program will be on an interim basis as a pilot project. We are looking at options on a going-forward basis to make this program mandatory. In order to do that, Mr. Speaker, we need to identify the additional resources that will be required to deliver on a long-term basis. It will be once that happens, then information will certainly be available via Woodside or through our department on to the regions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the program is developed far enough along yet for this pilot project, but I am wondering if the Minister knows at this time if the project is going to be mandatory or not or is it just being set up as a voluntary basis that it will be suggested by the court. Has that step gone to that process yet to deciding whether it is mandatory or voluntary? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, the program is not up and running yet, but it will be. It is all preliminary right now. It will be part of the option of looking at it on a mandatory basis on a moving-forward basis, but not just a pilot project to deal with issues at hand. Mahsi.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** I just have one last question for clarification on the pilot project. When can we expect to see this up and running? In what type of form? Will the Minister be setting up an office, public awareness campaign? What details will be brought forward perhaps maybe through the Family Law? I'm not sure. I'm just looking for a little more detail. There are people out there that this could really help. If anything, we could be helping kids move forward in a more positive environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, this particular program, Parent Education Program, will begin before the end of this fiscal year. We will be working closely with agencies that we have in the regions and in the communities to spread the news that this particular program is available to those individuals that will need it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 215-16(3):  
COMMUNITY-BASED WELLNESS  
PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the need to formally recognize and support the concept of healing the community. I

would like to follow up my statement with questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if currently there is a program that addresses the issue of community healing? Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department does have a basket of programs and services that we provide to our residents with respect to community wellness and mental health. We do have mental health and addictions workers and community wellness workers in our communities. We do have contractual relationships with local governments in some communities to provide counselling. We do in some communities have some examples of community wellness programming. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, the whole way in which you go about healing is a very individual type of approach, but that is what my issue is. It is an approach that the government takes which is individualistic, which is good for some issues, but you can gain synergies by trying to heal the community together. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know if the Minister would look at the development and implementation of something that looks at healing the whole community where you are looking at healthy people mixed with unhealthy people to try to gain synergies and try to heal the whole community. That is what I'm after. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I do agree with the Member that we should look at all approaches and, at the end of the day, we as a government and the department and the program has to be measured by the outcome and the results, specifically to Lutselk'e and Resolution. My understanding is that we do spend about \$290,000. There is the Brighter Futures program. There is a basket of programs going on, but at the end of the day, the program has to make sense to the community. It has to be something that the community feels ownership to. So I am willing to actively work with the Member to review what we have and implement a pilot program that suits the needs of the community if that is what is necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I would like to thank the Minister for her response. It is a good commitment to look at a pilot project for the community. Would it be possible to have a small pilot project like the beginning of the community healing project for Lutselk'e and Resolution in 2009 or if not both, then at least one of the communities and maybe one the following year? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** For example, in Deh Cho, I understand that a couple of communities, Kakisa and Fort Providence, have worked out specific programming that worked in their communities, so I don't see why we couldn't do that in Lutselk'e. Of course, I have to look at what budgets we have and where we could find the money, but I am most interested in working with the Member and the community of Lutselk'e, if that is the one we start with, and work on Resolution as well, work with the community as to what kind of proposal that they want to have and what sort of needs they have. I'm not sure if we could try to fill the entire community at once, but I do agree that we should try a model or a pilot program that suits the communities. I look forward to working with the Member to advance this idea.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to thank the Minister for her response. Mr. Speaker, to switch gears a little here, I would like to ask the Minister if she is prepared to travel with me into Lutselk'e to meet with community leaders to discuss this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Yes, I understand that the department officials were there last July and met with the community leaders but I have not been able to make it to Lutselk'e as a Minister yet. I would be happy to do that as soon as we can make arrangements. I just want to say again that, in looking at what we can do, that would include looking at how we are spending the money we do now and see if we can do it better with the resources we have, because we do understand that we need to make best use of dollars that we are spending on these programs. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 216-16(3):  
CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Premier. It is in regards to the government's attempts to invest \$700 million over the next five years in the Northwest Territories on infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, as all 19 Members of this House, we all want to do what is best for our ridings, but one of the main objectives that we try to meet is have sufficient community but also provide some sort of economic stimulus to those communities to have the residents have an opportunity to be employed, take an income and, more importantly, support their

families. What is this government doing to ensure that we do have capital expenditures in 33 communities and not just three or four in the Northwest Territories?

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the budget process we are involved with and the infrastructure process that the members take part in and the departments follow quite a rigorous routine. There are quite a number of projects that get highlighted whether it is in the Housing portfolio or in the Municipal and Community Affairs where the money is transferred to communities. That is the biggest difference we have seen now from how it was done before. A lot of the capital programs for our communities flow through Municipal and Community Affairs and then transfer to communities. That has now been transferred directly to the communities for their decision making process and other areas where there is Transportation, Education, Culture and Employment, Justice and so on. Again, demand is for safety, for existing facilities and trying to catch up with those older facilities that we have and replacement before consideration for new. We try to look at all the needs across the Territory and come up with a balance. At times that is very difficult when you look at the level of services and what is on the ground. We continue to do that.

The other piece we have tried to put in place is one where we have put a number of the small community committees together to look at how we deliver services in the community. That will also produce some work for us too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, a lot of our communities are already running a deficit with the New Deal that they signed with this government. I think that was not the intention, but it was also not the intention of this government that we walk away from communities and don't give them the capital that they are allocated. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the communities don't have capacity by way of engineering, design or construction. A lot of these projects they want but yet, Mr. Speaker, like I stated in my opening statement, in Yellowknife alone they are looking at spending some \$140 million in the budget over the next five years. In Inuvik, they are looking at spending some \$140 million in regards to capital in that community. Mr. Speaker, in the riding of Fort Smith they are looking at almost \$30 million. Mr. Speaker, where is the justification that these communities also sign on to the capital agreement and get these 15 communities on this list that I can see that aren't getting any capital by way of territorial capital expenditures. Where is the

fairness ensuring that capital is distributed fairly in 33 communities?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure program has been debated in this Assembly when that budget went through the House in the fall in looking at that. To draw a comparison, for example, the Inuvik process at schools that was on the books since 1997 have finally been put on there. There are two schools delayed for a number of years and moved ahead. We have the Hay River riding over the five-year period will be \$74 million. We have the Sahtu as well. It will be \$49 million. It is spread out through the North. The problem is when we have to replace existing facilities. That became the challenge. In the past years when the government reduced its budget, it went after the capital program and put us, as Minister of Public Works, in a capital deficit where we did not replace facilities when they came due or did mid-life retrofit, and that has now added to the burden of replacing our existing infrastructure on the ground. We are trying to play catch-up to that as well as try to make new investments. There has been significant dollars that have been put into Municipal and Community Affairs' budget that transfers directly to communities now. I am told that they monitor that quite closely. I am not aware at this time that those communities are in deficits. If they are, that is something that would be reviewed by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, again, the point I am trying to make is we, as government, have to find ways to implement infrastructure into communities. Sure, you might have downloaded the responsibility to communities. This government still has a responsibility in regards to infrastructure in those communities, with pipes and water treatment plants, in regards to schools, in regards to utilidor systems or basically looking at the overall cost of health centres. Yet those are still the Government of the Northwest Territories' responsibility. It is not the municipality's responsibility. But yet none of that is making its way into this capital budget. Why is it that departments that are in charge of reviewing this budget and coming forward with their objectives are not looking at community infrastructure that needs to be replaced?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, over a timeline and the past issue would show that departments have looked at the projects that need to be replaced and many of those based on the need, the safety of the facility and what is the demand on the facility in our communities. It is something that will continue to be applied as we look through our future infrastructure programs. A budget will always tell us just how much we can advance in these areas. We will continue to do that work. As I stated earlier, the work we are doing with

Members on the small communities, the delivery of programs and services, we will also be looking at how we deliver those services in communities and hopefully provide us with needed information as to what things we can look at in trying to make sure we continue to have a balanced approach across the Territory. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, in regards to the budget process, as we just heard, the \$700 million was going to be expended over five years. Mr. Speaker, as we know, they basically squashed the time frame down to two or three years. How reasonable is it to think that the communities will be able to take advantage of this \$700 million with the time frame that has gone from five years down to two years?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, it is always a challenge to deliver on our capital program on an annual basis. History shows that that is why we changed our capital process. The communities that have the requirement of Building Canada Plan are communities that had to put in their proposals on projects that they could deal with. Those are part of the package that we, overall, sent in. They say they can deliver it and we work with them on that basis. There are a number of factors that yet still have to be considered. For example, the Housing budget, that allocation in communities, final decisions are being made on that as well as some of the Building Canada Plan future years. Final decisions have yet to be made by the federal government on that as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 217-16(3):  
WATER CLARITY AND QUALITY IN  
JEAN MARIE RIVER

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask my questions to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs just on the water quality issue that I raised with regard to Jean Marie River. I was just wondering about what the plan and strategy is and the current state of the water reservoir at Jean Marie River. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jean Marie River has agreed to be part of the band's bundled water treatment plant. They are

hoping to have construction start in 2010-11. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I think there was an existing reservoir. Did the Minister say a reconstruction and building a new reservoir? I just need some clarification there. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, it is the water treatment plant is going to be replaced. I am not quite sure at this moment, but I can get that information for the Member and find out if that includes the reservoir or not. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** It certainly does clarify it for me. On the interim, Mr. Speaker, I would like to use an image. Since our washing machine is broken over there, what are the interim steps the department can help with this community? I raised the issue that the water is discoloured. It does have a bit of an odour. Can it look at assisting the community with filters on their taps or temporary water supply? They really are driving to communities and buying water bottles and water supply for their own needs. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'll commit to the Member that I'll instruct the staff to go in there and have a look at it and do an assessment and come up with some options as to how we might be able to assist the community. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** That's something the community will certainly be looking forward to and when the staff go there, please bring water.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, it's to talk about what's the best way in the interim to provide clean potable water to the residents of Jean Marie. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the staff are already looking into the situation as to the options that can be used, and I'll follow up with them and then I will inform the Member as to where we're at with this. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 218-16(3):  
PROTECTION MEASURES FOR  
NORTHERN AIR CARRIERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, regarding my Member's statement today on transportation, why is the department making permanent carriers give up counter space to a temporary carrier when we're letting long-term

leases go? I hope they're charging a good amount for that space. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this is the same question that was asked earlier. Mr. Speaker, we have a new carrier coming on the scene in the NWT. Our mandate is to treat everybody fairly and responsibly. We have, at the Yellowknife Airport, a total of 16 counters. Not all of them are being utilized. Some of them haven't been utilized by the carriers for some time. We've had a review done on the requirements and we've decided that we need to allocate for these counter spaces to the new company that's coming in. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** I'd like to remind the Minister that both these airlines are good corporate citizens and both aboriginal owned by the IRC and the Nunasi Corporation, which is Canadian North, and First Air, the Makivik Corporation out of northern Quebec. Mr. Speaker, the money won't stay in the North, it will just go south to the southern shareholders. Why is this government not supporting northern airlines?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of challenging whether the company is credible or not. That is not my point at all. We have no protection measures and we're not in a position to incorporate any protection measures that these companies are maybe looking forward to us doing. The air carrier system in Canada is not regulated and we're obligated to provide space and we are obligated to treat them fairly. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Well, Mr. Speaker, is it fair to treat a temporary airline just as good as a permanent airline? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. You're asking the Member's opinion. I guess, Mr. McLeod, would you want to respond?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we run a very efficient and high-quality operation at the airport. We intend to treat everybody fairly. We intend to treat everybody with respect. Mr. Speaker, we don't have a lot of choices as to where we can locate a new company. We can't put them outside. We are not in a position to build an addition. We have to look at, and we have looked at, the options in front of us. We recognize there is some space available, some space that has limited use or no use. We have space that sometimes is being shared. This is our best option going forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** So the Minister is telling me just letting the southern airline come in for five months and take all the money and run and have no support for northern airlines. That's my understanding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is using editorial licence here. Mr. Speaker, we certainly recognize the situation in place of northern companies, the companies that are bit...We do support them in other ways. In terms of providing counter space, our options are very limited. We are mandated to treat everybody fairly and that is the case in this situation and it's the case when we treat any of the carriers that we work with in a fair and responsible manner. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 219-16(3):  
WELCOME CENTRE FOR IMMIGRANTS

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and it's related to a Member's statement and questions asked on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Centre for Northern Families has offered a Welcome Centre for Immigrants program for two years and it helps immigrants transition to a new country and community. The lease in the existing multi-cultural facility ends this month; actually on Sunday. In asking questions, the Minister had agreed to meet with the executive director and try and identify some possible solutions. Given that they're shutting down on Sunday, I was wondering if the Minister could please just give me a bit of an update. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, yes, we did follow through the Member's questions in the House and met with the executive director and the Member himself as well, and with my staff and tried to find some options of how we can move beyond what we're faced with. There are certain issues that we need to deal with. They are very critical issues that are before us. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we are working with different avenues. Aurora College does offer the program and their program also expires June 2009. There is a proposal being submitted that we're talking about here, settlement service supports for immigration. That delivery can certainly be...Aurora

College is open to looking at options of new delivery locations, whether it be a storefront or in a community itself. Those are the areas that we can certainly look at on a move-forward basis. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 4-16(3):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY  
CONSTRUCTION

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Can the Minister of the Department of Transportation provide the following:

1. updated financial cost estimates to construct the Mackenzie Valley Highway extension;
2. a framework for conducting the environmental scoping of the Mackenzie Valley Highway extension;
3. an options paper to analyze the various financial options for constructing the Mackenzie Valley Highway;
4. a territorial-wide strategy for engaging the federal government's Minister of Transportation and others with the intent of obtaining commitments to construct a Mackenzie Valley Highway; and finally,
5. a regional/community approach discussion paper to help initiate the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, by reviewing the GNWT's programs and meetings with officials from DIAND to examine program that can be used to contribute to the Mackenzie Valley Highway construction.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to 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. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 14-16(3):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE  
TO MARCH 2, 2009

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, March 2, 2009, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on February 26, 2009, it shall be adjourned until Monday, March 2, 2009.

And further, that any time prior to March 2, 2009, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

### Motions

MOTION 14-16(3):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE  
TO MARCH 2, 2009  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on February 26, 2009, it shall be adjourned until Monday, March 2, 2009.

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to March 2, 2009, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the

time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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; Tabled Document 11-16(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2009-2010; Tabled Document 17-16(3), Supplementary Appropriation No. 3, 2008-2009; 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; and Bill 7, An Act to amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have for consideration before us today Tabled Document 7-16(3), Tabled Document 11-16(3), Tabled Document 17-16(3), Committee Report 2-16(3), Bills 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee wishes to continue on with the consideration of the budget for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and to move on to Transportation if time permits, but I think it's the intent of the House to finish at six o'clock, recognizing the clock. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. That's consideration of Environment and Natural Resources and if we have time, Transportation prior to six o'clock. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. We'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, committee. I would like to call Committee of the

Whole back to order. Minister Miltenberger, do you have witnesses you would like to bring to the chamber?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please get you to escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger, if I could please get you to introduce your witnesses.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Gary Bohnet, the deputy minister of ENR, and Mr. Jeff Dalley, the finance director for shared services for ITI and ENR.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Yesterday when we left off we were on page 13-18, activity summary, environment, grants and contributions, contributions, \$3.910 million. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to 13-19. It is an information item, environment, active positions. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to page 13-21 which is an activity summary, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$27.097 million. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to page 13-22, activity summary, forest management, grants and contributions, grants, \$100,000, contributions, \$30,000, total grants and contributions, \$130,000. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to page 13-23, information item, forest management, active positions. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 13-25. It is activity summary for wildlife, operations expenditure summary, \$13.933 million. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 13-26, activity summary, wildlife, grants and contributions, contributions, \$278,000. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 13-27 which is an information item, active positions, wildlife. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to page 13-28, information item, lease commitments - infrastructure. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 13-29, Environment Fund. It is an information item. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 13-30 which is an information item, work performed on behalf of others. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to 13-31, also an information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to 13-32, also an information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued again. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to page 13-33, information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to 13-34. It is an information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 13-35, information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are moving along to page 13-36, information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued, total \$3.980 million. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Okay, committee. We will go back to page 13-7, which is the departmental summary for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditure summary, \$60.849 million. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Does committee agree that we have concluded the Department of Environment and Natural Resources?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree. Just for the record, yesterday we indicated that our little bags that we are handing out for recycling to replace plastic were 50 cents. They cost 50 cents, but with the logos put on they were \$1.07 per bag, just so that it is clear and on the record. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you for that update. If I can thank the witnesses for coming in today and if I can get the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort them out, that would be great. Thank you.

Since we have concluded the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the next was the Department of Transportation. Does committee agree that we move on to the Department of Transportation?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Minister McLeod, I believe you have some opening comments you would like to make.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure today to present for your review the Department of Transportation's main estimates for fiscal year 2009-2010.

We are proposing an operating budget of \$97 million for 2009-10, including amortization, to operate and maintain the territorial transportation system. This represents an increase of almost 1 percent from our 2008-2009 budget. The department continues to plan, improve and expand

highway and airport infrastructure. In 2009-10 we will deliver a capital program valued at about \$77 million. While these investments were already approved in the fall, I want to quickly highlight a few of these to provide some insight into the type of work the department will be doing across the Territory.

The approved highway system investments will help to reduce the cost of living and better connect our communities. Reconstruction on almost every highway across the NWT is underway or planned. Winter roads, connecting in the Nahendeh and Sahtu regions, will be improved to better withstand the challenges of climate change. The Tu Nedhe and Thebacha regions will be better connected through the chipsealing projects on the Fort Smith and Fort Resolution highways. The department will continue our active role in the Deh Cho Bridge project which will improve services to the North Slave region. In the Beaufort-Delta and Nunakput regions construction of the Tuktoyaktuk to Source 177 Road is well underway as is the research and engineering work to assess options for Aklavik access to gravel. The Tuktoyaktuk Gravel Access Road marks another major step towards our long-term goal of a Mackenzie Valley Highway, as does the continuing Mackenzie Valley winter road grade and bridge investments. We are currently finalizing an economic analysis of the route which we hope will strengthen the basis for movement on this priority. Substantial environmental baseline and socio-economic work is also planned between 2010 and 2012.

The improvements proposed across the air system, including runway extensions at the Fort Good Hope, Tulita and Fort McPherson airports, will help facilitate lower cost of air travel and community resupply and satisfy regulatory requirements.

These major capital projects spread across the Territory will help to provide jobs, businesses and training opportunities and stimulate the NWT economy. As you are aware, the 2009 federal budget speech promised additional infrastructure dollars to further stimulate the national economy. I will keep committee informed as the details of this funding become known.

Mr. Chairman, the volume of traffic growth generated by the North's economic activity has averaged about 7 percent per year across the system. The greater frequency of ferry crossings, more aircraft landings, higher passenger volumes and record levels of commercial vehicle traffic has been the department's major challenge over the last 10 years, especially as our infrastructure is aging. It is expected that the economic situation will curb the level of traffic growth and provide an opportunity to gain some ground on rehabilitation and maintenance efforts across the system. The

economic downturn may result in increased competition and cost decrease for capital and maintenance contracts. Lower commodity prices, including fuel and steel, may also provide an opportunity to reduce costs. The department's ability to attract and retain skilled transportation professionals, such as engineers, may be increased. These factors will help maximize the economic stimulus that infrastructure investment provides.

Mr. Chairman, the department has implemented a number of innovative changes to improve transportation services within our existing structure, staff and resources. To address the maintenance and rehabilitation challenges, operational improvements to the Highway Structures Management Program have been implemented. We can now take a more proactive approach to ensuring that rehabilitation work is properly prioritized and that structural integrity is maintained. We plan to continue expanding the use of the mobile issuing station to improve driver's licence and identification issuing in remote communities. The department has also implemented a number of operational changes to maximize limited resources, like optimizing the location of granular stockpiles to minimize travel times, and using own forces to deliver chipseal projects when regular maintenance levels allow.

The department will be continuing with major strategic infrastructure investments approved under the Reducing the Cost of Living Initiative. The department proposes to reduce the cost of living in the Tlicho by commencing the preliminary work required to connect Wekweeti to the public highway system through an annual winter road.

The safety of the travelling public is, of course, at the core of all our activities. It is the central reason for the implementation of our airport safety management system, airport emergency response plans and training facilities, Highway Reconstruction Program, ongoing improvements to the winter road network and increased commercial vehicle inspections and enforcement. We have begun preparatory work to implement improved road weather information. Improved road weather information will allow for more focussed maintenance efforts where it is required most, improved salt management and energy savings. We will also continue to focus on public safety education through the Drive Alive Transportation Safety Program. We are always mindful that safety is everyone's business.

Mr. Chairman, the department has focussed on finding innovative ways of doing business. These program and operational adjustments will enable the department to do more without spending more; an essential goal during these times of economic

restraint. The department will improve the operation and maintenance of 2,200 kilometres of all-weather road, including five ferries, 1,400 kilometres of winter road, 27 airports as well as plan, design and manage the delivery of \$77 million in infrastructure investment within our proposed budget of \$97 million.

Mr. Chairman, the 2009-10 plans will ensure the continued protection and enhancement of our over \$1 billion in transportation assets while carrying out our primary mission of providing for the safe, secure, accessible and reliable movement of people and goods. Our goal is to make our transportation system safer, more secure, more accessible and more reliable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Do you have witnesses you would like to bring into the chamber?

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Does committee agree to permit the witnesses into the Chamber?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Sergeant-at-Arms, if I could please get you to escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Thank you, Minister McLeod. If I could introduce your witnesses to the committee, that would be great.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I have with me today Mr. Russell Neudorf to my right, who is the deputy minister of Transportation; on my left, I have the assistant deputy minister, Mr. Daniel Auger.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. We will proceed to general comments from committee. Are there any general comments? First on my list is Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be reviewing the 2009-10 main estimates for the Department of Transportation. I am glad to see that highways No. 1 and No. 7 will be getting some investment dollars. Once again, it was a huge concern of the constituents and the communities that I represent -- Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River -- that are really impacted by the failures that occurred last year. I'm glad to see that we're able to work the concern into the budget and the ministry has addressed them.

The long-term initiative for Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 1, for me -- we call that the Dehcho Connection -- is to move towards eventually chipsealing that loop and it will provide many benefits to the Deh Cho region and the Northwest Territories, much like we talked about the other day how the Mackenzie Valley Highway towards Tuktoyaktuk will increase and stimulate the North. This type of investment in Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 7, I always like to see it part of the strategy that it can and will increase tourism and tourism development of our region. I cannot say it enough on behalf of our constituents that tourists and tourist operators and people with motor homes want to come up here, but word of mouth spreads very, very fast when the roads collapse and they just turn around and go the other way.

One of my constituents has always said, he has contacts in Europe and he said even those guys knew about Highway No. 7 collapsing and it impacted the way they do their business and address their tourists and the directing of tourists to Canada and the Northwest Territories. That's something that we have to be very mindful of and continue to invest those dollars into reconstructing and rebuilding those sections of our highway.

Most particularly it would be Highway No. 7. I know there were some interim measures done last year and I'm really looking forward to the type of investment that we're going to do in Fort Liard and Highway No. 7. The community is quite excited that there are additional dollars this fiscal year to address those concerns. I think the key thing here, too, is to ensure that we do have the workforce to complete the work that's done. I know in other infrastructure projects with our government that we often get challenged by enough contractors and professionals to complete the work that we have laid out for us. I'm hoping the department has a good strategy in place to spend as much of our investment dollars on our highways and get them completed during the construction season of the spring, summer and fall months.

I also spoke this week and last week about the business planning cycle and capital planning process about getting a bird's eye view cost of the Liard Bridge at Fort Simpson. I think that's something that has been put off for a while. I know there were some cost estimates from the '60s or '70s, maybe even '80s. I think I requested the Minister to provide those to me. I'll be very glad to see those. At the same time we have to do at least Class D estimates. That's going to cost and take some resources. My experience is out of a \$100,000 commitment we'll do that, but I would certainly urge the department to kind of look towards that.

As well, I'd like to commend the department for taking care of the needs of the smaller communities like Nahanni Butte and Jean Marie River. They don't have highway systems, but they have seasonal roads. We continue to invest in those. That's something the communities depend on. That's their road out of the community. The little work that we do replacing the odd culvert here and there on those access roads is a huge stimulus package for them. A culvert program of \$50,000 goes a long ways in a small community like Jean Marie River by providing income and revenue for local companies. I would continue to urge that with respect to Jean Marie River. As well as the Nahanni Butte completion of the access road there. I believe that you can do a lot of work this coming summer with regard to that.

I'd just like to maybe touch a bit on our ferry situation. Last summer the ferry being on the demand system worked out well for the benefit of constituents. They didn't feel pressured that they had to make an increased speed and make it to the ferry's schedule on an hourly basis. It really alleviated that. I've always said, I don't know if we can prove it, I always said if we could prove it, I would gladly produce some documents that showed an increase of accidents as a result of going to an hourly ferry schedule. That's something I would urge, I know there may be some pressures again this coming summer, but I would urge the department to stay away from that. There are some studies. In fact, the people who deliver fuel know that it wasn't actually saving that much fuel, which was one of the key deciding factors of that program. At the same time, for public safety and efficient transportation system, I believe that staying on the demand system is the best for the Fort Liard ferry crossing.

I'll just conclude my opening remarks with that.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the opening remarks regarding Transportation I'd just like to thank the Minister. On December 23<sup>rd</sup> we signed the MOU in Tuk for the Access Road 177 and it's under construction now. It is employing at least 40 local people in the community and it's a good stimulus to the community of Tuk and, I hope, the start of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Moving on to, again, just to thank all his staff, Mr. Neudorf and Mr. Auger. Thank you for all the work you've done making this possible. Over the years it was 13 years since my uncle Vince Steen was working on it, so it was good to finally get it in motion.

Now, in regard to our local businesses at the airports, such as Canadian North and First Air, and making sure that we facilitate our northern carriers

where we can support local and northern businesses and good corporate citizens of Yellowknife. I think Canadian North here in Yellowknife has 8,200 staff in the city. I know the flight crews fly through here steady to support the local businesses: the hotels, the taxi companies, restaurants. It's a big part of the community. So is First Air. The same capacity. I just want to make sure that we're giving I wouldn't say preferable treatment to our local carriers, but treated fairly and if they need a new kiosk, they can put it under the belt at the airport under that polar bear.

In regard to the one position in Tuk, the airport manager. I know we've talked about it last year. I put a motion forward to get it reinstated. I'll be doing the same again in regard to keeping that position. The Minister quoted a few times of the safety of everyone in regard to the airline business, especially up in the North. Making sure that everybody is properly maintained on the aprons and nobody gets hurt. Making sure the runways and lighting systems are working. In my riding our manager takes care of three or four of my airports in Nunakput. He's persistent and he does his job. I really think it should be looked at in regard to saving that position due to the oil and gas industry being able to land 737s the last two years now in Tuk. It was always good to see them in the community and an active role in making sure everything went safely and smoothly at the airport. I think the department should really take a look at that. I always say that's where all the oil and gas is. It's true. And I just really want to support my constituent. It's the only one on the budget this year that's to be cut. I am going to be bringing forward a motion in the House to get that reinstated. I hope the Minister steps up to the plate with me and makes it happen.

Overall, that's all I have to say about that.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have an issue I'd like to bring up every chance I get when we have the Department of Transportation here. It's what must be perceived, in my view, as a printing error in the Minister's opening comments, because he talks about expansion of airport systems in Fort Good Hope and Tulita and Fort McPherson, but I notice that there's no Yellowknife there. I've raised this issue a number of times and I can appreciate that it's probably a printing error and the Minister would like to correct that officially for the record and I'd certainly like to hear that. I've raised that on a number of occasions. Because he talks about 7 percent growth in some of the following subsequent paragraphs in his opening statements.

One of the things that continue to be lost on this infrastructure and that always gets overlooked is the fact that Yellowknife is an airline hub. It's just the same point as we say that Hay River is the transportation hub when it comes to trucking, and perhaps even shipping through the barging systems. But certainly Yellowknife is undeniably the hub when it comes to airlines. When we consider the over-the-top traffic and when we consider other components of that, it's one of those realizations that I certainly hope the department is putting some focus on. I would really look forward to hearing what plans the Minister has to expand that airport runway. In time most of us know, and have come to realize, that eventually of course that airport terminal will live its full life and perhaps show up on the other side of the site. But in the short term, the big focus is that runway needs to be expanded. Now is a good time -- as if there wasn't any better time -- to start that type of consideration when infrastructure money is out there, when Canada is looking for shovel-ready projects. I'm not sure how much shovel-ready study you need to do on expanding the Yellowknife Airport that few hundred feet left to open up an international traffic gateway. It would help our tourism economy and certainly our business economy. I think it would go a long way for our services here.

I typically don't have a whole ton of complaints about the Department of Transportation. That probably bodes well for its operation. Occasionally I may have something to do with the Minister, but I wouldn't necessarily go too far on that statement. I would say that the Department of Transportation does produce a good product in general, certainly, and that's typically my concern. If the Minister has any fruitful ideas on how we're going to get that extension happening, I look forward to hearing his plan. I can tell you certainly there are people in our business community who would certainly like to see that. I look forward to a good answer on how we're going to move forward on this issue.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments I have will probably be in five areas I want to speak to the Minister about.

The first area is the recent discussions we had in this House this afternoon on the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the approaches that could be discussed between the communities and this department here specific to the Sahtu region. The research that I've read and the documents I've read on the community approaches to the Mackenzie Valley Highway are quite appealing in terms of the regional economic stimulus that could be happening in the long term with this approach. I've also read in the Hill Times that the federal Minister

of Transportation and Infrastructure has \$4 billion available and that \$4 billion is there for projects that could be done in 25 months. According to the Hill Times, the Minister is willing and waiting to see how soon he can get this money out into the communities and regions and territories or provinces. I'm hoping that the Minister could take advantage of the limited time we have with this funding here as stated in the Hill Times with the federal Minister.

In the same breath I wanted to ask the Minister about these dollars that are available in Ottawa, that if there's any way that his department could push very strongly to put the proposal, I think it's ready to go -- the Bear River Bridge proposal. Because I think that Bear River Bridge might fit quite nicely within the time frame of 25 months. If that's the type of funding that can go forward. I'm not privy to the details on the requirement or criteria for the Bear River Bridge, but it's something that is being bounced back and forth. The Bear River Bridge went through all the stages to a point where the steel had to be redistributed to other projects in the Northwest Territories. I wonder if that's something the Minister could bring forward to the federal Minister and get the Bear River Bridge built for us.

The Oscar Bridge is somewhat a sore issue in the communities of Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope. It's between those two communities. The Oscar Bridge has been sitting there without any type of structural movement or any type of work done on it. It's quite a few dollars, but I think that's something the department needs to own up to and do the right thing and complete that bridge by putting the approaches onto that creek there. It's really an eyesore in terms of driving by it and I think that bridge needs to get done as soon as possible.

The airports in my community...I certainly want to thank the department and the Minister for extending Tulita and Fort Good Hope. However, with the conversations about Deline and Fort Good Hope, who have partnerships arranged with North-Wright Air, that we are looking at investing into further aircrafts that would meet the 2010 Transportation Canada rule in terms of runway length. I think that rule will come into effect in about 21 months from now. There are some other details I'm not going to get into, because correspondence has been going between this department and North-Wright and Deline. I know Fort Good Hope spoke on it, but I haven't received any type of correspondence to address their concerns. However, it's been quite an interesting exchange of correspondence as to he said, she said.

What I'm asking for is if the Minister would consider North-Wright and Deline's request in terms of seeing if Fort Good Hope and Deline can receive

an extra 1,000 feet of runway to their airports right now. This would mean a lot in terms of safety. This would mean a lot in terms of lifting restrictions. This had to be a very contentious issue and I am certainly going to start bringing it up within the life of this time we sit here.

North-Wright has invested \$1.6 million into Yellowknife's Airport here in terms of a terminal and construction. If you look at all the agencies down the Mackenzie Valley in terms of usage of government transportation facilities at the airports, I think North-Wright has one of the most leased spaces within this department. I think some very careful and serious commitments need to be discussed when we talk about airport runways in our region here.

Mr. Chair, the department has looked at winter roads and I'm very grateful that the winter road from Fort Good Hope to Colville Lake is being considered as part of the infrastructure on highway systems. I think that's something that's good, because now we know for sure that road will be somewhat safe in terms of being put into Colville Lake. The winter roads, certainly they still continue to need upgrading and safety. They need to have some improvements, cut down some hills. Certainly when I read the report on the Mackenzie Valley Highway construction I noted the number of bridges between each community. The Minister has indicated a number of times of the amount of bridges that are going in, the amount of bridges that are being worked and still some bridges that need to be completed between the communities, so I continue to support the Minister on building these much needed bridges along the winter roads.

There's an aspect here, in Fort Good Hope, that they spoke to me about last year and I want to bring this to the Minister's attention in terms of the consideration of the winter roads, if the Minister would consider putting in the winter road between Fort Good Hope to the Dempster Highway, in terms of looking at that section. It's been scoped out. It's been looked at. It's about 345 kilometres south. If you hit the Dempster Highway and you come 60 kilometres south of Inuvik. Is this something that they would consider and look at as any other projects that have been asked by us for the department to consider? That way, during the winter months at least, we can have people from Fort Good Hope, the Wells could have some connection up to Inuvik. There are family members...There are needs from the communities of Good Hope to drive up to Inuvik. There are people in the Inuvik Regional Hospital from our communities.

Mr. Chair, I want to bring these general concerns up from our region. I look forward to the Minister's response to other areas that certainly would bring

regional economic stimulus to our region and also to regions. As he spoke of how to distribute the monies across the board here and I'm asking in the Sahtu, because we have seasonal access to roads outside of our communities, that we look at some other areas that would make it cheaper to travel and bring the cost of living down in our communities. As well, we have the winter roads, or even with the extension of our runways we'd take advantage of these areas. I thank the Minister for his opening presentation.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd also like to highlight my main issue with transportation and that's, of course, the fact that transportation, not the department, but transportation is a phenomena in the Northwest Territories, and in most jurisdictions accounts for 50 to 67 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions. This is the major contributor to climate change. This department, of course, is one of the biggest recipients or experiencers of the impacts of climate change; perhaps poetically so.

I'm always looking for what the real costs are, and somehow they always seem to be buried and obscure and maybe they are difficult to identify. But I think to the extent that we can, we can perhaps make some progress on the issues in a more effective way.

I notice the reference to the winter roads connecting in the Nahendeh and Sahtu regions are going to be improved to withstand the challenges of climate change. I'm pretty sure that's true in most other regions, so I'm not sure why those were selected over North Slave, for example. I'm wondering if it's possible to know what those additional costs are, what the trend has been over the last five years or a decade and if there's any projections into the future so that there are no big surprises there, given that our models are getting more and more accurate on what's happening.

I note the volume of traffic steadily going up at 7 percent per year. I'm not aware of any efficiencies in fuel standards there and perhaps it's just because I'm not aware. I don't hear this department talking about this. Obviously, a responsible government would be one that takes this on head-on, and I think more and more they are across North America. I'd like to see this government establish meaningful fuel and mileage standards for vehicles and, increasingly, jurisdictions are doing this for aircraft. This can start in a straightforward manner, for example, by simply doing the research on what are the most fuel-efficient aircraft that meet the particular needs of a region and making sure that information is known by those who purchase aircraft and so on; of course, as well as vehicles.

I also see the reference the Minister made to the substantial environmental and baseline socio-economic work planned for 2010, 2012, and I'm wondering if he would like to give us any more details on that statement so we have some idea where things are going there. Perhaps that's something that we could envision a briefing for down the road by EDI for EDI if the Minister was open to that.

Finally, of course, I appreciate this department staying on budget and a 1 percent increase. That's good to see and it shows that there is control at the helm. Of course, infrastructure dollars are going up which means it must be a challenge to administer that effectively and so on. So far we're hoping that the Subcommittee on Infrastructure has reversed the trend, but so far the only trend we have in hand is increasing proportions of carry-over from year to year over the last four years. I'm wondering if the Minister can provide us with information, given that there's four weeks left in the fiscal year, on what the carry-over will be this year as, perhaps, an amount and a percentage that shows that we've got that trend reversed.

Those are my comments. I'll continue to ask questions in that area as we go through. Again, I appreciate the Minister's opening remarks and the chance to participate in this review. Mahsi.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few comments on the Department of Transportation. I think, for the most part, the department is juggling a bunch of different things and doing a good job at the task that they have at hand. I've been happy with the Yellowknife bypass road moving forward and thank the Minister and his staff for all the work that they put into seeing that road finally look like it's going to be constructed. I think that will be a big boost for the city and for the region. Also, in the area of public safety, I think having another access in and out of the capital city will be good. Redirecting some of that truck traffic on that route will also be good down into the Kam Lake Industrial Park. I'm happy with that.

One of the things I'm following closely is the Deh Cho Bridge, obviously. In the Minister's opening remarks the only mention of it was it will improve service in the North Slave region. I know that it will. Obviously, a bridge across the Mackenzie River is going to improve service because there's not going to be a period where the ice road and the ferry are unavailable and people will be able to go across that river at any time of the year. So that's good from that standpoint. But the question I have -- and the last government was never able to really answer it -- is if you're charging tolls on all the

trucks coming across the bridge, how is it going to lessen the cost of living in the North Slave region? Not just the North Slave region but all the goods that are transported across that bridge and end up in Yellowknife and are flown to outlying communities. If there's a tariff or a toll on those goods crossing the river, that's going to be passed on to the consumers not just in Yellowknife but all the other communities that the goods are flown into. It causes me a great deal of concern.

Also, I had some questions for the Minister last week in regard to what our financial exposure is as a government going forward. They're behind schedule there and I'm just hoping that we're not at risk for any further money. I also want to find out exactly what it's going to cost us for the collection and administration of the tolls and when that's going to be coming forward. Also, the bridge itself, if there are...I know we can't get into specific cases, but if the government is named in any suits, I'd be interested in knowing that as well.

Aside from that, I'm quite happy with the department and will have some questions as we go through the detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't speak long. I generally think the Department of Transportation is doing a good job. They oversee quite a number of areas. One area that I am concerned about is their procurement policies. I know the Minister is aware of this instance, but where the department underestimated the cost of work, they went out to tender, the three contractors bid. Anyways, I've already stated this in the House. Then to go back out to tender, basically only changing the date by which the project needs to be completed, is very unfair.

I'm also very concerned about the fair distribution of work. We're heading into an economically difficult time and in the South Slave there are numerous contractors. There surely must be a way to ensure that we are not allowing some businesses to fail who have invested a lot of money in overhead, equipment, property, by the policies of this government going to things such as negotiated contracts where certain businesses in communities are precluded, where it's a large project. On smaller projects, I can see there being a lot of merit in going to a community and negotiating a contract, but when we're talking in the millions of dollars for a contract, to negotiate a contract of that size, eliminating the possibility of participation from other businesses that have, like I said, men, employees and equipment on the ground, I think is insensitive in a time like this.

Generally, I have found the Minister very responsive to those kinds of concerns, but I can't say that always for...Well, concerns that have been brought forward have been met with a rather strange response from senior staff, kind of to the effect of well, if you...If constituents talk to their MLAs about it, well, then that's the end of the discussion with the department about it. I find that stance and that demeanor very, very odd. I don't see it in any other department. I don't like it. I think that people in the North are used to going to their MLAs about just about anything they want and we're here to serve the public. That is not a correct attitude to have. People should always feel at liberty to talk to their MLAs about things. This is, seriously, the only department where I have met with that kind of resistance at the senior management level. I hope the Minister can do something about that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I don't have anybody else on the list for general remarks, so I will go to Minister McLeod for a response.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Many issues raised very interesting comments and some of these issues, of course, are going to be discussed further in our budget.

I do want to quickly respond to a number of things that were raised today. First of all, the comments made by Mr. Menicoche regarding Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 1. We certainly agree; most of our roads across the Territories need to be considered for reconstruction. Most of our highways are at their mid-life cycle and need to have some significant investment. Mr. Chairman, I also have to point that we have to recognize that there was an inability for some time within our government to attack some of these deferred maintenance issues and deferred reconstruction projects that we are now trying to play catch-up on. We are investing significant money in Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 7. In the long term our plans are to chipseal it at some point but, of course, priority has to be right now to have safe, reliable highways that our residents and our tourism traffic can drive on and be quite comfortable.

We also recognize that there is going to be capacity challenges in the communities as we move forward trying to do the many projects that are on our drawing board to try and accelerate the Building Canada Fund. Mr. Chairman, I have to point out the fact that we haven't totally been at the point where we are in a position to agree to the two-year acceleration or disagree. That is still being debated and we are awaiting the outcome of that. We are quite interested to hear what would be the next steps in terms of investment if we're going to agree to accelerate everything under a two-year plan.

We are, and have been quite up front in trying to have a working number for all the bridges across the Territories. There are five major bridges that will probably need to be done at some point. They're not in our capital plan at this point and that includes the Liard River Bridge. We do have a working number and we try to keep that fairly current but we have to recognize that these are based on conceptual design and fairly early estimates and working estimates. I'm glad Mr. Menicoche is happy that the changing of the ferry systems to on-demand rather than schedule is working for his communities.

Mr. Jacobson has indicated that he's pleased with the outcome of accelerating or the proposed acceleration of the Tuk highway. There are still some approvals that are required to move this forward. We have some money in the supp that has to be dealt with and we'd need approval to ensure that this continues. I would certainly agree with the Member; I think we would all share the enthusiasm to see this as a long-term investment for the start of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

We recognize the Member has raised today in the House and again tonight that there is quite a concern from the aircraft carriers that have contacted him about being able to operate in this environment where we are seeing companies move in. Mr. Chairman, the industry designed for very little market disruption abilities from us as a government, especially as a Minister. I would probably be in a very potentially libellous situation if I did take any kind of protection measures. I am trying to be very careful so we don't end up as a government with legal challenges from the industry.

The airport manager is a position that has been look at for some time now in the community of Tuktoyaktuk. It is part of our sponsor reductions, but it was also recognized that traffic volumes have been decreasing. It is an area and the position that can be covered off by the person in Inuvik and handle all the different issues that are of need in that area. I also want to state that, as and when and if things pick up, this would be a position also that would be reconsidered for re-instatement, but at this point it is really difficult to make a case to continue this position.

Mr. Hawkins raised and pointed out that we had potentially a printing problem, Mr. Chairman. There is really no typo in this document. The need for airport expansion has been brought to the table many times by this Member and has been working really hard to make a case that there is a lot of potential to increase in the Yellowknife Airport. We are looking at a \$20 million-plus project to do that if that was going to be the case. We really don't have it anywhere in our capital budget and can't really see it as part of our foreseeable capital investments

until we can identify a source of revenue. That includes additional dollars to provide O and M to maintain this facility. The study that ITI did looked at accommodating the desire from the community and from the MLA to attract lower flights and large aircrafts to increase and stimulate the tourism economy. Mr. Chairman, that still could be accommodated as was mentioned in this study. There was a desire to do what they call a double drop, which is basically to land a large aircraft in Yellowknife, but in order to leave when they did leave the community, they would have to use two smaller planes to connect back in Edmonton. That is an issue. I think that is going to be ongoing as we try to find ways to accommodate the many needs. This is one of them. Mr. Yakeleya has raised once again the options and the desire to see some discussion move forward. Mr. Chairman, we are regrouping, trying to package up and discuss with our colleagues and that will include the standing committee at some point to see where we could go with this.

Mr. Chairman, we have recognized that the Mackenzie Valley Highway would be a project that would be an economic stimulus. Yes, of course, but there would be a lot of preparatory work in the event that the federal government did agree to backstop it. We have probably several years of permitting that would need to take place at a fairly high cost. There has been, as the Member mentioned, \$4 billion in economic stimulus mentioned in the budget. Our understanding, and although it hasn't been finalized yet, it is going to be based on a per capita allocation. If that is a reality, our per capita amount would probably not be much more than \$5 million. We can't build a whole lot of Mackenzie Valley Highway with that. The Members pointed out that the Bear River Bridge is ready to go. We agree. We need money to be able to move any further on that and we would need committee and Members in this House to support it.

Mr. Chairman, we are working on the Oscar Bridge. The engineering for that project is being done right now. We would expect, all things considered, that we would be able to start on the realignment next year.

The communities of Fort Good Hope and Tulita have been approved in the communities that will have their airport runways extended to 4,000 feet. There is still a desire from both Fort Good Hope and Tulita along with Deline that we look at extending it further. We had agreed with one of the communities to sit down and talk about some of the actual technical requirements that really never transpired. We need to be able to look at that before we can come back to this House for further dollars. It will be probably \$2 million-plus just to look at the actual physical capital investment. It would be more than that. We would have to add the

operation and maintenance on top of that. We are quite reluctant and we have indicated to all the communities that going past 4,000 feet is a new standard. It has new additional requirements that are involved. I would want to make sure we are all on the same page while we discuss this and consider this and look at maybe being creative or look at ways. I am not sure there is an answer there but, at this point, it is not in our budget. We need to be convinced that there is a way to do it.

The winter road, of course, is still a work in progress. We continue to invest on the grade improvements, the bridge approaches. I think this year we have in this budget \$20 million for investment in the Mackenzie Valley Highway in the Sahtu region. We do not have and will not have plans right now, Mr. Chairman, to look at the extension. It is actually the first time I am hearing it, that we consider extending a winter road to the Dempster and it is not in our budget. We would anticipate it is probably \$2,000 a kilometre to invest in this stretch of winter road. I think it would be very difficult to put a business case together. It is a 300-kilometre stretch. We would need more than \$600,000 to do that.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Bromley raised a number of issues. Sorry, Mr. Chairman, you raised a number of issues.

---Laughter

A number of these things are issues that we have been working on, have been discussing at the national level regarding targets for some of the new vehicles, some of the new planes or the type of planes that can be used. The federal government, I know, has been working with the auto industry and the carriers to discuss that. I would have to get a better understanding of that with our officials to see where it is at. Certainly I can commit to coming back to committee to have further discussion on that. I am very much interested to look at how we can do things and share that information of what we are doing on greenhouse gas reduction. I really appreciate the comments made by Mr. Bromley for us to stay on budget. As we move forward and traffic volumes increase and costs of doing business increases, it is a difficult target to meet. Our carry-overs have gone down, but I guess I should qualify that and state that it has gone down because we have introduced a negative supp, so it is really not a fair picture. I do want to offer and take up the offer to make a presentation on any of the initiatives and issues that committee would like to see.

Mr. Ramsay has raised a Yellowknife bypass road. The project is on track. We have awarded the contract and we should have that piece of infrastructure in service in the next couple of years.

Mr. Chairman, the Member also raised the issue of the Deh Cho Bridge. The Deh Cho Bridge is, as I indicated in the House, behind schedule. All the parties are working to bring it back on target. There are a number of things that need to be done before the temporary bridge is pulled out and all the piers have been poured and it is the pier vents that we need to be in place. It is going to be a challenge if we don't have them before the ice bridge goes out or before we have to take the temporary bridge out. It is causing some stress. There is some concern between some contractors and the contractor. Still, we have a guaranteed maximum price, so unless things really go wrong, that's within the realms of that. We have to remember, we still are the guarantor of this project so we do have the ultimate liability at the end.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ramsay also asked about how this lessens the cost of living. Mr. Chairman, the idea behind the bridge was to see how we can remove the bottleneck that prevents year-round access from the Yellowknife, Behchoko, Fort Providence communities and mines through to the South. Right now, the trucking industry and all the residents have to wait twice a year; in the fall when the ice is forming and in the spring when the ice is breaking up and we've had long waits. It's not every year, but some years we've had 30, 40 hours' waiting time. Those costs are incorporated in the freight costs right now. Right in the times when the ferry is not running, the freight is brought across by chopper. Those are passed on to us. So even the rolling in the toll, at the time it was going to be considered a cost-savings. Now the price has gone up considerably since then and I am not sure if we've done another additional study to see what it is right at this new price level, but that's probably something we could look at. We are also anticipating the cost of incorporating a toll collection system at around \$300,000. That's what we had budgeted for and this has not been designed as of yet.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Hay River South raised the procurement policy and it was raised as a question to the Premier during question period. There has been some concern. It's been raised by both MLAs from Hay River who are quite concerned that a contract went out for a gravel haul and it was significantly higher than what we had budgeted. We did look at the ability to negotiate, Mr. Chairman, the difference between what the tender price comes in and what our budget is, and there is really little ability to negotiate down to what we can afford and it's not something that we embark on. In this case, it was quite a bit higher. We did consider then to cancel the project and we did cancel the project and decided to retender based on a different season, a different time of the year. That's allowable under the rules, Mr. Chairman. We are

anticipating that because it will be a summer haul versus a winter haul, that we will have a better response and better price.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly recognize also the other issue that was raised by the Member regarding negotiated contracts. We have to be very careful to ensure that we have balanced investment in all the areas of the Northwest Territories. Some areas are more, there is more desire to have negotiated contracts than others. Mr. Chairman, there are land claims agreements that we try to follow. We have MOUs that are part or are supporting the land claim documents, in some cases, that we try to abide by. We also have interim measures agreements that we have to also accommodate, and a lot of times these projects are right on the doorstep of an aboriginal community, small community or right in their traditional lands.

Mr. Chairman, there is also the reality at some points within our system when we go for permitting, we are also directed by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Review Board to negotiate or ensure that there is significant benefit to the communities.

So I certainly agree and I am trying, along with our staff and our government, to be very mindful that we follow and support the balance investment in the Territories. Also, that's the same as we move forward. We try very hard to balance or present our budget where it's looking at all areas of the Northwest Territories. But, Mr. Chairman, there are occasions where need comes first. There are times when our road collapses or unexpected challenges come forward, so we really have to fast track some of those, but we are always trying to be mindful that we need to invest in all the different areas.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I agree, surprises are coming down the pipe. Good to be prepared. I think that completes general comments. Sorry, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One area I forgot to raise in my opening comments was about two years ago I raised the issue of updating our licence plates. The issue has sort of fallen off the table and disappeared. I didn't know if the Minister could comment on it. I don't have anything else other than that issue. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, of course, we took the request very seriously.

---Laughter

We are working on it. We hoped to have something to present to committee for their review after we have everything worked out for this licence plate

design and I think it will probably be in the next month or two.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Does that conclude general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one question to the Minister. In his presentation to us, on page one of four, I think it's the fourth line, bottom page here, it talks about "The Tuktoyaktuk gravel access road marks another major step towards our long-term goal of a Mackenzie Valley Highway."

Mr. Chair, the Minister has indicated on numerous occasions as to projects that are contributing to eventually a Mackenzie Valley Highway. The bridge work, the upgrades, the access road here and I wanted to...Blackwater Bridge has been looked at and hopefully the Bear River Bridge does get some attention. In light of these specific projects that are going towards the safety of our winter roads and all-season roads, can the Minister consider a heading - it doesn't have to be any dollars -- going forward on his Transportation budget. Can the Minister put a heading on the Mackenzie Valley Highway with the heading "Tuk access road, Blackwater Bridge, Bear River Bridge upgrades"? Can that be considered?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the goal from our government and the direction and support of the motion we passed yesterday and the many strategies we've worked on from the longest time has been to incorporate a road, the Mackenzie Valley Road. When we say Mackenzie Valley Road, we are talking all the way from the Liard River Bridge right to Tuktoyaktuk. It incorporates all the different parts and components of it. We are hoping this investment in the Tuk gravel access road will attract attention from the federal government and maybe encourage them to spend more money on that. We are also doing the same thing in the Sahtu and other areas on the road upgrades and the bridge enhancements in the new bridges. So when we refer to the Mackenzie Valley Road, we mean all the infrastructure, all the bridges that are required at Liard River, Ndulee, Bear River and all the other different stream crossings, the smaller ones, all the way to Tuktoyaktuk.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I understand what the Minister is saying. I guess the one question I do have for the Minister, if he would consider in future in terms of going forward on the budgets, maybe next year or the year after, hopefully it would be sooner, that he

would have a specific heading. You don't even have to put dollars beside it, but you could have a specific heading that says Mackenzie Valley Highway. Then he could list his projects there. Right now it seems to be all over the place, so that is something I am asking if he would consider. He has given me his round-about way as to all of these projects that are going forward, all the highways in the North that are being looked at as the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I am asking to put them together under one item here, and put projects here that is what I am asking for.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think it was requested before that we be more specific in our investments. If the Member and the committee agree, we could take all the different capital projects under Mackenzie Valley and lump them under one, but I am sure we would be requested to provide the breakout. But certainly we could accommodate that if that is the desire. Right now we have it in three different areas.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I know we are looking at three different areas, but if you can accommodate it to put it down as the Mackenzie Valley Highway, then I certainly would be interested in looking at that, of course with the other Members. I certainly welcome what the Minister is saying and certainly that would satisfy my question here, so I thank the Minister for being open and flexible to my questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I believe that concludes general remarks unless there is anything further. I am not seeing any. Does committee agree that this concludes general remarks?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Does committee agree that we go on to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** We are going to defer page 11-7, department summary, until we have completed the detail. We will start on page 11-8, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-9, information item, revenue summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-10, active position summary. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just going to ask a standard question. Could the Minister please provide us with a breakdown of the

number of aboriginal, the number of non-aboriginal, the number of women in management and disabled employees within the department? A paper copy of that is fine later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. We heard the request coming to other departments so we got ready. We will be glad to hand it out.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Nothing further, Mr. Abernethy? Committee, we are on page 11-10, active position summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, committee. Agreed on 11-10. Moving on to page 11-13. Haven't we agreed? I thought we agreed. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving on to activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to find out what amount is spent on the activity described as environment under corporate services and what proportion that is of the corporate services budget. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we will have Mr. Neudorf respond to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Mr. Neudorf.

**MR. NEUDORF:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Within corporate services we have a planning, policy and environment division, that is 12 people in that division and we have two full-time environmental people. We also, with all of our project delivery, there is a big environmental component that each of those projects would have to go through, so there would be various people in our airports division that deliver projects and our highways division that deliver projects that would be involved with the environmental review.

There is also a portion of the environmental review that would be allocated for studies, when those are required. There is about \$300,000 that is allocated to planning-type of studies and environmental studies would fit within that range. It would depend on the issues coming forward. Final point underneath the Building Canada Plan, we have some money dedicated, 1 percent of Building

Canada Plan funding, that is dedicated to research and development and the main focus there is on climate change research and development, so that would be \$1.8 million spread over seven fiscal years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I heard of the \$8.43 million, \$300,000 is for environmental studies, plus two PYs, is that correct?

**MR. NEUDORF:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct and I also mentioned that we have folks involved with obtaining environmental permits related to projects that are within our airports and highways divisions, the project deliveries staff. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also heard there was \$1.8 million and about \$250,000 per year for climate change research on highways and I would guess that that starts this year and I am wondering what research is planned for this year. Perhaps if you are thinking a year or two ahead, we can get some indication there, too. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We do have a schedule of areas that we are going to be doing research through this money that is coming forward from the Building Canada Fund. One of the projects that we are looking at is some of the review that is being done by the Aklavik Gravel Source Working Group. We have other projects that we are proposing, Highway No. 3 vulnerability assessment, airport runway embankment and sub-grade soil classification and monitoring, and we are also looking at some climate change research and development roundtables. This would be a series of one and two-day workshops to talk about permafrost, winter roads, marine operations and it would be fairly broad based and held at different times. Those are some of the things that we have identified so far, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It sounds like sort of a rah-rah-get-together and perhaps some education components, but I am wondering...It seems clear that some real research is needed, based on what I have heard from the deputy minister and certainly people driving the Mackenzie Highway out of Yellowknife. Is there a plan to get to some real research to figure out how to reduce our costs and how to better build highways? I would think there might be accelerated interest if we are actually contemplating a Mackenzie Highway in the near future, for example,

to ensure that it is going to save us in the long run there, huge potential for unnecessary costs and alternately for savings. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I would need to see what the definition of "real research" is by Mr. Bromley's standards. Mr. Chairman, there is a number of areas that we need to do additional research. We have identified, he has asked us what is on our list of to do, that is what I provided him. There are a lot of other areas that need to be looked at and that is still something that we are putting together. It does look into the areas that we anticipate and are agreeing that we need to assess the impacts of climate change in the area of transportation, so those are still areas we are developing and we will be pleased to share that once we have all of that identified. Mr. Chairman, I am quite reluctant to start providing information that hasn't been firmed up yet.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister's comments. I am just trying to bring some focus to what I see as an opportunity here. Perhaps I have a more academic view of what research is, and if so, I apologize. I view what he described as information gathering; whereas, research, I would view as perhaps a more, finding new knowledge and perhaps an experimental approach to finding new ways that work as we encounter new problems. I probably had that in the back of my mind, so just for his clarification, that is what I was referring to. I think obviously we do need some new ways of doing things for these new issues that are on our plate. So anyway, I will leave it at that for now. Thanks for those comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. No question, more of a comment. Page 11-13. Hold on. Did Minister McLeod want to make a comment to that?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I certainly recognize that there is desire to look at the issues around climate change and adaptation. Mr. Chairman, we intend to work with the other departments and also the Climate Change Committee to come forward with a better coordinated approach rather than us taking the limited dollars we have investing it in an area that might not be appreciated by some Members. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro. But before we go to Ms. Bisaro, I would like to recognize Hudson and McKinley Hawkins in the gallery, children of our colleague Mr. Hawkins. Next on my list, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question and I have asked this question

before in the House, but I would like to know from the Minister whether or not there is any significant news in regards to a P3 policy for the government. It sort of affects transportation, what with the bridge and all. I know that it may not necessarily be just his department that is involved, but if he has any information for us, that would be very much appreciated. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, we are part of the working group. We have people that are sitting on the committee that is working towards this policy. It is being headed up by FMB and my understanding is that the policy is fairly close to being released. I can't give a firm date on when it will be actually released, but I can say it will be released soon.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that response. That is good news, glad to hear it. I guess I would like to then next know that if when the policy is done, it will be reviewed with standing committee before it goes public. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I would think this is better answered by the Finance Minister, but I think the answer that I can give is yes.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, and I appreciate the Minister's position. I guess I would have to understand if he is overruled by the Finance Minister, but we will leave it at that. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to follow up with the Finance Minister as soon as I can get his attention and provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a few years ago, and oddly enough it was while the present Transportation Minister was known as the former Transportation Minister, so this must be at least four years or maybe even five years since I wrote this letter, but I wrote the Department of Transportation a letter of concern that there was snow on the back of vehicles, you couldn't see taillights. If I remember correctly, it may have even covered back windscreens as well as covered licence plates and that would be a road hazard. I recall that the Minister wrote back suggesting that that was a good suggestion and it needed to be pulled into our Transportation legislation and updated. I am just wondering, has that initiative fallen off the table? From the looks of where I am sitting, perhaps it may have. I am just

wondering if the Minister recalls that letter or if any of the staff recall that letter and have they had any progress on that initiative, because this is your policy and planning area. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a request that was made some time ago and I am pleased to report that we are just about ready to bring it forward. Mr. Chairman, we expect to have a discussion at Cabinet level over the next couple of days on some of the regulation changes in that act. That includes the request from the Member and it has been incorporated and will be presented to this House, I believe, before the end of this session for first and second readings.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'll just say I am overwhelmed by how many yeses and agreeables are coming from this Minister. So I will thank him for that and I look forward to that update. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I didn't hear a question, more of a comment. We are on page 11-13, activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$8.430 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Agreed. Moving along, we are on page 11-14, which is an information item, corporate services, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Agreed. Moving along, we are on page 11-17, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$29 million. Mr. Jacobson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 7-16(3):  
JAMES GRUBEN REGIONAL AIRPORT  
MANAGER  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to read a motion. I move that the committee strongly recommends that the government take concrete action to reverse the decision to eliminate the James Gruben Regional Airport manager position and that the government identify the funds necessary to immediately reinstate the position under the Department of Transportation, under airports activity. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. A motion is on the floor. A motion is being distributed.

Thank you, committee. The motion has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the opening statements that I said earlier this afternoon, I really think this is a position that is a safety concern for myself and the betterment of the Tuktoyaktuk Airport. Having a regional manager there in the community, he does not only take care of the one airport in Tuktoyaktuk, he takes care of the other three in my riding, four in total. I really think that, like I said, this individual goes above and beyond his duties in regard to doing his job to the best of his ability and I really think this wouldn't be good to cut because, as the Minister said earlier, the position will be looked at again, and just stating that won't ever come back to the community. Just speaking to that, I just thank my colleagues for voting with me on this motion. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

We're on page 11-17, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$29 million. Any questions? Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, the question I have on the airports here, I've been forced by a number of residents in Deline and they are saying through airports maintenance that they're certainly looking forward to a community airport snow blower. There would be other avenues as to how they can get one in the community. Over the years, there has been an increase in terms of aircraft usage. It's been one community that's certainly seen some increase in the traffic, especially in the wintertime, and they have to juggle the grader usage with the hamlet. They were looking to see if they could possibly ask this department here, through the various means, to see if they can get a snow blower for the community. I know it's in the books somewhere but I don't know if it's quick enough for them to get a community snow blower. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we were not aware that there was a concern with the snow blower in Deline. It's the first time we're hearing the request. We certainly can take a look at it. We do assessments on our equipment. It is a capital item. We can commit to the Member that we'll have an assessment done on the snow blower

and if it is in need of replacement, then we'll put it in the capital process.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I don't know what to say. It chokes me up here.

---Laughter

Mr. Chair, this issue is being brought to my attention, like I say, and I'm very surprised that the department hasn't filtered its way up to hear from the community. I do appreciate the Minister's response.

I want to say, also, with the issue of airports in our small communities, there have been a number of incidents where vehicles have been parked. I know it's at the owner's risk when they park vehicles in these small communities when they have to travel for a week, a couple of days to the other centres for meetings. Some of the larger centres have some type of security system; however, in the small communities, sometimes these passengers leave their vehicles in the area at the terminal and sometimes there is vandalism that happens over the weekend. It happened several times in this community here, in Deline. I know that the department is not responsible for passengers leaving their vehicles overnight at the airport. Is there any way that the department can work with other agencies to see if there's any type of security or advise the passengers when they leave their vehicles at the airport? In other airports in the Sahtu, the vehicles are pretty well safe there. I think just a couple times I got inquires as to vehicles being left at the airport. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, this is not an issue that's restricted to the smaller communities. We have larger centres in all our communities that are experiencing problems with vandalism on vehicles and theft, even in the private parking lots of some of the companies, the air carriers. It's really not an area that we are going to step up and assume liability on. It's posted very visibly that it's park at your own risk. We certainly can encourage the RCMP or the bylaw to do increased patrols. I would suggest that the owners of the vehicles also do the same so that the vehicle can be monitored. It's a difficult area and we don't have the resources to provide security guards or security at all our airports.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I certainly agree with the Minister in terms of maybe I was somewhat narrow-minded on it happening only in small communities. I do agree with the Minister that this happens at all airports no matter how well your security systems are, if there is any type of security system. I do look forward to seeing if the Minister can work with the hamlets or the communities in terms of having an extra drive-by at the airports to make sure that

some of the vehicles are there. Sometimes it's very difficult because you don't have the resources to have a 24/7 type of security system, but if there's any way that the department can work with the communities and work with the hamlets, the bylaw officers or the RCMP to look at this and also make the passengers aware that when leave their vehicles at the airport that there's a big sign that says park at your own risk and have some safety measures be put in place that they are well aware of.

One issue that certainly requires other agencies to ensure that the vehicles at the airports are respected in terms of those who have to park their vehicles for some reason at the airport, I appreciate the Minister's comments. I guess it has to be through the safety at the airports to see if there are other ways that they could make it a safe place where passengers can at least park their vehicles for a night or two without worrying that it's going to be damaged when they come back to their community.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We will continue to monitor to see if we can do anything different to enhance security at our airports.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions with regard to some of the activities that the department has planned for '09-10 relative to airports. The business plan indicated that there's going to be an investigation of alternative Yellowknife Airport governance models. I wonder if I could get an explanation from the Minister as to where that project is going. I guess, basically, the rationale, who's driving it and what kind of involvement does the City of Yellowknife have in this particular project. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This was an initiative that was looked at as part of the budget reductions. It's still on the drawing board. We have, within our department, been doing some work in the area of airport authorities. There has been some contact with the city and as we move forward, we will be pleased to share that with committee.

**MS. BISARO:** There was quite a bit of work two or three years ago, well, probably longer than that, about an airport authority and my recollection is that it wasn't very positive. Would the Minister advise whether or not that previous work is being considered as they go forward? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. We have and are using the initial work that was done several years ago and we've also done a number of new things that we have been working on and putting together that we'll be adding to it. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I guess I'll accept it at face value. I guess I'd like to just caution that anything as we go forward, certainly the City of Yellowknife needs to be involved and certainly City of Yellowknife businesses need to be involved. It's something that's going to impact largely on this community and I just caution the Minister to make sure that we involve more people rather than less as this project goes forward.

I have another question with regard to another project which the department has outlined for '09-10 and that has to do with airport commercial land development. Can I ask whether or not the department, since business plans were done, is this still on the horizon for the department? Are they still looking at airport commercial land development at the Yellowknife Airport? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** On the first question regarding the airport authority, again, we're quite early in the development of anything that's going to be presented publicly and we will certainly commit to making sure committee is aware of where we're at as we move forward. We totally agree that the City of Yellowknife will be a player and needs to be a part of it. The air carriers and the different companies in the air industry will certainly play a role also.

As to the commercial development, we're always looking at commercial development. I'll have Mr. Neudorf talk to any of the specifics of recent developments, if there's any. Thank you.

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

**MR. NEUDORF:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have commercial development challenges at three different airports: the Yellowknife Airport, Norman Wells and Inuvik. Those are the three airports where we've got the most demand and it's also where we are constrained for space. We had been working on, are working on a strategy to address those, perhaps coming up with the model where the increased revenue, the least revenue that we could get out of commercial development would pay for our up front development costs to cover that. That's being worked on in-house. That is tied somewhat to the Yellowknife Airport authority, the previous discussion we had, because obviously those two would need to be related.

The final point, the Yellowknife bypass road, one of the reasons we're interested in that is because it provides access to the west side of the airport, which is where the future expansion of the commercial development at Yellowknife Airport will occur. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** I need to express a concern that's been expressed to Yellowknife Members by the City of Yellowknife about commercial development on airport lands. The airport lands are within the municipal boundaries of the city and there is a concern on the part of the city that developments that are undertaken by the government on airport lands has an impact on other businesses within the city in terms of revenue, and quite often taxes or tax rates on airport lands are not the same as they are within the city and it creates difficulties for the city. Having said that, is the department in discussion on these particular developments with the city? My understanding is that you are, but I don't know that you're necessarily agreeing so I'd like to hear government's side of it. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We try to work very closely with the city. It's been recognized some years ago that the city has raised the concern that approvals for development on airport land is within the municipality, but at the same time the authority lies with the Minister to make those decisions. We have made the commitment that we will work together with the city to ensure that we're all working in harmony for the most part.

Mr. Chairman, the taxes on airport lands is collected by the city for the improvements and I think the whole amount of this tax goes to them.

**MS. BISARO:** It's not so much whether or not the city gets the taxes but whether or not the tax amount is the same as what it would be for a business that is not on airport land. I think that's more their concern.

Has the department, in their discussions with the city, been talking about writing and/or signing a memorandum of understanding relative to commercial development on airport lands? Thank you

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** The city collects the taxes on the development. We pay a grant-in-lieu to the city for the airport lands. There are no services, I don't believe, from the city to these lands, so they are making money on the lands.

**MS. BISARO:** I'll repeat the question. In the conversations that the department has had with the city, have there been discussions about signing a memorandum of understanding with the city in terms of how commercial development will occur on airport lands within the municipal boundaries of the City of Yellowknife? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. We have, as I indicated a number of times, where we agreed how we'd work together and we would consider signing an agreement on the commercial development.

**MS. BISARO:** Okay. I was given to understand that there was a memorandum that was being discussed. Is that the case or not? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just checking with my staff here, but there has been some discussion historically on an agreement. There is no formal agreement at this point, but that's what we're working towards.

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

**MR. MENICOICHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With regard to airports, just a couple issues that I'd like to raise at this point. The first is, of course, the Trout Lake Airport. I continue to highlight the importance of that project in the next capital planning project or else the next round of the budgeting cycle. That's something that's critical to the traffic and movement of people and freight in our region. It's only by the grace of God that landing in crosswinds for the last 10, 15 years that there hasn't been an incident.

Aside from that, Mr. Chair, I want to capitalize on the Minister's good mood and ask for some infrastructure which is like...There's only a small item that I've been asking for and that's runway lights in Jean Marie and Nahanni Butte. I think last time we had this discussion, I think I raised it in the House, and I said repair the runway lights in Nahanni Butte. I just have to correct myself. There actually are no runway lights in Nahanni Butte and that's something I believe should happen. It's manageable. I know that in the Sahtu that they had some runway lights installed, as well in the Tlicho Territory. Over time I've been getting lots of "no" answers, but at the same time they're doing it in other communities in the regions. I just want to point out that it is something that I've been consistent with, and the communities have been consistent with in raising with me and raising with the Ministers as they travel through my riding there, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to get the Minister's assessment of this need for my communities. Well, actually, I know his assessment, but what I'd like to see is a commitment that at least they'll look at it.

That's something that's a priority for myself. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the Trout Lake Airport relocation is something that's on the drawing board. It's something that is being discussed for consideration for Building Canada acceleration projects. That's something that will come before committee, hopefully fairly quick, and a decision can be made on the future of this project.

Mr. Chairman, the runway lights is an issue that is an ongoing challenge. We have a number of communities that have runway lights. That is the system similar to what is in Nahanni Butte. The other communities are managing for the most part to operate them in a safe manner and operate them in a way that is not damaging them.

Mr. Chairman, we have to recognize if a community is listed on the aircraft carrier's itinerary that has indication that it has airport lights and they don't work, it really can be cause for some concern especially for our dark environment in the North here.

Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of communities that have really been struggling to have lights. We replaced them a number of times. They are fairly costly. They could cost anywhere up to \$300,000 only to have them damaged again. It is terrible. It is not like going to Wal-Mart to go and buy new Christmas lights. These are very costly.

I have asked my staff to see what we can do to ensure that we have communities that know how to handle and look after the lights and incorporate proper operating maintenance practices that don't damage them. Apparently a number of these things have been tried. Certainly I don't want to rule out putting new lights back into the communities, but I need to be able to convince Members of this House, I am sure, that they are going to stay there and we are not going to be back trying to replace them in a year, because that is the history on them. I would be glad and I would be happy to let the Member know that I am willing to talk to the community leaders and see if there are any solutions there. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I thank the Minister for that answer. I just want, well, it's not so much a question, but just to reiterate that I will continue to raise the issue. The communities will continue to raise the issue with me as well. I will continue to follow up with the Minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. There is no real question. It is more of a comment. Next on my list is Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been speaking with a number of aviation companies located at the YZF. One of the concerns that they have had goes back to a loan that was given out of the Opportunities Fund. The government didn't do any market disruption analysis or anything, but there are aviation companies in the Northwest Territories, specifically here in Yellowknife, that are going to be in some difficult times with the downturn in the economy. One of the aviation companies was telling me that their lease at the Yellowknife Airport went up 50 percent. It is a tough one to explain to them how their lease would go up 50 percent one month, and then the next month they hear of a \$34 million loan going out to another aviation company to help them out. Does the department have any compassion or any heart when it comes to companies that are going to find themselves in some tough predicaments out at the Yellowknife Airport and paying increased lease rates? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we are assessing all our fees and all our leases at the airports and trying to bring them in line with other jurisdictions and bring in some of the increases that have not happened historically. Our approach, I believe, was to have it phased in. We are looking at all our fees, not only this outfit or this company or this area. I will have Mr. Neudorf speak to the specifics of how we are planning to move forward on it.

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

**MR. NEUDORF:** Mr. Chairman, of course we are governed by our Airports Act. It indicates that we are to charge market rates for all tenants on our airport properties. We are endeavouring to do that. We are in an implementation phase and trying to catch up and make sure that all of our leases are modern and current. As we go through that, we are seeing that we have been giving some of our tenants a good break over the past few years, but our Airports Act governs us and it does say that we need to charge market rates so that we are giving a fair advantage for everybody including those others that are on the airport and those that are off of the airport that perhaps are in similar types of business. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I am just wondering, if the government would entertain...In order to keep some of these businesses in business during these tough times, it might take some creative

manoeuvring from your department underneath that act to allow them to go into arrears for a certain period of time and pay it back when things get better. I'm not sure, but if we are going to demand 50 percent more for lease rates out at the Yellowknife Airport, it is a tough pill for aviation companies to swallow, especially considering the fact that we can give a loan for \$34 million to one of them and the other ones are...They all should be treated fairly. Some of the aviation companies out there I talked to don't feel that they have been treated fairly. With the rates going up, like I said, 50 percent, that is something I think we need to address. If there is a way to keep the wolves from the door, I think we need to be looking at that and keep the jobs here and keep the businesses open. Is there any creative thinking there, Mr. Minister? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I certainly would be willing to see if there is a hardship case that is really there. Our intentions, and we are going to have to go back and confirm, is to look at a phased-in approach. A lot of the companies have been getting a very good deal in terms of agreements. We certainly cannot look and accept an arrears type of solution to this, but we certainly can look at what it is that is a real concern. A 50 percent increase may be concerning but if it is not a whole lot of dollars in terms of what it amounts to the company, then maybe we don't have something that we can be concerned about. If there is a hardship case that is being caused by us moving forward maybe too rapidly, we will certainly look at that.

**MR. RAMSAY:** What I am hearing from the Minister is, if there are situations where companies are having trouble paying their leases and I understand that they were in a favourable position in the past when times were good, but times aren't so good right now. The leases are going up. The work is not there. Will the Minister, if it is not the Minister it would be his staff, but would they entertain a meeting with companies to go over their needs? If they are having trouble paying their lease, obviously they are going to have trouble staying in business. Will the government look at helping them out in some way? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I believe we have already done what the Member is asking in terms of meeting with the different companies to inform them of our intentions. We certainly can have another discussion with them to see if there are certain areas that are challenging them and if there are ways we can incorporate our increases to not affect them as much. I would be glad to provide that direction to our staff.

**MR. RAMSAY:** When did the department and the Minister meet with the companies out at the airport that are under lease obligations at the YZF? When was the last time they met with them? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I would have to follow up and see when that happened. I don't know off hand. We don't have that information.

**MR. RAMSAY:** It gets back to my point. If it was six months or a year ago, a lot has happened since then. Times have changed and there is not much work out there. I think it is probably a good idea for the department to take a look at those leases and the costs and if we need to make some changes, we need to make some changes to how that is done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that happens on a fairly regular basis and especially with the businesses and companies that are going to be looking at a change or an increase. So we'll provide information and we'll commit to having our staff have that discussion again. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** A motion is on the floor to report progress.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'd like to thank your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, if I could, please, get you to escort the witnesses out, that would be great. Thank you very much. Now I'll rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Before we go to orders of the day I'd just like to take a moment to thank our Pages that have been working with have been working with us this week in the House.

---Applause

Mr. Clerk, item 23, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Monday, March 2, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

- Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy
- Tabled Document 11-16(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2009-2010
- Tabled Document 17-16(3), Supplementary Appropriation No. 3, 2008-2009
- 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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 2, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:54 p.m.