



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Friday, October 29, 2010**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>5361</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>5361</b>
73-16(5) – Aboriginal Participation in Devolution Negotiations (Roland) .....	5361
74-16(5) – Supplementary Health Benefits (Lee).....	5362
75-16(5) – Energy Priorities (Miltenberger).....	5363
76-16(5) – Repeal of the Settlements Act (R. McLeod) .....	5364
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>5364</b>
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Policy (Groenewegen).....	5364
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Policy (Abernethy).....	5365
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Policy (Bisaro).....	5365
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Policy (Hawkins).....	5366
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Policy (Ramsay).....	5366
Congratulations to Mr. Owen Rowe, Winner of Local Hockey Leaders Award in Fort Simpson (Menicoche) .....	5367
Need for New Firefighting Equipment in Small and Remote Communities (Jacobson) .....	5367
Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Policy (Bromley).....	5368
Draft Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (Krutko) .....	5368
Support for Aboriginal Language and Culture in Tu Nedhe Schools (Beaulieu) .....	5369
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>5369</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>5370</b>
<b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>5381</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>5381</b>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION</b> .....	<b>5381</b>
22-16(5) – Referral of Tabled Document 103-16(5), Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 Report, Year-to-Date of the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2010 (Ramsay).....	5381
23-16(5) – Dissolution of the 16 <sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly (Bisaro).....	5381
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>5381</b>
Bill 13 – Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditure) 2011-2012.....	5381
Bill 14 – An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act .....	5382
Bill 15 – An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act.....	5382

Bill 16 – An Act to Amend the Dog Act.....	5382
Bill 17 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act.....	5382
Bill 18 – An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act .....	5382
Bill 19 – Municipal Statutes Amendment Act.....	5382
Bill 20 – An Act to Amend the Evidence Act.....	5382
<b>MOTIONS .....</b>	<b>5382</b>
20-16(5) – Retention of Long-Form Census Questionnaire (Bromley).....	5382
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS.....</b>	<b>5384</b>
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE .....</b>	<b>5397</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>	<b>5397</b>

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, October 29, 2010****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

The House met at 10:13 a.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 73-16(5):  
ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN  
DEVOLUTION NEGOTIATIONS**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories firmly believes in the inherent right of aboriginal people to manage their own resources and govern their own affairs. For years we've been active participants in the land claims and self-government negotiations that have seen real power and control pass back to NWT aboriginal governments. That commitment has extended to devolution negotiations as well. From the beginning of our negotiations, we have made sure that aboriginal governments have had every opportunity to participate in a meaningful and active way.

The current devolution process began at a May 2001 meeting of the then Intergovernmental Forum, consisting of aboriginal leadership, the Premier of the Northwest Territories and the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. It was at this meeting that an agreement was reached on a memorandum of intent that stated the intention of all parties to begin negotiations.

Tripartite negotiations between Canada, the GNWT and representatives from the aboriginal governments began in September of 2002. The aboriginal governments formed the Aboriginal Summit shortly thereafter, selecting a chief negotiator and adding legal and research staff. The GNWT and Canada shared the cost of funding the Aboriginal Summit to represent NWT aboriginal governments in the devolution negotiations. While the summit has since dissolved, most aboriginal governments continue to participate in negotiations, either at the table or as observers. We continue to

fund aboriginal government participation up to the present day, with the GNWT alone contributing approximately \$3.9 million since 2001 in addition to the roughly equal contributions from Canada.

Finance Canada, the lead federal department for resource revenue sharing negotiations, chose to conduct these discussions at a separate table, although these were linked to the main table devolution talks. It was Canada's preference to conduct these negotiations on a bilateral basis with the GNWT. The GNWT continued to advocate for a seat for aboriginal governments at these negotiations and their lead or chief negotiator attended these sessions as part of the GNWT's caucus. In addition, the GNWT initiated its own bilateral negotiations with aboriginal governments on how resource revenues would be shared among NWT governments following devolution. This commitment to bilateral negotiations with aboriginal governments on resource revenue sharing continues and provisions reflecting this from part of the proposed devolution AIP.

These early negotiations resulted in a devolution framework agreement, which was signed by the GNWT, Canada and aboriginal governments in March 2004, indicating agreement among all parties on the broad outlines of devolution. In 2005, Canada made an offer to the NWT parties. The Aboriginal Summit's negotiator was prepared to recommend the draft AIP and advanced it that summer at a number of general assemblies. However, the GNWT declined the offer, not agreeing with Canada over primarily financial matters, including A-base, one-time costs and net fiscal benefit. Changes in ministerial leadership and two federal elections that ultimately resulted in a change of government in 2006 were also factors in the slowing of negotiations.

While negotiations with Canada stalled, discussions between the GNWT and aboriginal governments continued. In May 2007, the GNWT and four aboriginal governments – the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu and NWT Metis Nation – signed an AIP on resource revenue sharing that would see 25 percent of the net fiscal benefit shared among aboriginal governments. The AIP included provisions for the inclusion of the remaining three aboriginal governments in the future negotiations of a final resource revenue sharing agreement. The four aboriginal governments and the GNWT then

agreed on a revised devolution agreement-in-principle that they formally jointly transmitted to Minister Prentice for signature. The Minister declined and suggested returning to the negotiation table. The main issues of money remained.

With little left to discuss until Canada and the GNWT had resolved the outstanding financial issues, aboriginal governments agreed that negotiations should continue on a bilateral basis. During these bilateral discussions with Canada since the fall of 2007, the GNWT continued to keep its aboriginal government partners updated on progress through eight regional aboriginal leadership meetings and by providing copies of correspondence with Canada.

During the spring and summer of 2009, Canada and the GNWT began to make progress on resolving the outstanding bilateral issues. With the final elements of a devolution AIP starting to come together, plans were made to brief aboriginal governments and resume full tripartite negotiations. During November and December 2009 and January 2010, briefings were given to:

- the president and vice-president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council;
- the chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and senior officials;
- all Tlicho leadership and senior staff;
- all Sahtu leadership and senior officials;
- the majority of Akaitcho chiefs; and
- NWT Metis Nation leadership and officials.

Canada provided a separate technical briefing to Dehcho representatives in January 2010.

A technical session with Canada, the GNWT and aboriginal governments was held in January 2010 and main table negotiations were held in April and June 2010. The Inuvialuit and NWT Metis were full participants in the main table negotiations with Canada and the GNWT. The Tlicho, Akaitcho and Dehcho attended the negotiations as observers. The Gwich'in Tribal Council had formally withdrawn from participation in April 2010, despite having some signatories to the 2007 AIP on resource revenue sharing between the GNWT and aboriginal governments.

Following the main table negotiations in June, there was agreement that negotiators had reached the extent of their mandate and a proposed AIP should be forwarded to leadership for consideration.

As I said at the beginning, every reasonable effort has been made to include aboriginal governments in a devolution negotiation in an active and meaningful way. It is simply untrue to suggest, as some have, that the process leading to the proposed AIP excluded anyone that was willing to

participate or simply is the result of bilateral discussions between Canada and the GNWT.

I believe the proposed AIP provides the basis for a deal on devolution that will create real benefits for all residents of the NWT. Without devolution, the NWT share of resource revenues will continue to be zero. We have made every effort over the past nine years to involve NWT aboriginal governments in the negotiations and there is nothing in the proposed AIP they have not had a chance to review and fully consider many times before.

Gaining control over public lands, water and resources will be a major step in the political evolution of the NWT, putting NWT residents in charge of decision-making and giving us access to revenues that are now flowing to Ottawa. All NWT residents will benefit from devolution and it is my hope that NWT aboriginal governments will be prepared to take the next step in a process with us. We look forward to the time when they will sign on to become full participants and beneficiaries of devolution.

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

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 74-16(5): SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Decisions surrounding health care, particularly who pays for what, are some of the most contentious and sensitive that our government faces. We have seen this over the past few years as we have attempted to resolve the inconsistencies between uninsured supplementary health benefits programs in the NWT.

Later today I will be tabling the Report of the Supplementary Health Benefits Joint Working Group. The report has been developed using our Legislative Assembly's consensus process, in a partnership of Executive Council and the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning.

I want to recognize and thank the Joint Working Group members who took on the challenge of addressing this complex area: my co-chair, Mrs. Groenewegen; Mr. Yakeleya; Ms. Bisaro; and Cabinet colleagues, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger and the Honourable Michael McLeod.

On October 22, 2010, I received a letter from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning communicating the results of their review of the working group report. I have shared this response with the Executive Council, and again, in the spirit of consensus government, we have agreed to move forward with changes consistent with the principles agreed to by the Joint Working Group and to implement these changes during the life of this government.

Based on these principles, the Executive Council will rescind the 2007 policy on supplementary health benefits.

---Applause

The Department of Health and Social Services will concentrate its efforts on the modernization of our existing policy framework. We will develop proposals for amendments to the Extended Health Benefits and Metis Health Benefits programs to require the use of third-party insurance as the first option and to ensure parity with the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits Program. We will also develop a pharmaceutical strategy to include generic drugs, drug pricing, and efficiencies and cost containment of pharmaceuticals, procurement, distribution and access.

Also consistent with the recommendations of the Joint Working Group, the 2004 grandfathering of extended health benefits will be eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, I will make a further announcement next week regarding the implementation of these changes.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, the NWT is not alone in facing the challenge of sustaining its health care system in an environment of escalating costs and other critical pressures. Difficult decisions about what we can afford and what we cannot will continue to challenge this House in the months and years ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 75-16(5): ENERGY PRIORITIES

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories supports global and local actions to reduce emissions of the greenhouse gases that cause climate change.

We continue to build on our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by advancing a number of alternative energy sources. This government's energy priorities include solar, wind, hydroelectricity, geothermal and biomass energy projects.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has taken on the challenge of expanding the use of solar, wind, geothermal and biomass energy. Although widely used elsewhere in the world, the technologies involved in using these energy sources are relatively new to the Northwest Territories. Through a combination of studies, business case assessments, subsidies and demonstration projects, ENR is making important progress toward expanding the use of alternative energy sources.

Mr. Speaker, experience has shown us that photovoltaic technology is a reliable and cost-effective source of renewable energy for small off-grid camps and residences. We are seeing more remote camps and lodges installing solar panels and battery systems to supplement or replace gas and diesel generators because it saves them money. Solar photovoltaic systems have been installed on buildings in Sachs Harbour, Inuvik, Wekweeti, Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Behchoko and Yellowknife.

ENR is working with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northland Utilities on a net billing pilot project so that we can start testing the cost and reliability of solar power on community grid systems. Funds are available for residents and communities that want to join in this pilot project.

ENR is now preparing a NWT Solar Energy Strategy to coordinate these actions and prepare a path forward so that we can take full advantage of energy from the sun using this technology.

Some of the best potential for geothermal energy in Canada has been found in the southern part of the Northwest Territories. This heat from beneath the earth's surface has the potential to produce power and provide heat to meet the needs for communities and reduce their reliance on diesel fuel.

Considerable potential for geothermal energy from the Con Mine shafts and tunnels exists right under the city of Yellowknife. The tunnels and shafts from old mining operations could provide a thermal reservoir for a district heating system that provides all the heat needed for buildings in the downtown core. A business plan for this project is at the development stage. Another geothermal pilot project to provide one megawatt of electric generation capacity in Fort Liard is also in the business plan development stage.

Wind is the most available renewable energy source in our High Arctic communities. A wind energy project is being developed in Tuktoyaktuk to develop the capacity and experience needed to incorporate wind energy into existing energy systems as has been done in Alaska. ENR continues to work with Dowland Contracting and interested community members to finalize plans to install wind turbines in Tuktoyaktuk in the summer of 2011. ENR is also preparing plans to implement wind power in Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour in future years.

Mr. Speaker, wood has always provided a sustainable source of heat in the Northwest Territories. The development of new efficient technologies has made wood a reliable source of energy for large-scale applications. Work is underway to determine the feasibility of harvesting biomass in Fort Providence and Fort McPherson. A

feasibility study on producing wood pellets in the Northwest Territories is also being done.

Biomass energy projects are currently underway in Kakisa, Fort McPherson, Behchoko, Whati and Yellowknife. As Members know, proper forest management practices must be applied to ensure that the harvest of local wood supplies remains sustainable. ENR is committed to ensuring the sustainability of our forest resources as we work to expand the use of biomass.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committed to building on and increasing our renewable energy projects and expanding the use of greener renewable energy sources.

As a government, we are working to become a leader within Canada on alternative sustainable energy. We are committed to advancing our energy priorities in the form of solar, wind, geothermal, hydroelectricity and biomass energy. I believe our work in these areas will not only help cut greenhouse gas emissions, but will also help reduce the overall cost of living for our residents.

As the cost of fossil fuels increase and we become more concerned with the real threat of climate change, we must adopt these alternative energies to ensure a more sustainable future for the next generation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 76-16(5):  
REPEAL OF THE SETTLEMENTS ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will be giving notice of motion for first reading of An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act.

The political development of the Northwest Territories has been dramatic since the establishment of responsible territorial government in 1967. One of the critical elements to our development has been the empowerment of communities to run their own affairs based on local resources, priorities and conditions.

As many Members of this Assembly know from their personal experience, the opportunity to be elected to sit on a community council has provided many of us with the foundation and the knowledge to be able to sit here today. The development of our communities has also contributed greatly to the quality of life that we enjoy today.

In the 1960s and '70s, the GNWT supported unincorporated settlement councils that acted as advisors to settlement managers. These early councils were well received and councils wanted to pursue more real and meaningful control over their community affairs.

While many of these councils became hamlets, there were some communities that wanted to gain more experience and authority without taking on the full responsibility of community government that accompanies hamlet status.

For these communities, the GNWT put in place the Settlements Act. Through this act, communities were able to be incorporated and could take on more responsibility and learn the business of government. Over time, the communities built on their experience as settlements and now have moved onto other forms of community governments. In recent years, Colville Lake has transitioned to a designated First Nations authority and the other two incorporated settlements, Enterprise and Fort Resolution, have obtained hamlet status. There are no longer any settlement communities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the pace of change over the last 40 years has been quite rapid. Residents and leaders of all communities are to be commended for the work and effort they continue to devote to ensuring their governance structure evolves based on local needs and priorities.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the outcomes envisioned decades ago when the Settlements Act was first put in place has now been accomplished. We can all celebrate the achievement of the long-term goal of the empowerment of the former settlement communities. The Settlements Act was a useful and important tool for community development. Now it has served its purpose and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will be advancing a bill to rescind this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following on the Minister of Health and Social Services ministerial statement today on the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy, I would like to add a few comments.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to co-chair a joint working group made up of Cabinet Minister and Regular Members to look at this topic. This is something that has received a lot of public attention. Mr. Speaker, I think if I could characterize the Supp Health Policy as it was proposed, it comprised of some very good initiatives and some very good principles. Unfortunately, bundling them

all together and expecting to advance all of those initiatives in concert was a problem.

We don't even have to think about them; things like pharmaceutical bulk buying, buying generic brands. These are the kinds of things that should be regular, run-of-the-mill business decisions within the department that would make economic sense and contribute to the sustainability of our provision of these services. Mr. Speaker, some of the other ones do require more analysis, more consultation and perhaps some thought to the timing and the implementation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for her comments today and we do look forward to working with her and with Cabinet on advancing these principles. Although we could not accept the wholesale change to the Supplementary Health Policy as it was proposed, ironically the individual initiatives and individual principles are all things that have merit and need to be pursued further.

I think that we have arrived at a good conclusion here going forward. The main things that we were concerned about, like medical bankruptcy with catastrophic conditions and catastrophic costs for pharmacy, the fact that there are people in our communities and our society that do not have any coverage, the fact that third-party insurance should come to play before our government insurance kicks in, many of these very, very important issues need to be addressed.

Leadership is not always about what's doing the popular thing; it's about what's doing the right and responsible thing in ensuring the sustainability of our ability as a government to continue to deliver these programs and services into the future.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ditto. I'd like to thank the Minister for her Member's statement today.

Frankly, the Executive Council's decision to rescind the 2007 policy on supplemental health benefits is a great step forward. Since this policy came into place and it was passed by the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly in their dying days, it's caused nothing but problems. It's fundamentally flawed.

Sure, something needs to be done. We can't argue that. We need to find a way to provide support to the low-income families who don't have access to insurance or can't get insurance. Clearly, that needs to be done. We've heard since the Minister started bringing this forward that the direction that this government was going wasn't the right way. I

think they've finally heard all the information, they finally gathered all the information that they needed to make a decision. I'd like to thank them today for rescinding that policy.

I do have one area of concern. I'll ask the Minister later today. In her statement she said that she will make a further announcement next week regarding the implementation of these changes. I think it's important, given the interest on this side of the table and the interest in the community, that the Minister meet with us and talk to us and give us a bit of an idea of what she means by an implementation plan. I'm not 100 percent certain what is ready to be implemented. I'm not sure that anything is ready to be implemented.

In my opinion, we need to go back to the drawing board on a lot of the issues. The Minister is working on a Foundation for Change for the health system in the Northwest Territories and I think that's part and parcel of everything that needs to be done in order to fix the health system overall. I'm looking forward to the Minister coming to us and talking to us about what she means by implementation plan next week and that anything that does start to roll out that has a clear plan, that people are informed, that people are consulted, that people understand what's being done and why.

Communication is important. A solid communications plan on any changes that come forward with extended health benefits in the future is required for anything that's ever implemented. Let's work with our people. Let's make sure they understand. Let's make sure they have input.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The long-awaited response from the Health Minister with regard to supplementary health benefits is finally here. I'd like to thank the Minister for her statement today. Many, many people in the public have been asking for a response to the Joint Working Group, to the changes to the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy, and they've been looking for information on these changes literally for months. I appreciate the Minister advising the public today through her statement.

I have to say that the 2007 policy, the rescindment of that policy is music to my ears. I believe that Cabinet and the Executive Council have finally seen the light. The 2007 document is just bad policy; I've said it before and I will say it again. I look forward to discussing amendments to that policy and to the implementation to both the Extended Health Benefits and the Metis policy, as

is mentioned in her statement, with the department and the Minister. I know we can develop a policy which will work and that will be fair and equitable for all NWT residents.

However, and it has been mentioned, there is one thing in the Minister's statement and I'm dismayed about the lack of statement with regard to any action to cover those people who are not currently covered by extended health benefits or its conditions. I hope that is expected, but it's not in the statement and I would like to know from the Minister at a later time whether or not actually that is the plan.

I certainly hope that's in there, because it is the right thing to do. We do need to cover those people. I believe if we really try hard, if we are creative, that we can identify efficiencies and savings in the current Supplementary Health Benefits Program. Some of them have been identified already. Those savings will significantly offset any costs to add more clients to the program.

I look forward, as I've said, to the Minister's of Health and Social Services announcement next week about implementation. I have the same concerns as my colleague Mr. Abernethy. There needs to be ample opportunity for Regular Members and the public, hopefully, to provide input on this implementation plan.

I want to thank the members of the Joint Working Group, of which I was a member, for the work that it did do relative to this particular issue.

Lastly, the Minister talks about difficult decisions and I agree. But if we work together, consider the needs of all residents and be objective, we can be successful.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a fantastic day for the people of the NWT. The people of the North have certain cause to celebrate. The people have won a decisive victory in their struggle for health care, for everyone who has worked tirelessly on this problem of second-class health care proposed back in the 2007 Cabinet directive.

Health care is no less important to anyone across this North. Health care is one of the defining factors that helps identify Canadians. It makes us the envy of the world and certainly the envy of our neighbours to the south.

Today the Health Minister has heard the voice of the people and I personally want to thank her. She

has, with the support of her Cabinet colleagues, pulled back the 2007 directive that gave direction to change the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy. That must have been a tough thing to do.

I'm going to acknowledge the Health Minister and her Cabinet colleagues for the courageous consideration and decisive action of finally pulling this off the table. Today's statement demonstrates that the ground has really moved; an impossible day that many of us thought would never come. The improbability was overcome and it has.

So with great respect, I certainly will never say any one person or one group has done anything wrong, but I will say that the people have won a common sense victory. The struggle to protect health care will not be over, as the fight will wield on for many of us for many years to come. The principles of health care must live on, namely access and fairness, just to name a few.

Today clearly shows government can listen to the people and to the Members of this Assembly. I want to give credit to them, the people. This struggle was not won only by the voices on the floor of this Assembly, it was won by the people who braved to speak out, by those who signed their names to petitions and postcards; many who have never signed or spoken out before. I want to thank them and many others who stomped out there on this problem, challenged and e-mailed, and told all of us to stand for our rights. Health care is a principle we need to fight for and protect at all costs. Protection of the principles, yes; reform, we should not be afraid of that; but it should be fair and we should make sure everyone is covered in a fair way as well.

As our future is before us and this government has turned to a new page and perhaps even a new chapter on this problem, the time to unite Northerners could not be greater. The people look to this government to continue to demonstrate leadership in courageous decisions such as today that have been made. Today was one of the small steps going forward. I applaud this government for hearing the voices of the people.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to speak today about supplementary health benefits. First off I would like to say thank you to the government. You've done the right thing by rescinding the 2007 Supplementary Health Benefits Policy.

Equality and fairness are principles that should build the foundation of any health benefit policy in

the Northwest Territories. I'll continue to work toward ensuring that any of these policies include these principles.

As much as I'm very happy to hear that Cabinet has decided to rescind the 2007 policy on supplementary health benefits, I'm left wondering how the other proposed changes will be implemented in the next 10 months. The Minister said she'd be speaking next week to an implementation plan and I do hope this plan will allow for a full dialogue with the public and Regular Members of this House as changes move forward. She has a lot of room for improvement when it comes to that.

The Minister states in her statement today that it was the spirit of consensus government that moved Cabinet to actually listen to the concerns Members and the public have had with the 2007 policy on supplementary health benefits. The spirit must be evident every day, not just when they're faced with a crisis.

This government just seems to continually take issues to the wall even though Members are here day in and day out telling them that what they're doing is wrong and that they're making a mistake. They continue to push us to the very limit of our tolerance and of our patience.

In closing, I want to thank the Members of this House, my Cabinet colleagues especially, for trying to get this right. Thank you, as well, to all the Regular Members whose dogged determination has turned this decision around. To the many members of the public, the NWT Seniors' Society and all those people who have spoken out over the past two years against this policy, I want to say thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. OWEN ROWE,  
WINNER OF LOCAL HOCKEY LEADERS  
AWARD IN FORT SIMPSON

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My kudos today are for a constituent of Fort Simpson. The Royal Bank of Canada has a very prestigious recognition called the Local Hockey Leaders Award. They choose 14 winners from across Canada annually. We know that it takes a lot of time and energy of volunteers to keep our national game of hockey going. We need to recognize all the work that organizers, coaches and parents give to this great sport.

This spring my hometown of Fort Simpson nominated Mr. Owen Rowe for the award and threw their full support behind him for his efforts and dedication to hockey as a coach, player, volunteer and parent.

I was very pleased to receive the news that the Royal Bank of Canada did select Mr. Owen Rowe for the Local Hockey Leaders Award for our region. Owen Rowe was recognized formally by being flown to Toronto for a special ceremony. He received his award, a signed Team Canada Jersey and \$10,000 towards a registered hockey cause in Fort Simpson.

Also, he and the other winners are recognized in a permanent display at the Hockey Hall of Fame and there will be a banner recognizing his achievement in the Fort Simpson Arena.

Owen Rowe has been coaching minor hockey for the past 15 years. He also started and coached the Fort Simpson Women's Hockey League, the Moosehide Mamas. He has been a player/coach on the senior men's league and has taken many young men of Fort Simpson to compete in tournaments. The Fort Simpson Flyers are always the team to beat no matter where they go.

The people of Fort Simpson are proud of their players and the successes of our hockey teams. This is due in large part to the efforts of Mr. Owen Rowe. So you see how he has helped hockey on so many levels. He is definitely a local hockey leader. He has volunteered, raised funds, donated funds, coached and played, all for the love of hockey.

On behalf of my constituents and the community of Fort Simpson, I would like to congratulate Mr. Owen Rowe for this much deserved hockey leader award.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NEED FOR NEW FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT  
IN SMALL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm speaking on the firefighting equipment in the communities. Per capita the Northwest Territories has one of the highest rates of fire-related disasters that occur in small, remote communities. The remote fly-in communities with equipment to fight fires is seriously deficient.

Recently I received a response from Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Robert McLeod, commenting that the territorial fire marshal's office is planning to conduct a community fire department capacity assessment. Today is October 29<sup>th</sup>. February 9<sup>th</sup> was the first time I brought this statement into the House. I can still say that the fire marshal hasn't been to Tuk.

This government can save lots of money conducting assessments of Nunakput communities, and as MLA I can honestly say our equipment and infrastructure is inadequate and needs a complete overhaul.

The fire marshal's office has mentioned time and again that community governments are responsible for the operation of their community fire departments and their office can provide advice and training from time to time. If the fire marshal's office thinks they can come into communities and invest in improving the firefighting equipment to southern standards alone, then they are more out of touch. Where does a community like Paulatuk find hundreds of thousands of dollars for equipment? Sometimes when I visit various community fire halls, their equipment is not only old but incomplete. Why is this government continuing to place our firefighters in harm's way just to reduce their budget?

I have visited Nunakput communities enough to know each community desperately needs a complete overhaul in their fire halls, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned previously they are risking their lives in service to protect their communities. The least we can do is have proper training and equip them accordingly.

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  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY**

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud the government's reconsideration of changes to the Supplementary Health Benefits Program. The Minister shows, with this action, that she has listened and respected the clear voice of democracy and has benefited from the input of Members and the public in reaching a wise decision. The response of the government shows that the detailed input of Members and the public has been, and will be, taken into account. The announcement of the requirement for third-party insurance where it is available, measures to ensure parity between the emergency health benefits of other plans, and the development of measures to take advantage of group buying for medicine shows a progressive and equitable approach to serving all the members of our society with similar benefits and programs.

I have often spoken on the essential point that our government services should help those most in need when they are most in need of help. I thank the government for ensuring our services are equitable and universal. I have also taken the position that we should use the tax system and use of progressive taxation to put the costs on those who can afford them most, but only after we have taken our most effective action to reduce costs and increased efficiencies and demonstrated need. Members of the public have been consistent in

supporting this approach and we need to recognize this. Should they be needed, I will support changes to tax regimes for the progressive distribution of the cost of government throughout society. In announcing these changes, the Minister has extended a hand of cooperation and commitment to work with all Members in finding the best system possible and I look forward to her proposals.

I thank the Minister again for listening, acting, and asking for the participation of all Members in the continued improvement of our health services and programs, but in particular, Mr. Speaker, I salute all those citizens who demonstrated their faith in the processes of our democracy, and responsibly and actively participated in the political process. This response by our government once again shows that committed citizens can make a difference. Mahsi.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DRAFT DEVOLUTION  
AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rebut some of the comments made by the Premier over the last couple of days in regard to the devolution process.

Mr. Speaker, in the devolution process agreement-in-principle, a letter was handed or sent to aboriginal organizations around the Northwest Territories and asked them, basically, to respond and determine what their role and participation will be. Mr. Speaker, the Premier basically admitted that the Dene/Metis did not have...(inaudible)...basically were involved in the negotiations of the agreement-in-principle, but simply as observers.

Mr. Speaker, under the Gwich'in Land Claims Agreement, the Sahtu Lands Claim Agreement and the Tlicho Land Claims Agreement, it's pretty clear. It states the government shall involve those aboriginal organizations in development and implementation of a Northern Accord oil and gas agreement, subject to the agreement signed September 8, 1988, which is the devolution agreement.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we've heard from five of the regional organizations, making it perfectly clear they have an issue with this agreement-in-principle. They have problems with that agreement. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, there was a letter sent to the Premier on April 19<sup>th</sup> from the Gwich'in Tribal Council -- and it was specifically sent by the president, it was sent by the tribal council -- which outlined six areas of concern in relation to the consultation process this government has been put into. All they ask is that they take into account these

items, have discussions with the Premier and Aboriginal Affairs to relate the questions and find clarification on their issues. But again, seven months later, not a response from this government. We talk about inclusion of aboriginal organizations in the devolution process, but when groups raise questions and make issue of a particular issue, the government pushes them aside and says, sorry, we'll deal with you later.

For me, the Constitution is clear that aboriginal treaty rights are constitutionally protected. The government has a right to abrogate or derogate any affects on those land claim agreements, treaty rights or aboriginal rights in Canada. Again, Mr. Speaker, it clearly underlines the reluctance of this government to hear the issue of our aboriginal so-called partners in this process, and simply push them aside...

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

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, the aboriginal leaders are requesting a meeting with the Premier and the Minister of Indian Affairs to clarify exactly what the intention of this legislation is and what affects it will have in regard to the land claim agreements, treaty rights, and also clarify what the abrogation clauses are and exactly how are you going to remedy those situations where you have land claim agreements that clearly state that you shall consult, you shall include them in these processes, not simply saying, well, if you don't respond, we're kicking you off the table.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions to the Premier on this matter later. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE  
AND CULTURE IN  
TU NEDHE SCHOOLS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week I spoke about the need to provide more support to aboriginal languages and about the important role that language plays in maintaining aboriginal culture. Today I would like to talk about the important work the schools in Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution are doing to preserve aboriginal culture in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, in Lutselk'e, aboriginal language and culture classes are held three times a week for kindergarten to grade 9. In addition, there are two half-day classes each week for grades 5 to 9, also grades 8 to 10 students take one semester of a

three-credit aboriginal language course. Mr. Speaker, classes regularly go out on the land throughout the school year. Depending on the season, they will go hunting, trapping, fishing and camping. On top of all this, Mr. Speaker, the school has a daily program of prayer and song in the Chipewyan language. Periodically, classes are held to do traditional craftwork, and preparation and cooking of traditional foods.

I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the hard work of the dedicated staff at the Lutselk'e Dene School for their important work in preserving aboriginal culture in Lutselk'e.

Mr. Speaker, in Fort Resolution, the Deninu School is also delivering a vibrant aboriginal language and culture program. They have a daily program of elders coming into the school to talk to the students. Also, on a regular basis, a variety of demonstration workshops are done in skinning, beading, sewing and traditional food preparation, as well as periodic aboriginal culture theme day using print, audio and visual resource materials. In addition to all this, Mr. Speaker, the school has a monthly cultural program that includes activities such as going out on a moose hunt, fish net setting, drumming lessons, moosehide tanning, canoe trips and Dene games.

Again, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the hard work of the dedicated staff at the Deninu School for their important work in promoting and preserving aboriginal culture in Fort Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier this week, there is no shortage of dedicated volunteers, elders and professionals that are committed to preserving aboriginal language and culture in the Tu Nedhe riding. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a former member of the Great Slave Riding and a current member of the Yellowknife Centre riding, Mr. Blake Lyons.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize all the visitors in the gallery today. I, too, would like to join my colleague Mr. Abernethy in welcoming Mr. Blake Lyons, a former colleague at Yellowknife City Council and mentor of mine when I was a much younger man. Thank you.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all our hardworking Pages over the past week, especially my two Pages from my hometown of Tuktoyaktuk: Melody Teddy and Theresa Cockney. Thank you for all your hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Blake Lyons, a constituent in Yellowknife Centre, as well as Murray McMahon, another constituent from Yellowknife Centre. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, when we talk about hard work of people in the Chamber, I think we have to recognize our hardworking interpreters and, with that, I'd like to recognize Lillian Elias, our Inuvialuktun interpreter from Inuvik.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Mr. Murray McMahon, who has a home out at Cassidy Point and spends a lot of time in the Weledeh riding. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 289-16(5): PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Obviously there was much anticipation on her Minister's statement from earlier today. I'd like to begin by asking the Minister, obviously she's been getting a lot of questions about the advancement of this 2007 policy up until today and the decision that Cabinet has made to rescind that policy. I'd like to ask her, in going forward, how exactly is she going to engage Regular Members on any of the proposed changes and the implementation of those changes, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will do that, as we have done all along. This is a consensus government, and contrary to what might be spoken here, Members here know that we work together on any of the major changes. So, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to do that as we move forward. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I'm just wondering why sometimes it might take two years for the Minister and the Cabinet to realize it is a consensus government. It took two years of work by all Members of this House to turn this policy around. It took outrage by the public to get this policy turned around. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, it took two years.

I'd like to ask the Minister, maybe she could comment on that. Why did it take two years for the current Cabinet to make the right call on this policy? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I think the important message today is that we have moved this program forward. The Cabinet announcement is based on the Joint Working Group work and Joint Working Group report, and that document will be tabled later today. It has a number of suggestions on how we should improve our Supplementary Health Benefits Program and I think it's important for us to move forward.

As Member Groenewegen suggested, there are a lot of things that we need to do, and that Members on the other side agree on, with respect to the Health Benefits Policy. I look forward to working with the members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and everyone else on the other side and my Cabinet colleagues to get the job done within the remainder of this Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have faith that the Minister and Cabinet can get this done by the end of the life of this current government. I'd like to ask the Minister how she intends to accomplish this feat in 10 months. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The discussions that I've been having with the Members on the other side with respect to this issue is that Members want us to get some stuff done that were suggested in the Joint Working Group report.

In my Minister's statement this morning, I talked about the fact that we need to look at health benefits, a program not being the first option but encouraging people to get private insurance first, parity with the NIHB program, the pharmaceutical strategy to include generic drugs and drug pricing and efficiencies and the elimination of grandfathering. So there are a number of very specific items that the Joint Working Group is recommending and the Members on the other side agree on. So I will be making an announcement about the process by which we will get the job done within the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the last two years, one of the criticisms that was levelled at the department was the fact that it was hard for information data, research to get into the hands of Members so we could make informed decisions. As this moves forward, maybe the Minister could comment on how sure she is that she has the ability inside of the Department of Health and Social Services to actually get the information that is relative, that's relevant, that is going to be required for decisions to be made as we move this forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** With all due respect, I categorically reject any notion that our department or myself as the Minister are not giving out the information. All the information was out there. The issue with the changes with supp health is that people just didn't want it. It wasn't the lack of information. So, Mr. Speaker, we will work as we have always with the Members on the other side and give detailed information.

We need to do more work on how we are going to implement the pharmaceutical strategy. We need to do more work on how we encourage people to get third-party insurance. We need to work on how we encourage employers to offer third-party insurance. We need to do more work on how we make all our programs equal and equitable.

So there's a lot of work to be done. So we are going to do that work and we will bring that back to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, because I believe all the Members agree that these are important programs, but changes need to be made. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 290-16(5):  
NEED FOR NEW FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT  
IN SMALL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement was on the inadequacy of fire equipment in the communities. Mr. Speaker, considering that the communities have inadequate community infrastructure, they need a complete overhaul. Considering the cost to upgrade them, even a fraction of southern standards is very costly. Will the government commit in replacing all inadequate equipment by the end of this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the Member's frankness when he asks a question. He just gets straight to

the point. The community governments are responsible for the firefighting infrastructure. They are given the money through the capital investment and they do have the responsibility. Our department will work with the communities in identifying some of their needs and possibly help out with the cost to them and finding out where they can access some of this equipment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Considering all the small, remote communities are most sus, sus --

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Susceptible.

---Laughter

**MR. JACOBSON:** Yeah, susceptible -- through these house fires and the highest number of deaths per capita over Canada, will this government work with the local fire marshal's office and various funding sources to develop a real capacity for each community all over the Northwest Territories, not just Nunakput? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** With the new public safety division coming onboard, that is one of their mandates. I have had commitment from the assistant fire marshals that they are more than willing to work with each community in identifying some of their needs, some of the training that they may lack. There is talk of going to more of a regional type of training so we can get more people in. So the commitment is there to work very closely with the communities.

We understand that it's a very difficult job they have, especially in some of the smaller communities. It's a very difficult job. So we will do our part as the department to see how we can best assist communities. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Considering our volunteer firefighters, Mr. Speaker, are risking their lives to service and protecting our communities, will this government implement a comprehensive checklist of systems like the Minister is saying such as proper valves are functioning, breathing apparatuses, heated fire truck facilities, proper safety gear and training will be listed on the checklist? I think the best place to get the training would be down here in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We are currently conducting a community fire department capacity assessment. That's us working with the communities and coming up with a needs analysis that will do for each community. Some of the items that the Member pointed out would be part of that. Obviously, we can't have volunteer fire departments, especially in some of the smaller communities that are untrained and unable to operate a lot of equipment that's expected of them. So with the new public safety division and the commitment made by the fire marshal's office to work with each community, I think we are going to

see a dramatic improvement that's available to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past summer we had a fire up in Tuk, a dump fire. We had volunteers going out there, chemicals burning, breathing apparatuses were insufficient because they were cracking at the seams of the masks. Your bunker gear, it's just right worn out. I know that he's saying it's the responsibility of the community, but I think the fire marshal's office... It's been nine months I've been asking this to happen. Should it take nine months for a person to jump on a plane and hit the communities and go check? Mr. Speaker, all I'm asking is the government try to commit extra dollars for the communities to get proper breathing apparatuses and bunker gear for the safety of the firefighters in harm's way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** My understanding is there were a couple of members of the public safety division office up in Tuk just recently. We'll continue to work with the communities to identify their needs. If they have equipment that needs replacing, as I stated earlier, we will work with the community in trying to identify the best places.

There's also, and I saw it firsthand at a public meeting that I went to amongst the Beaufort leaders, where one community had offered equipment to another community free of charge. So there's that opportunity there. It's just equipment that they had a surplus of and they felt one of the smaller communities could use it, so they donated it to the community. So there are many different ways that...

I hear the Member's point and he's obviously concerned about the safety of his constituents, as we are concerned about the safety of the volunteer firefighters. So I will commit to working closely with the Member in the community to see how best we can assist them as far as training and advancing their firefighting skills go. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 291-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I'd like to follow up on my statement and her statement as well.

I noted in the Minister's statement that there were no words that I read or understood which referenced that coverage would be extended to those residents of the NWT who do not currently have either chronic conditions coverage or

catastrophic drug coverage or supplementary health benefits coverage. So I'd like to ask the Minister, is it the intent of the Minister and the department to do that? Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Minister's statement, I will be coming back next week with more information on the work plan or the time frame within which the recommendations made in the Joint Working Group report need to be reviewed and considered, so I will be looking into that. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I'm afraid her words don't give me much comfort. She's mentioned that she's coming back to announce the process to talk about implementation. I have several concerns there. The coverage of people who are not currently covered is a very basic need and it's one that certainly all Members have agreed upon. It was not one that at the Joint Working Group there was any kind of disagreement on. So I need to know from the Minister, in terms of these announcements of process and implementation, will there be an opportunity for the public, I guess, to have input on those? I know she's mentioned the Standing Committee on Social Programs, but will the implementation plans and suggestions be out there for the public to comment on?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I do agree with the Member that the most important pillar of the Supplementary Health Policy that we rescinded is the fact that we would have been able to expand the coverage to the working poor as of next Monday. That aspect was the most immediate and present Anti-Poverty Strategy that we had that we are not able to implement. I agree with the Member that we need to look at that. We're going to look at that in a package with all the other suggestions that the Joint Working Group had asked us to work on and Cabinet is committed to looking at that.

Of course, in any changes, we work with the Standing Committee on Social Programs. Standing Committee on Social Programs and every other committee can give and invite public input. We have a process in place. I'm making a commitment in today's statement that I will be coming back with a time frame and what we are planning to do in that regard. We will have lots of time to review those and follow the regular consensus government process.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for her comments. I appreciate, I think, Standing Committee on Social Programs will certainly take advantage of the Minister's comment that we can go for public input. I imagine there will be certainly some of that.

The Minister mentioned the 2007 policy, which has now been rescinded. It kind of leads into my question. I guess two things: I don't think we need a policy to extend coverage to people who are not covered, but in the absence of a Supplementary Health Benefits Policy -- which I presume we now have -- what will govern extended health benefits, Metis health benefits and any other sort of catastrophic condition benefits?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Whatever she wants to do and she's suggesting these policy changes. As it is now, the Supp Health Policy that would have come into effect on November 1<sup>st</sup> has been rescinded. Everything is status quo until we change anything. If we need to include anything or change anything else, that's a policy change. So we need to do more work on that and I'm making a commitment, as I did in my Minister's statement, that we are working to come back with a proposal on the recommendations made by the Joint Working Group and anything else. Until we bring in new policies, the status quo remains.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I guess we have to agree to disagree. I'm puzzled that we need a policy change or a new policy in order to implement some of these efficiencies and changes to supp health and chronic conditions coverage.

The last thing I want to ask the Minister is whether or not... There have been a number of changes that have been mentioned in her statement. I have to assume, I'm hoping these are not all the changes that are being proposed. Are these the short-term changes and are there medium- and long-term changes coming?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Those are the changes that I will be coming forward with next week with a time frame and short-term, mid-term and long-term implementation plans, what we need to do and work together on in order to implement the changes that were suggested in the Joint Working Group and where we could move forward.

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

QUESTION 292-16(5):  
DRAFT DEVOLUTION  
AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we heard over the last number of weeks and the press release that has gone out to media advisers from the Gwich'in and Sahtu, statements by the Tlicho and the president of the Dene Nation, Mr. Bill Erasmus, that we do have a disconnect between the aboriginal leadership and the aboriginal

community regarding how this devolution process will affect them. I would like to ask the Premier about the olive branch handed out to formulate a meeting between yourself as the Premier of the Northwest Territories and the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and trying to find some solution to these outstanding issues that have been raised. I'd like to ask the Premier what we are doing to try to engage the aboriginal leadership and try to find resolution to this standoff.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process we've engaged in is we've already made calls to the regional leadership to see if we can pull a regional leaders' meeting together to discuss this issue. We'll be following up with a letter today.

**MR. KRUTKO:** As you noted, there is a deadline that has been in place. I'd like to ask the Premier if that deadline will be extended to allow for this meeting to take place before we have a drop-dead date where they either respond to participate or don't participate. Can we at least attempt to have that meeting before we come to that conclusion? Also to keep the Members in the House informed.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The deadline established was that through the chief negotiators' joint letter that went to the leadership. We've started to see those responses. We've always had a meeting planned for near the end of November. We have now contacted their offices to see if we can move that up. We'll follow up in hard copy. The deadline was put there in the sense of a response back from the regional leadership to the AIP. A decision going forward has yet to be made. In a sense, the comment was, can you respond back by the 31<sup>st</sup> on how you would be a part of it as the AIP states, and Members are aware that there's always an open door for them to join, whether it is on the 31<sup>st</sup> their indication of what are the concerns or issues they have. Many of those we can address through our regional leaders' meeting.

**MR. KRUTKO:** We have heard a lot of issues, whether it's regarding the cap that's been put in place or the aboriginal 25 percent or the whole area of how the powers are going to be shared, and what exactly the aboriginal role is going to be with regard to the negotiations and implementation of this arrangement. I'd like to ask the Premier if he is dealing directly one on one with those aboriginal groups that have those issues and are trying to find solutions to resolve these outstanding issues and trying to assure both the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government that these outstanding issues have to be resolved in some format. Would you deal directly with those aboriginal groups one on one and find resolution to those issues?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The agreement-in-principle that is before the regional leadership for their comment and feedback as well as that is before the federal government and ourselves, allows for that government-to-government bilateral process to proceed once an agreement is signed. There is a process built in to have the bilaterals with each group as we progress, if that is the decision made.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, this issue is more than simply a transfer of power from one government to another. It is a transfer of responsibility to indigenous people in the Northwest Territories by this transfer and the affects it's going to have on the indigenous population under treaty rights, land claim agreements, and Section 35 protection rights. I'd like to know if we have an aboriginal lawyer or aboriginal legal counsel to look at it from the aboriginal perspective on aboriginal rights and inherent rights. I'd like to ask again if that issue is going to be dealt with prior to a decision to sign off.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** This process, as I said in my statement, of the engagement, role, involvement from chief negotiators to legal counsel from the aboriginal groups, they have been involved in this. They are well aware of what's in there. We are as well. In fact, as I stated, we stand by the government's position on self-government and the inherent right. We stand by that. This agreement-in-principle will not take away authority from any aboriginal group that has their rights established through treaty and the modern treaties, being the land claims and self-government agreements. We stand by that in our commitment to continue to work with those. This agreement-in-principle is talking about Crown lands that are in the North that would then be the authority and regulations, and how we deal with those would be decided by Northerners. Their role, again, is clearly spelled out and the continued role of their involvement as we progress is spelled out in the AIP.

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

QUESTION 293-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For an hour this morning I was very pleased and very optimistic. When the Minister came out and said they've rescinded the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy that was great news. Unfortunately, since then I've heard a bunch of my colleagues ask some questions and I've heard responses from the

Minister, and that optimism is pretty much gone. Mostly from one statement.

The Minister said that the problem with supp health is that people just don't want changes to the supp health. That is not true. That is not true at all. I've heard people talk about changes. People do want changes to supp health. People who have catastrophic conditions are concerned about that. People want people with low income to be covered. I think the Minister has missed the point.

Coming to where we are today, the Minister has indicated that she's going to make further announcements regarding implementation to these changes next week. Great, but we don't know what changes those are. Could the Minister tell me what those changes are? What changes are going to start being implemented?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Members, it sounds like they're hung up on that sentence in the Minister's statement that said I'll be making announcements regarding the implementation of these changes. What changes? What changes are the three paragraphs prior to that sentence? Changes: to require the use of third-party insurance as the first option; a pharmaceutical strategy to include generic drugs, drug pricing and efficiencies, and cost containment; a pharmaceuticals procurement distribution and access; also changes to eliminate grandfathering that happened in 2004. May I remind all the Members on the other side, those were the exact suggestions that were made in the Joint Working Group report and the communication.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** That's what I wanted the Minister to say again. I know she's already said it and the answers are yes, yes, yes, and yes. The problem is that each one of those are so broad and so big that before anything can be implemented, some research has to be done around those on how we're going to implement it. What aspects of each of those are going to require implementation today, tomorrow, and in the future? To tell me that they're going to start implementing something right away seems pretty premature to me.

That's the point I think we're trying to make. We don't oppose what you're saying, Minister Lee. We support it. We agree with those things. What we want is to make sure that information is researched and how we do those things is done. I don't see that here. Is the Minister, when she's talking about an implementation plan, is she talking about the implementation of a work plan and how we're going to research those things, design those things and implement those things, or does she already have something she wishes to implement? It's a subtle difference but it's an important difference.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** These are important items. We take these recommendations very seriously. No, I will not be announcing on Monday that we are implementing these. I agree with the Members that these need work. We have knowledge in the department and I will be coming back on Monday to set a time frame and the process on when we're going to get this work done and how we can work with the other side on implementing them. I will be consulting with the Members and sharing information and work through these ticket items, because those are important and we want to get them done.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Optimism is starting to creep back up. That is basically what we needed to hear, is that this is a work plan and not an implementation plan. A work plan may have implementation steps further down. We can't implement things without it.

I want to talk to another statement that the Minister made that caused me some concern. Based on where we are today, we're status quo, which is unfortunate but it is what it is. We do have to move forward on finding some ways to help the low-income people and I think that should continue to be a priority. But the Minister said that if we didn't rescind this policy, that she was going to make changes on Monday for the low-income people. We'll check Hansard tomorrow, but I'm pretty sure she said we would implement on Monday. I'm curious, what would she be implementing on Monday? Because I, on this side of the House, have never seen any program, policies or procedures about anything that the Minister was planning to implement on Monday. When she said that, quite frankly, I was very surprised. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The Supplementary Health Policy that was rescinded would have come into effect on Monday. That's what I said. But it's not. It's gone. I said that.

On Monday I will be making an announcement about how we move forward to look at the recommendations made by the Joint Working Group. What I was saying was had that Supplementary Health Benefits Policy not been rescinded, we would have been able to have coverage for those working poor that we were trying to extend the coverage to. Thank you.

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** That's my point, Mr. Speaker. The Minister was talking about implementing something for the working poor on Monday and, yes, it's not going to happen, which is unfortunate, but that's where we ended up as a result of the rescinding of this policy.

My point is still there, Mr. Speaker. We, on this side of the House, never saw anything about any program that was going to be implemented on

Monday. How was the Minister planning to... When the working group report is tabled this afternoon, it doesn't say anything about implementing any program on Monday for the working poor. So what program was this and where's it coming from? It's another surprise. It's not going to happen, granted, but it's just another example of what is she talking about, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, he's got to calm down. All that is saying is that we know, we've been talking about this 2007 Supplementary Health Policy for the last three years, and that's been delayed. The implementation of it has been delayed and delayed and delayed. Had we not done anything, it was set to come into effect on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The important point here is that we are moving forward. We are accepting the report. We want to work together and we will share the information. We have to work together on how to bring this third-party insurance and pharmaceuticals strategy and all of the recommendations, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 294-16(5):  
CULTURAL PROGRAMS IN  
TU NEDHE SCHOOLS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I spoke about the important work that Tu Nedhe schools are doing to promote and preserve aboriginal culture in their communities. I'd like to follow up my statement with questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday the Minister tabled the NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan. It's good to see the government recognizing the importance of preserving aboriginal language. However, there was little mention about the connection between language and culture. I'd like to ask if the Minister acknowledges that there is a strong connection between language and culture. Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, that is part of the process. The recommendations that were brought forward, there are over 70 recommendations, and some of the recommendations would reflect on what the Member is referring to, the culture preservation and also the language in the schools as well. There's heavy emphasis from the elders, from the traditional leaders that we need to have that in the schools. So I'm glad the Member is raising that issue, because that is important. It's important for this government to proceed with that. Mr. Speaker, that is part of the plan. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to developing a strategic plan for the preservation of traditional aboriginal culture activities? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, this will be part of the plan as we move forward to start implementing the 73 recommendations that were brought forward. We will have a plan in place with the schools. We need to work with the education councils, as well, and with the leaders. But, most definitely, we will have a plan in place to deal with those matters. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the Minister is willing to consider this. Many schools are struggling with the delivery of their culture programming today. Will the Minister commit to increasing funding to those schools that are being proactive in the delivery of aboriginal cultural programming starting the next school year?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, I think we have been proactive in the past. We had a ministerial directive to have that funding that's been distributed to education councils directly spent on the language and culture preservation. This will be an area that we need to highlight as part of the business planning cycle for next year and the following years. It is a priority for us and definitely this will be part of the discussion as we move forward.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about the work being done by the Lutselk'e Dene School and the Deninu Kue School in Fort Resolution, but more can be done. Both schools agree that they can do more. Will the Minister assist the Lutselk'e Dene School and the Deninu Kue by allocating an additional \$10,000 to each school to help the culture programming immediately? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, I must commend the two schools for promoting even more of a culturally relevant program, on-the-land program, and the activities that are happening. Definitely, that's a discussion that we need to have and I will definitely include the Member, and also the Members as we move forward on the importance of identifying key resources of investment that we need to identify for next year's business planning cycle. Mr. Speaker, definitely, we will keep the Members informed on that. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 295-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little bit conflicted and confused by some of the dialogue that's taken place in the House here today. I'm sure anybody listening in the public must be wondering, too, and kind of scratching their head. Here we're heralding this big victory that we got for rescinding the 2007 policy. Mr. Speaker, people should make no mistake: this doesn't mean that we've entered from having the 2007 Supplementary Health Policy, and now because we're rescinding it we've entered into some kind of utopia, you know, some kind of Shangri-La on supplementary health care services. Absolutely not. Mr. Speaker, the real facts of the matter are that the supplementary health system is broken. It's unfair and it's inequitable, and we, as legislators, have got to do something to address that. There are people with no coverage who need coverage. There are people who are getting coverage who maybe don't need coverage.

Before people run out and start ripping up their third-party health insurance cards, we should just put this in context. This is not a huge victory. This is a lot of work ahead of us to make sure that we get something in place that is right, and I'm glad that we have the time to do that, because, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that there was one thing in that new policy which was the red herring out there that caused everybody concern, and let's call it what it was. It was the income testing. Nobody wanted income testing. Maybe there won't be income testing, because there hasn't been enough research gone on to see if income testing is the way to go, but if we think that we're going to continue to pay seniors on supplementary health benefits this formulary and this level and pay people on NIHB this level, think again. It's not going to happen. There's going to be parity. There's going to be...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do you have a question, Mrs. Groenewegen?

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Anyway, my question for the Minister is: Just because we do not have the 2007 policy, the Minister will concur that it is not going to be status quo going forward. Correct?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely correct. I couldn't say it any better and next week I am going to come to the table and say how we are going to try to get it down, as much as possible, of what needs to be done.

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

QUESTION 296-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the great news of the rescinding of the 2007 policy, I am hesitant to ask questions, because I'm afraid that the government will take back the good news and change it or mess it up in one form or another.

In listening to the questions that my colleagues have been posing to the Minister of Health and quite namely one of the questions highlighted by MLA Bisaro, which is, okay, what's guiding the future of the Supplementary Health Benefits program? It causes me to wonder where are the working poor in this equation and what can they have to look forward to. Can the Minister provide some guidance to this House where the working poor will fit in this equation going forward for supplementary health benefits, recognizing that all groups like the public, the seniors and whatnot all spoke in favour of immediate support to them? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's status quo for the moment because the policy to bring them in has not been implemented. I will be coming back next week, I said, to work on how we move forward on those recommendations of the Joint Working Group, which included expansion of coverage to the working poor. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate the answer, because that was very clear -- status quo, which means if you're in the working-poor bracket, that means nothing. At least it's clear and no one's fooled by that. So the reality is, what's holding back from immediate coverage to the working poor if that will be the long-term principles and guidelines? What's stopping this government from making that immediate decision? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, the Joint Working Group, which was made up of six Members, came up with a number of recommendations and we are going to try and work through those and I am coming back with an implementation schedule/work plan on how to do them. It's our wish to get it done within the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly tell the Minister right now, loud and clear, and I have no doubt I have a number of colleagues who would support this statement, which would be I would certainly believe that we could move on a policy to make an amendment immediately to include the working poor, as well as wait for the highlights and

guidelines and certainly direction coming forward next week by the Minister of Health.

In short, Mr. Speaker, what's stopping the Minister or, of course, the Premier, from answering the question, or perhaps the Deputy Premier from answering the question? Anyone else over there? The question being: What's to stop the Minister of Health and Social Services from immediate coverage to this group and we work out the details as we go forward? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The Members know, and the public should know, that the Joint Working Group provided the report to Cabinet and the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning a couple of weeks ago, at the beginning of this session, actually, and we just got the response from SCOPP this Monday. We responded to that today, so we need time to work through the recommendations made in the Joint Working Group report.

The Members always speak to us about following the process and working together, and we will do that. We will have a work plan on Monday as to how we go forward. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, clearly, paralysis by analysis, as said many times by my colleague Minister Miltenberger. The reality is, we can move on this issue. Cabinet agrees the working poor need coverage. I haven't heard any opposition on this side of the House that the working poor needs coverage and I can guarantee you today that if you went outside of this building, this ivory tower, and asked the everyday person in the public if the working poor deserve coverage, they need coverage.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is quite simple. What's stopping Cabinet from moving on an initiative that they like, we like and everybody else likes? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The Joint Working Group report that will be tabled later has 11 recommendations and it will become public later on, so we will be responding to those on how we can move forward in working through those recommendations wherever possible, whenever possible, as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 297-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not surprisingly, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I'd like to start by again thanking the Minister and Cabinet for moving forward in this way. I think they've heard the people, and this is democracy in action. I'd like to start by saying this whole process has been like

crossing a wide and dry desert and finally having a glass of tall, cool water offered by the Minister here. So it is greatly appreciated. But this is relief that needs to get out there to all as the first step. There's an anxious and traumatized public awaiting relief from the previous highly objectionable proposals. So I'm asking, in the interest of good communication that's needed immediately with the public, what action is the Minister taking to immediately let the public know? Is there a press conference with the ability of reporters to ask questions and get the word out to our public immediately that we're back to a reasonable approach here? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the most public of public forums. We made the announcement this morning. Mrs. Groenewegen, as chair of the P and P, as well as my co-chair of the Joint Working Group, we have agreed and we are committed to working together on any of the communications that we do. We will do interviews together, because we would like to continue to work together in the spirit in which we worked together in that Joint Working Group. So, Mr. Speaker, we will be open to any interviews or anything and we will be tabling the document this afternoon, followed by a statement next week. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate that. This is a public process, but we need lots of public processes on this, as I mentioned. There's a highly traumatized public awaiting some relief here.

In terms of next steps, I think this decision and this work between Cabinet and this side of the House is an additional step towards resolving some of these issues. We have made some agreement on the principles that are detailed in the report and this is important progress. But it's not a simple measure. Even our next actions still require, as the Minister has profiled and this side of the House has profiled, some back and forth and careful discussion. Can we agree that a high priority, perhaps a first priority, is progress towards ensuring that the basics of supplementary health coverage are available to everybody in the Northwest Territories through one plan or another very soon?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** That's the precise question that is the crux or main theme of all the discussions we've had in the last three or, actually, last seven years since I've been in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say again that I think that the Joint Working Group report and its recommendations and principles went a long way in making statements on that. We are committed, as I stated in the Minister's statement, to do what we can in the time we have left, what is doable, to lay out a work plan and try to do as much as possible. I

agree with Members who stated earlier that this requires a lot of work and we need to work through it. The important thing is, as Mrs. Groenewegen said, there are things we need to do to improve the program. So I, as Minister, am committed to work with the Members to see how we can move forward on those. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** There are clearly different perspectives on how much information analysis has been provided towards the consideration of the proposal put forward. So putting that aside, Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister if she will commit to providing thorough and transparent analyses whenever she's bringing forward proposals for consideration of committee. Mahsi.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** That's the expectation that we live under on everything we do. So we will be following those. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 298-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to have a stab at the Minister's statement. I'm coming at it from the aboriginal perspective. It seems like you are also going to look at the extended health benefits, but also Metis health benefits. The same thing applies to the aboriginal benefits by way of non-insured health benefits. It's a federal program. What are we doing to consult those organizations, those aboriginal groups, Metis locals, band councils and memberships of those particular programs to ensure they are engaged in whatever we are doing here? If we are going to claw back and allow people to get third-party insurance or look at some means testing, I'd like to know what we are doing to consult those organizations that have these benefits.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where they are impacted, one of the things in the statement is to look at all of the extended health benefits programs, Metis Health and NIHB, to find some sort of parity. Now, that would take some analysis and work and where it's possible and appropriate, we will work with other governments to keep them in the loop. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** One of the concerns I have about the rollback is what we're finding statistically is an aboriginal income in the Northwest Territories is around \$18,000. We're expecting them to pay anything more. It's a question of affordability and I don't think a lot of aboriginal people can afford to

pay for coverage. There was the issue around income testing, looking at that opportunity and people getting third-party insurance. I'd like to ask, are those options still on the table and also looking at using the format that it would be some sort of wage parity in regards to how this program is going to be implemented?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The Member knows that NIHB is not part of this program and although NIHB encourages people to have third-party options and when they do, they are asked to go to that first. One of the suggestions made that we want to look at is to require all Metis health and supp health... Well, it's no longer supp health, it's now extended health benefits which is what's in place. We will look at how we can implement requiring third-party insurance and allowing or encouraging people to go through that process first. So that will be part of the work that we'll be doing moving forward.

**MR. KRUTKO:** The other issue I know that has been bounced around, and we can agree to disagree, but one of the areas that we have to look at is in regard to income testing. We have to ensure that those who can't afford pay a little bit, those who can afford, use their coverage. So is income testing still part of the review process that's going forward and will that also be considered in these changes?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The recommendation that we have that we need to look at it is to encourage people to get third-party insurance and use it first. So we need to look at that. We will be coming back with a work plan on how long we need to take to look at those. We hope to be able to do that sooner than later and what best way there is to encourage people to do that. We will be making those proposals. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the areas that I have issues with is with regard to when people are sick. I'll use NIHB. There are specific things listed on NIHB that you aren't covered for. If those things are not on the NIHB, you can't get it. So basically if you have an illness such as cancer and you require certain vitamins or certain types of liquids, regardless of whether it's insured, you have to pay for that under NIHB. Are we going to find ways to enhance the Catastrophic Health Program to expand so we can help those people that don't have the financial means to get the medications or supplements they need to sustain them during their illness? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The programs that we have for the NWT residents, whether it be NIHB, the federal government's NIHB, Metis Health Benefits and Supp Health, that makes it so there is no need for catastrophic drug coverage. So what the Member is talking about is other things like people in low income, people can't afford. So if you are

talking about how to compare between the three programs and finding equity, that is part of the recommendation of the Joint Working Group and we need to look at those and look at the proposal. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 299-16(5):  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO

SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to the Minister's last comment with the supplementary or extended health benefits, "there's no need for a Catastrophic Drug Program." I'm not sure if I understand what the Minister means by that. Can she explain that to me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I meant simply by that under supp health benefits, as it exists now -- not supp health -- extended health benefits, people with chronic conditions or requirements, they get paid right now. They are covered right now under the existing policy. So the catastrophic drug coverage question came in because of the changes that were proposed, but that's gone. We said that this morning. So there is no need. We have the most generous Health Benefits Program in the North and they are all covered under the existing policy. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** So just for clarity for the public, the status quo includes an Extended Health Benefits Program that includes coverage for seniors, coverage for catastrophic costs and coverage for Metis. But I think what my colleagues were asking is do aboriginal individuals who are currently covered by NIHB, if they have a catastrophic condition, they are covered by their insurance hopefully first, and then they're covered by NIHB to a top-up, but their costs would still be significant. So under our existing programs, aboriginal people who have catastrophic conditions can still receive some top-up today. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** That's what happens right now. NIHB, then Supp Health. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Okay, so following along my colleague's line there, so what the department is proposing, and I support, is first insurance, then if you still have some costs, then our existing Supplementary Health Program, which includes costs for catastrophic costs if you have a catastrophic condition. You can still access that program today; we're just asking you to help us

help you by utilizing your insurance first. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The Member is going into the details of which we have to still work on. That's what I am saying in saying that we need to look at how we implement the recommendations made in the Joint Working Group. Part of it is to review parity and equity between the three programs. We need to figure out how do we encourage people to get third-party insurance, how do we encourage employers to get third-party insurance. We want that to be the first option, but we need to work out how that can be done. The Member made those suggestions in our review process and there are other suggestions, but those are things we need to work on. I think it's premature for us to talk about the details of that, because I don't have a set plan in front of me. Thank you.

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree. I think what the Minister is doing is highlighting the fact that this still requires a significant amount of work and earlier she mentioned that it's not an implementation plan she's bringing forward next week. It's a work plan, which is what we needed to hear; implementation plan/work plan are significantly different things. So I'm happy about that. The Minister has already agreed to work with us on this side of the House about that implementation plan. So I just realized I don't have a question, so I'll sit down.

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

QUESTION 300-16(5):  
WAIT TIMES FOR HEARING TESTS  
IN THE NWT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another question for the Minister of Health and Social Services, but probably to her great happiness, it's not regarding supplementary health benefits. It's regarding hearing tests.

I've had some complaints from constituents that it's taking 18 months or more to get hearing tests here in the Northwest Territories. They're gravely concerned. I've brought this to the attention of the Minister's office and at the time the response was yes, that's the reality. In short, what is being done on this problem and has the Department of Health and Social Services solved this problem by finally being able to bring somebody in and shorten up those wait times?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right that this issue was brought up. I believe I followed up on it with the status of what was happening at the time, but I don't have the most recent updates. I will commit to getting back to the Member on that.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Minister is right; she did provide a response that, yes, they know that. Her response also said they're looking at it, but the reality is that this response was lacking in the sense that it didn't seem to have a plan to bring someone in or a long-term plan to solve the solution. The issue comes down to the fact that I'm being contacted again by more constituents saying that this continues to be a very important issue and they're concerned is the government hearing them. Would the Minister commit to getting an answer and update before the end of this sitting so if there are problems, we can deal with them in a timely way before session ends? We usually get better answers to our questions while we're in the House than outside.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** To be fair and just going by my recollection, I believe what we were working on was to have some of our local people trained so that we could create more of a human resource pool for that office. I believe the starting time for that training program was this fall. I don't have the most recent updates, so I'm willing to look into that. I believe our response last time was more than we know about that. I think it was more precise on our action plan. I will get back to the Member.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important issue for many people who have hearing loss. It's difficult for some people who have hearing loss to finally admit it, let alone deal with it. It is a significant challenge in families and I'm well aware of some families out there that struggle trying to communicate with each other in the way of dealing with this particular issue. The important thing is, will the Minister respond to this issue with a plan of action to show how the department is going to deal with this particular issue and showing the resources that can be committed to this problem with some time frames on how we plan to do this on the short term, again back to a long-term solution?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** As I stated, I will get back to the Member with the details.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees

on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

#### BILL 12: AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR ACT

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act. This bill amends the Liquor Act to allow for an inspector or peace officer to seize and remove anything referred to in a warrant for the search of a dwelling house. A public hearing and clause-by-clause review was held on October 28, 2010. The committee wishes to report that Bill 12 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

### Tabling of Documents

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 104-16(5): REPORT OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS WORKING GROUP

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Report of the Supplementary Health Benefits Joint Working Group.

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

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 105-16(5): CBC NEWS ARTICLE, YUKON BAN ON DISTRACTED DRIVING, OCTOBER 20, 2010

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While perusing the CBC website I came across a very interesting and informative story to make sure I could table it before the House: Yukon Passes Cell Phone Driving Ban. I certainly hope the Minister of Transportation makes extra note of this story and tabling.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

### Notices of Motion

#### MOTION 22-16(5): REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 103-16(5), GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CONTRACTS OVER \$5,000 REPORT, YEAR-TO-DATE OF THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2010

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I'll move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Tabled Document 103-16(5), Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 Report, Year-to-Date of the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2010, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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

#### MOTION 23-16(5): DISSOLUTION OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Legislative Assembly requests the Governor-in-Council to dissolve the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly on September 4, 2011, to permit a general election for the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories to be held on October 3, 2011.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 13: APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES) 2011-2012

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 13, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) 2011-2012, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 14:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 15:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
FIRE PREVENTION ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 16:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE DOG ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Dog Act, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 17:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 18:  
AN ACT TO REPEAL THE SETTLEMENTS ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 19:  
MUNICIPAL STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time.

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

BILL 20:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EVIDENCE ACT

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2010, I will move that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

### Motions

MOTION 20-16(5):  
RETENTION OF LONG-FORM  
CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE,  
CARRIED

**MR. BROMLEY:** WHEREAS the Government of Canada intends to eliminate the Statistics Canada long-form census questionnaire and replace it with a voluntary survey;

AND WHEREAS the long-form census is a critical source of information about the diversity, employment, income, education, and other characteristics of Canadians;

AND WHEREAS in the NWT, data from the Census of Population and the NWT Community Survey are used extensively by all levels of government and many businesses and agencies to monitor socio-economic conditions; to design, monitor and evaluate programs; and to plan policy initiatives and identify emerging trends;

AND WHEREAS this information is essential to businesses, research, planning, and the design and evaluation of public policies and programs;

AND WHEREAS users of this data, ranging from the business community to university researchers to social justice advocates, are opposed to this change;

AND WHEREAS in the NWT, one of the effects may be the loss of data as a basis on which to compare northern to southern communities;

AND WHEREAS the long-form census questionnaire was sent to 20 percent of households in Yellowknife and administered to every household by canvassers in all communities outside of

Yellowknife and provides a high quality and depth of data;

AND WHEREAS introduction of a voluntary census will introduce uncertainty with its reliance upon householders' willingness to complete and mail a census form;

AND WHEREAS people who tend to rely most on government assistance programs, particularly aboriginal citizens, are most affected by literacy and social issues and hence less inclined to complete and mail a voluntary census form;

AND WHEREAS it is estimated that it would cost the Government of the Northwest Territories approximately \$500,000 to increase its data collection to replace the data no longer available from Statistics Canada;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Legislative Assembly urges the Government of Canada to reverse its decision to eliminate the mandatory long-form census questionnaire.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the mover of the motion, I will offer remarks on the need to make this call on the federal government for preservation of the full, long-form census data collection.

Accurate, reliable and detailed data is essential to this government's ability to develop policies and programs and, very importantly, to evaluate whether our programs are having the best results. Long-form data is essential to the continuing improvement of our services. The information obtained through the long-form census is essential to the well-being of our citizens.

As the motion points out, the people who rely most on government services to overcome their many social disadvantages are exactly the people least able or likely to complete and mail a census form. The cumulative impact of low response rates from the disadvantaged would yield an indication that the conditions of disadvantage are actually improving. Clearly, this would be untrue.

We don't fight poverty and social malaise simply by failing to collect information that reflects these conditions. We have a duty to the least advantaged to ensure their conditions are recognized in the most basic sense by the full and complete description of those conditions with statistical information. It's hard to understand how a federal government could decide to do without this data and still progress towards a just and equitable society that meets the needs of those most in need.

It's estimated that filling the long-form census gaps with our own Statistics Bureau could cost this

government as much as \$500,000 more each year. Lack of the data would seriously damage or even eliminate our ability to compare our NWT conditions with those of the provinces.

This data is essential when we seek funds from the federal government for our programs. Also, if the full data collection is resumed after an interruption, the lack of past information would make accurate historical comparisons impossible and unreliable.

Our businesses need this data to continually sharpen their competitiveness. Students and educators seeking to learn their disciplines or apply their learning to the betterment of society will find they lack the basic tools. Our non-government organizations and volunteers who are eager to improve social conditions with their energy and enthusiasm will find they don't have the information essential to making the best use of their limited funds and capacity.

Our poor and disadvantaged crucially need this information as the emphasis of their conditions.

There is a requirement for information for measuring progress for implementation of an Anti-Poverty Strategy, for example. The GNWT needs this data to intelligently find its way into the future. I look forward to the support of all Members in sending this clear message to the federal government and I particularly appreciate Cabinet's support in moving this motion forward and I will be calling for a recorded vote. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy; sorry.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Data is essential to any program, policy and evaluation of any program and policy. I'm concerned that with the elimination of the requirement for the long-form census, the data we are going to get is going to be subject. The quality of the data is going to be in question and we rely on that data to make informed decisions in this House and in this government. So I'm very concerned about the elimination of the requirement for the long-form census. I'm curious how the federal government intends to make decisions without that data. It's a concern and, as a result, I'm going to be supporting this motion. I think we need to send a message that it is going to affect us and when they're making their decisions, they have to think about the people that it is affecting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm totally in support of this motion. For me, it's a no-brainer. I have been perplexed since the federal government

announced they were cancelling the long-form census as to what the rationale was for them doing so.

The motion itself references any number of reasons why we need the long-form census. So I don't think I'm going to repeat what's in the motion. My colleague Mr. Bromley has covered many other reasons as well.

I just want to read a quote from the executive director of the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg. She said, "They strongly urge the Conservative government to reconsider its plan to cancel the mandatory long-form census. The information and statistics generated by this are critical to the health and well-being of all aboriginal peoples of Canada."

And that applies in spades to us here in the NWT. So I will be in support of this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government, as well, has agreed to second this motion and will be supporting the motion and its intent for the reasons listed by the Member for Weledeh. I'd also point out that we're not alone in our concern. There are governments across the country that have filed their concerns and asked for the federal government to reconsider. I have been, along with many Members on this side of the House, at the federal/provincial table talking about northern concerns and have been told many times that our numbers are so small that we're not statistically significant, and that it's very difficult to plan and make policy decisions because of that fact. This lack of information will not help that particular circumstance, so we will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will allow the mover of the motion to make closing comments. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the support of colleagues here. I think it's clear that there is general and considerable concern about eliminating the collection of this information that's needed as a basis for good decision and its absence would result in suspect data. We suffer from small numbers and the difficulty of statistics anyway, so we don't need this added problem. Mr. Speaker, I just want to again ask the Cabinet if the Premier would allow a free vote and I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Clerk, the Member is requesting a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Bromley; Mr. Abernethy; Mr. Ramsay; Mrs. Groenewegen; Mr. Beaulieu; Mr. Hawkins; Mr. Jacobson; Ms. Bisaro; Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South; Mr. Krutko.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

Results of the motion: in favour, 16; against, zero; abstaining, zero. The motion is carried unanimously.

---Carried

---Applause

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 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project; Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits; Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits – What We Heard; Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy; Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future;" Tabled Document 98-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010; Tabled Document 99-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2009-2010; Tabled Document 100-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011; Tabled Document 101-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Committee Report 3-16(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act; and Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I call Committee of the Whole to order. Items in Committee of the Whole today are: tabled documents 4, 30, 38, 62, 75, 98, 99, 100, 101, Bill 4, Committee Report 3-16(5), and Minister's Statement 65-16(5). What is the wish of Committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee today would like to proceed with table documents 98, 99, 100 and 101, please. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. With that, we'll begin with Tabled Document 99-16(5) after our break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break, we agreed we'd begin with tabled documents 98, 99 and 100. So at this time, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he has any comments. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010. This document outlines an increase of \$29.284 million for operations expenditures for departmental over-expenditures in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

During the year-end process to finalize the GNWT financial statements, adjustments are typically made to department expenditures to ensure the statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. The 2009-2010 year-end process identified a number of adjustments that result in departments exceeding their appropriation authority.

Section 36(4) of the Financial Administration Act states that the Minister of Finance shall submit an appropriation in the form of a supplementary appropriation bill to the Legislative Assembly to finance any departmental over-expenditures resulting from the year-end process.

Therefore, appropriation authority is being sought for adjustments in the following two categories of over-expenditures:

1. Appropriation authority totalling \$25.5 million to account for the reallocation of previously expended capital investment expenditures to operations expenditures. The net financial impact on government operations is nil as the transaction does not represent any additional outlay.
2. \$3.8 million to fund departments who over-expended their approved operations expenditures appropriations in the 2009-2010 year and thus require appropriation authority for the over-expenditures as required by the Financial Administration Act. These over-expenditures result from accounting adjustments made after year-end.

I'm prepared to review the details of the supplementary appropriation document. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing in any witnesses.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Is committee agreed the Minister brings in his witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Minister, for the record, can you introduce your witnesses?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have Ms. Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance; and Sandy Kalgutkar, deputy secretary to the FMB.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Any general comments with regard to Supplementary Appropriation, No. 4?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Committee agree? Detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** You can turn to page 3. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This section deals with the increased costs incurred by the Department of Human Resources to address the backlog and that has been a long-standing concern of the House. I'm wondering where are we at in addressing the backlog in the Department of Human Resources and can we anticipate further costs and further our actions in place to prevent a similar huge backlog accumulating again. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is work underway. There was a backlog identified as of September 10, 2010, of 1,820 outstanding pay issues. There's been work to reduce that. As of September 27<sup>th</sup>, they whittled that number down to 1,400.

There is work underway on all aspects of the Human Resources mandate to address the various problems that have been identified.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I know that there are still issues of employee satisfaction in the department and these are brought to my attention. I think that shows some progress if the net has dropped from 1,800 to 1,400, but it's a pretty modest progress. Again,

we've been dealing with this for much longer than the Minister had indicated. I guess I'll leave it at that and just highlight my concerns that we need to show better progress than this. We need to demonstrate that things are in place to prevent further accumulations at the same time that we're working to clear up this backlog.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We've listened closely to the Member's concerns and cautions and accept them in the spirit in which they were intended.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 3, Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010, Human Resources, operations expenditures, management and recruitment, not previously authorized, \$787,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$787,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 4, Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$5.028 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$5.028 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 5, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health services programs, not previously authorized, \$19.131 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$19.131 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 6, Justice, operations expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$1.098 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$317,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.415 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, \$2.923 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$2.923 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree that we've concluded Tabled Document 98-16(5)? Mr. Bromley.

COMMITTEE MOTION 14-16(5):  
CONCURRENCE OF TD 98-16(5),  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 4, 2009-2010,  
CARRIED

**MR. BROMLEY:** I move that consideration of Tabled Document 98-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 98-16(5) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** A motion is on the floor. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Question is being called.

---Carried

With that, I'd like to thank the Minister. If you can, you could maybe just remain at the table to make your comments for the next item, which is Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2009-2010. This document outlines a decrease of \$15 million for operations expenditures and a corresponding increase of \$15 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

There is only one item in the supplementary estimates, a \$15 million transfer between infrastructure contributions and capital investment expenditures for the Department of Transportation to account for the Deh Cho Bridge as a GNWT asset. There is no financial impact on government operations as the transaction is a reallocation of previously approved funding.

I'm prepared to review the details of the supplementary appropriation document.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will now open the floor for general comments in regard to the supplementary appropriation. Detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We'll turn to page 5, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure

Expenditures), No. 5, Transportation, operations expenditures, highways, not previously authorized, negative \$15 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$15 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 6, Transportation, capital investment expenditures, highways, not previously authorized, \$15 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$15 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 99-16(5)? Mrs. Groenewegen.

COMMITTEE MOTION 15-16(5):  
CONCURRENCE OF TD 99-16(5),  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 5, 2009-2010,  
CARRIED

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I move that consideration of Tabled Document 99-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2009-2010, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 99-16(5) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** A motion is on the floor. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Question is being called.

---Carried

As we agreed, the next item we'll be dealing with is Tabled Document 100-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011. Mr. Miltenberger, do you have any opening comments?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011. This document outlines an increase of \$17.471 million in operations expenditures for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

The supplementary estimates include the necessary transfer of the appropriations from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to the NWT Housing Corporation as a contribution from the Department of Finance for the Public

Housing Rental Subsidy Program and its associated administrative costs.

The other major items in the supplementary estimates include:

1. \$7.5 million for the Department of Health and Social Services to fund initiatives and programs under the federal government's Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative;
2. a \$4.1 million special warrant approved June 29, 2010, for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to fund increased costs incurred during the 2010 forest fire season;
3. \$3.6 million for the Department of Health and Social Services to fund the 2009-2010 medical travel costs incurred by the Stanton Territorial Health Authority;
4. \$622,000 for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to fund the emergency response plan to combat the anthrax outbreak this summer.

I'm prepared to review the details of this supplementary appropriations document.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Any general comments regarding the supplementary appropriations? Detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Turn to page 3, Executive, operations expenditures, Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, \$150,000. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering a little detail on this. Basically my question is why the frequency of twice a year. Are all communities going to be done twice a year? Typically I would think these things would be done once a year or every three years. I'm looking for some justification for the twice a year. Perhaps that's in how complete the surveys are done each year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is going to give us the baseline information to hopefully track a positive impact of the changes that are coming with the Electrical Rate Review and the changes to the rates, especially in the thermal communities. In particular the interest, of course, is to track things like food basket costs. The plan is to use the schedule laid out and see if that will deal with the adequacy.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That helps the explanation. So will there be feedback, then, to retailers of goods and services that indicates the government's perspectives based on those price surveys?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, the intent is to have the basis of good blue-chip information

where we can take a look community by community at the impacts and be able to share concerns and information with the communities and the businesses in the communities so that we can see what's happening both with the costs and other impacts that may be there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We're on page 3, Executive, operations expenditures, Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, \$150,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Executive, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$75,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$225,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 4, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operations expenditures, intergovernmental relations, not previously authorized, \$65,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$65,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Finance, operations expenditures, deputy minister's office, not previously authorized, \$34.214 million. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess it's kind of ironic, I was talking about this yesterday and the decision to transfer the Social Housing Program over to ECE three years ago or four years ago resulted in them needing to hire I think it was 11 or 12 new staff positions at ECE. This is coming before Members of this House requesting the establishment of five new positions for the administration of the program with the Housing Corporation. That's exactly where it belongs. It was with the Housing Corporation. But there's been no corresponding human resource plan on the 11 positions and the \$1.2 million that ECE has been spending the last three years on the administration of this program. I find it almost hard to imagine that without that HR plan why we would, in good conscience, approve five more positions at the Housing Corporation when the government hasn't even shown us what they're doing with the 11 that were hired in the first place. So I would like to get a response to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is part of the adjustment to follow up on the commitment made in this House to return the resources and the public housing rental scale operations and authority back to the Housing Corporation. This is part of the cost. In the ensuing

years, of course, there's been other forced growth pressures that have resulted in what is before this House today. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** The money that would appear here for the establishment of those five positions, if you divide that by five it's about \$43,000, \$44,000. I'm just wondering why it's not more money if you're establishing five positions. It should be much more than...probably twice as much as what appears here. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, the positions that are laid out here are to address some of the costs of the transfer and also recognizing, as I indicated, that in the prior three years there has been some other forced growth pressures that resulted in the need for some continued resources with Education. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** When we were going through that housing initiative and putting 500 new units on the ground in communities around the Northwest Territories, land tenure was a big issue at the Housing Corporation and additional positions were needed to allow the construction of those new units in communities and a number of employees were added. I'm just wondering, maybe we need to see an HR plan now for the Housing Corporation as well, because those positions were there. I know some of them were term positions but... How is the Housing Corporation going to utilize the people that are there already with these new positions? Are they going to migrate people into these positions or are these going to be brand new positions, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, the intent is to contain our costs, and the questions and suggestions that the Member has, or recommendations, would relate to the business planning process. The Member's suggestions for an HR plan that will clearly delineate the resources that are now going to be in place to take over the public housing rental scale are all very legitimate comments and suggestions that would be best debated as we look at the main estimates and the business planning process. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** To my knowledge, I sat through the business planning process that we just had, and I know the main estimates will come before the House in February, but to my recollection, we didn't have a discussion on establishing these five new positions, but I might be mistaken. Maybe if I could get that clarified by the Minister. Was that part of the discussions during our deliberations of the Housing Corporation's business plans? Because I don't recall seeing the five new positions for the administration of the PHRS in those plans. I might be mistaken. My memory might be failing me, but I don't recall that. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We'll confirm the particulars as it accounts for the 11 positions,

the five new ones. I think there is some ongoing discussion here as to whether we were, in fact, transferring some positions and Education is keeping some as opposed to adding new ones. I'll commit to the Member and to the Chair that we'll have that information before the committee by Monday.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I thank the Minister for that. I think that would be very useful information and it would clear things up a little bit, because it does run across both the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure as well as the Social Programs committee. So if that information was to go to P and P, that would be great. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have similar issues with this item. First of all, I'm concerned that it's only five positions. As the Minister knows, the Members have called for a SWAT team, or certainly a comprehensive and focused effort with a good bump-up in number of people to deal with these arrears that are plaguing our people and our local housing offices. The five positions that are mentioned here, is that the same five positions that would have been transferred from Housing to ECE previously when the transfer took place five years ago? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recognize that there is interest in issues broader than this supplementary appropriation. What we're talking about today is basically carving the money out of Education and the resources out of Education to move them back into the Housing Corporation and this does not talk about any further program enhancement at this point. I mean, those are legitimate questions, once again, but sitting here with the supplementary document, it's not something I'm in a position to speak to in this particular forum. If there's further information, I could ask the appropriate department to provide that to committee. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I recognize that we're dealing with a real specific here, but in asking for approval of specifics, of course, we need to do that within the context of the larger questions. I appreciate the Minister's commitments here. I guess I would like to point out that committee has been promised a number of times for a human resources plan in association with this transfer back, and yet here we are approving something without this plan in hand so that we can have the important context with which to approve or deny these expenditures. I will leave it at that and just ask that the Minister does pursue this and see if we can have the full context provided by a human resources plan so that we'll know that this is being done as a step amongst many to resolve our issues for people. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I appreciate the Member's comments. This is a step among many others. There's program work that's being done. The function here today is to, as I indicated, basically reallocate the funds from Education back to the Housing Corporation to allow that transition and transfer and the program delivery as has been envisioned and supported by the House. There will continue to be other work done through the business planning process, and as the Minister of Housing, for example, indicated extensively yesterday, there are a lot of things underway at the Housing Corporation and this is one part to deal with an issue that has been of concern for some time. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Finance, operations expenditures, deputy minister's office, not previously authorized, \$34.214 million

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$34.214 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 6. Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$1.024 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Program delivery support, not previously authorized, \$150,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Health services programs, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$2.909 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 7. Health and Social Services, continued, operations expenditures, supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, \$6.801 million. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am somewhat concerned by the numbers on this page. This indicates that in both last year, fiscal 2009-10, and anticipating the cost in fiscal year 2010-11, we are overspending our medical travel budget by about \$3.2 and \$3.6 million. So I have to anticipate that going forward it's probably going to be about the same kind of an overage in future years. I'd like to know from the Finance Minister whether or not he can advise what sort of actions are being taken to try and minimize the cost of medical travel, or are we just simply going to come back year after year for a supplementary appropriation to cover the deficit? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an issue that is consistently

before the House. There is a requirement to come back, because there's the issue of costs that tend to constantly escalate. There is work being done, as the Minister of Health has indicated, with her Foundation for Change. There's a review through the program review office right now taking a look at the medical travel costs and drivers and structures and processes to see if there are ways to deal with this. Some of the consistent pressures are that we have, in a lot of areas on a national basis, a fairly rapidly aging population, and as we all know, for example, the requirement and degree of care required in late years are increased. I know, for example, in the South Slave, the rate and growth of seniors is very high, resulting in greater costs that are hard to anticipate. It depends on individual circumstance. So this will be an issue that I would suggest will continue to come back before this House, depending on the pressures, on a yearly basis or on a quarterly basis. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Excuse me, could we have some order in the House. It's getting a little loud to hear the Minister's responses. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments by the Minister, but if we have over-expended in this particular item on our budget roughly the same amount two years running, I'd like to know from the Minister -- and I appreciate that we're going to be making some plans to try and reduce the costs -- why would we not set our budget for the amount that we expect we're going to incur? I know our budget keeps expanding, but we've overspent by about \$3 million for two years running now, so in the next 2011-12 budget can I expect that we're going to see a realistic figure for medical travel? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, it's part of the conscious decision by the government, in many cases, to fund at the levels that are there, and if there's an overage, then the department comes back. Over time, the practice has been to avoid giving full budgets based on estimates. There was a concern in terms of accountability and the difficulty in being able to coffer the money and get it back, should those estimates come in under what was voted.

The preference and the practice have been, so that there is greater accountability not only in Health but, for example, ENR and fire budgets, there's a base budget and the requirement is to come back. Or in other areas of health costs with children in care or adults in care, there's a budget that's set and there's a conscious decision to require the program department to come back should there be a greater requirement for funds as opposed to giving based on estimates. The concern being that over time there might be a creep in the estimates just to make sure that you had sufficient money

even though it may not be that accurate because it's an estimate. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** The Minister and I have discussed the philosophy before and I have to disagree with him. I'm not so sure that funding to an unrealistic level is going to provide any more accountability than funding to a realistic level and then forcing our staff to keep to that expenditure limit.

I don't see much accountability when before us sits a supplementary appropriation for \$3.6 million for last year, \$3.2 million anticipated for this year. I don't really see how this is providing accountability in this particular aspect of our Supplementary Health Program expenditures.

I did want to ask another question. I note in the background information that we were given that we spend money on travel but we also recoup money from several places. I noted that we do recoup money from NIHB, which is aboriginal health benefits through the federal government. The differential between the revenue that we get and the expenditures we make is pretty huge, it's about \$3 million or \$4 million, if I recall correctly.

I've often heard it said that the NIHB program does not cost this government any money and I guess I would like to know from the Minister why we have revenues of some \$3 million and expenditures of some \$7 million for NIHB travel.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The question is being directed to the Minister of Health, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Chairman, the way to look at that is that we in the Territories provide medical travel more generously than what NIHB does. So the federal government doesn't cover for the kind of medical travel that we do. So where we can get reimbursement from the federal government, we get those. Then our aboriginal Dene/Inuit residents are the same as all the other residents and our government provides what we would provide non-aboriginal people. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's good.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up on my colleague Ms. Bisaro's questions. Again, we have a supplementary appropriation before the House where we continue to pour money into an issue and a situation that we know exists. We've been talking about this for I don't know how long. The program review office was to have a look at it, review it. We need to get a handle on this medical travel issue and if we're not funding it appropriately, then we've got to tell ourselves that and start finding the money to fund it appropriately.

I agree with Ms. Bisaro; there's no accountability when a government can just come to the Members as it sees fit and just approve millions of dollars for a program that doesn't come under any scrutiny just because it happens to be Health and Social Services and this sacred department that nobody is supposed to ask any questions about because it's the health and well-being of the public. We shouldn't go there, we're looking after people. Just because we're doing that, shouldn't stop us from asking questions about where is the accountability, where is the transparency and who is responsible for managing these budgets when year in and year out budgets are brought to this House and are approved by Members of this House that are woefully inadequate.

I just wanted to get that out there again, Mr. Chairman, that that is not appropriate. It's not appropriate for any government to knowingly be doing that. It shouldn't happen and we just continually are allowed to operate like that and it just doesn't make much sense to me.

Again, managing, you know, if you put yourself in the position of manager that's managing under that regime, do you think you're going to care if you're over budget? Do you think you're going to care if you approve something you shouldn't approve? Do you think you're going to care? The sky is the limit. What we have to do again is fund the operations appropriately and manage within those confines, not continually come back to this House time and time again for more money. It's getting old, Mr. Chairman. We can continue, continue and continue to talk about it, but at some point in time somebody is going to have to start making some decisions across the way there and get us to a point where we're approving real, accurate budgets for the Department of Health and Social Services. Today we're not, as evidenced by this supp again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of Health being off limits and questions being discouraged, I would suggest that if we checked Hansard, speaking as a Minister of Health for five years, my recollection, as it is today, is just in this House, on a constant basis, the Health Minister tends to top the questions in this House on an ongoing basis. It doesn't matter which Minister you pick, which Assembly you pick.

We have a circumstance. We are talking about how do we budget. The debate is, do you budget on actual or do you budget on estimates. The Member talks about accountabilities and you want to be able to have some oversight, and I'm indicating to the Member and to this House again, in the past over time, budgeting on estimates has been determined to be not the most efficient way if you want to have clear accountability, if you want to have precision in

the money being required. There's money to do your operation. Over time budgets have increased, but there's not the automatic increase. There's been a request by Cabinet, by the FMB, I think by Members over time that when they spend the money, let them come back and we will look at giving them money to cover that off based on actual. We're not going to just take it on word that they estimate that they need a million but they're only going to spend three-quarters and then we have to figure out how we get the other \$250,000 back.

If there's a decision as a government or as a Legislature that we're going to change our budgeting processes, all departments will come forward with your best estimate on how much it's going to cost you do to business and what you're going to need to do business. I would suggest there would be some significant potential for fiscal creep in all areas. That's a discussion that can be had.

The Members speak about accountability. The supplementary appropriation process, we have to be able to come back and defend what those costs are and be able to demonstrate how we spent the money and what drove those costs in any given year. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Chairman, when these appropriations are brought before the House, there is the opportunity for the Minister and for the government to defend those costs, but certainly they aren't met with the same rigor that they would be met with through the business planning process and the main estimates process in the House under full light. They just appear here as one line item, and the government can try to defend it the best way they can, but it doesn't lend itself to providing Members of this House the best opportunity to question the expenditures of this government.

While I've got the floor, Mr. Chairman, I just want to go back on something I said. I maybe said managers in the Department of Health didn't care how much money they spent. I know they care. I know they're out there working as hard as they can on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. What I'm saying is they are operating in a system where there is no ceiling, there is no cap. There's nothing there. The sky is the limit, because, at the end of the day when the department can come back to the House, whether it's just because it's the Department of Health and Social Services or not, and seek millions and millions of dollars at the drop of a hat, to me that's just not appropriate. You know, from time to time it might be okay, but this is becoming like a broken record, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I'd like to see a plan on trying to remedy it. The Minister and I spoke about this earlier during this sitting of the House. The Minister came before a standing committee 18 months ago with this nice glossy plan on how she was going to get deficits

back to zero at Stanton and other health authorities across the Northwest Territories. Here it is 18 months later, we're talking about the same things and nothing was done. That plan never saw the light of day even though it was presented to committee, and the committee left there saying the government is going to start to tackle the spending issues of Health and Social Services, we're going to start budgeting accordingly and we're going to take action.

Mr. Chairman, all I hear about the action is they are going to start charging patients to park at the hospital, they're going to start charging patients in the room for television and phone services. They are going to start nickel and diming people to try to get the deficit under control. Mr. Chairman, that is just not going to work. It's not appropriate. Our residents deserve much better than what they're getting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, I would have to disagree with the Member. I believe, from all my experience, that the quality of health care in the Northwest Territories, in my opinion, is second to none in the country. We have benefits, we have access, we have programs that other jurisdictions could only dream about and wished they had. The issue and the challenge... And there's not a jurisdiction in this country, there's not a jurisdiction in the world that is not dealing with the pressure of escalating health care costs. With us, we're talking Health and Social Services, \$300-and-some million. It's about 30 percent of our budget.

Most other jurisdictions when you...(inaudible)...off the social services piece, the health piece alone is in the 40 percent-plus range. We have pressures that are not going to go away. If the Member has specific recommendations how he thinks we can take millions of dollars out of the health system, as Finance Minister, I'll buy him dinner and he can tell me how we can do this in a way that we can stand here and tell the people that there is a way that we can extract millions of dollars out of the health care system and maintain all our programs like supp health or any other program, but we can still deal with the money and those pressures. I would be grateful to the Member if he could give us those specifics so he could help us in our budgeting processes. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Were on page 7, supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, \$6.801 million. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for the record with respect to the health care system in the Northwest Territories, I agree with everything the Minister just said. I believe we have a fantastic health care system in the Northwest Territories. I also believe we are under significant challenges. Could we be better? Absolutely. Could we be doing

more in the small communities? Please, yes, let's do that. But we have a pretty good health care system in the Northwest Territories when we compare it to other jurisdictions.

I think what you're sensing here is some frustration in the fact that we, as Regular Members, are trying to get a sense and an understanding of how this department is going to move forward to control certain things. Yes, the Foundation for Change is underway. I believe the Foundation for Change is going to identify a lot of improvements that can be made to the system to help us retain or maximize the use of our money, but we're talking here today about medical travel. Medical travel will be addressed under Foundation for Change. What we're talking about is how we're accounting for it. The department keeps coming back and asking us to approve a supp, approve a supp, approve a supp. To Ms. Bisaro's point, we know the baseline budget for medical travel is more than we're putting in the books. We know that. Do we have to increase the budget for medical travel by \$3.6 million? No, because I think putting a cap on it and trying to control it as much as we can, you need to put a cap lower than what the department is telling us they need, so let's increase the budget for medical travel; maybe not by \$3.6 million, but maybe by \$2.5 million. They are going to have to come back for a supp, but if we put a cap on it at a reasonable level, we can get the Minister to work on the department to control those costs.

I understand the Minister's of Finance point about not putting a cap on it and leaving it at the amount we have on it and do the same thing. I think I'm saying the same thing, but I'm just saying it's pretty clear that the budget we put in there is not even close. Let's try to get it a little bit closer to where we need to be, and let's continue to get the Minister to put pressure on the department to control those costs, and let's get done with the Foundation for Change. Let's get some results out of that thing.

My colleague is right; there's a little frustration on this side about the pace. It's a beast. It's a beast. Health is a beast and we need to rein it in as much as we can and we need to see some results. Please expedite Foundation for Change, increase the budget in this section a bit; not the full \$3.6 million, but a bit. That way we won't be asking for as large a supp every year. It seems pretty simple to me.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I appreciate the Member's comments and we do over time look at base budgets. We don't just keep them pegged at last century's costs or that type of thing. When we look, the Health budget has grown since 1999. It's doubled. With the THSSI money from the feds, part of which was dedicated to medical travel, there is going to be a bump-up in this coming fiscal year.

In keeping with the Member's comments, recognizing that the cost drivers are going to be there, some of the biggest being on an upward climb. For example, just the cost of fuel. Then the demand.

I appreciate the Member's comments and our intent is to be as realistic as possible. We would like to minimize our coming back for supps. We would like to be able to budget exactly. But it has proven to be with the beast, as the Member said, an ongoing challenge. We are going to be, in fact, looking to those suggestions and, in fact, have made some enhancements for the coming year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm trying to understand the philosophy and the rationale for the budgeting here. The Minister advised that they budget on actuals. I'm looking at figures provided to back up this request. I'm looking at an actual deficit in 2008-2009 of almost \$2.8 million. Yet it would seem that in 2009-2010 we did not bump up our actual expenditures, because we're still short by \$3.6 million. So from \$2.8 million to \$3.6 million, that's \$800,000. That's not bad, but I would like to know, I guess, from the Minister if he could tell me what we budgeted in 2009-2010 for medical travel compared to 2008-2009.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have that specific piece of information before me. I can commit to get it for the Member.

**MS. BISARO:** I would be interested in seeing those two numbers, because I really have a hard time believing that we need \$3.6 million. We have a \$3.6 million shortfall if we're budgeting from actual, because in the previous year we had a deficit of almost \$2.8 million. Just a comment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Comment. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I could get the Minister to make reservations for dinner for him and I sometime. I've got a number of things that immediately come to mind when we're talking about health and social services and ways that things could be improved upon. I would never say that we should be pulling millions of dollars out of the system. My belief is we have to be putting more money into the system. We have to be budgeting accordingly. That I believe fully in.

I also believe, like my colleagues, that I would stack our system up against any system in the country. That's not really the problem. The problem that I see and the way that I think we could fix things immediately is if we take a look at the eight existing authorities. When you're trying to manage anything,

the more moving parts you have it only stands to reason that it's going to cost you more money, there's going to be duplication. This is exactly where the government needs to start when it comes to managing and maximizing each and every dollar that we have earmarked for health care here in this Territory. We could still have boards out there that could be advisory boards rather than management boards. We could move them towards an advisory capacity and that would, in my mind, save us a tremendous amount of money on an annual basis. Start there.

The other thing is efficiencies. We really need to get a handle on missed medical appointments and the cost that missed medical appointments are having on our system, whether it's for surgeries or for somebody who has the flu and misses an appointment downtown at one of our clinics or at the health centre. That costs money. Every time somebody misses an appointment it costs money. It got me thinking: Why don't we have more of a concerted effort by staff at our health facilities to be calling people a day or two before their scheduled appointment just as a reminder? When I go to the dentist they're making me appointments for months out and sure enough a couple days before I have that dentist appointment, they're on the phone calling me and leaving me messages reminding me that I have an appointment. I think that in itself will save us a tremendous amount of money. Time is money, especially when you're dealing with doctors and health care professionals. We can't afford to be having hundreds of missed appointments on an annual basis at one clinic. We just can't afford that.

The other thing too -- and I had a discussion with Ms. Lee about this the other day -- is on bulk purchasing. I know the Minister says we're out in front of this, we're spearheading our involvement with the western provinces, but the information that I have is that Alberta and British Columbia have already signed a deal. They're already doing something together. There's this New West Partnership between Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan where they're looking at bulk purchasing. The Minister says we've signed an MOU. I asked her the other day if we're involved in this are we actually today making purchases under that arrangement, bulk purchases under that arrangement to help our escalating costs. The Minister was very evasive when it came to answering that question. She said, oh, we're involved, we're doing all these great things. The question was: Are we actually making a difference by bulk purchasing medical supplies and goods? She didn't have an answer for that.

There are four ideas. The Minister wants some ideas, I've given him four. I can give him more when he books that reservation for dinner.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Yes, maybe if we could just remind Members we can get back to the discussion before us where we're dealing with the supplementary appropriation and this particular area dealing with medical travel. We're talking about something much broader than that. If we could keep our discussions to the item that's before us. Mr. Miltenberger.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Member for Kam Lake tells me what his favourite restaurant is, we can have that dinner, but I would suggest based on the things I'm anticipating, he's going to be breaking new ground.

The issue of board reform, hesitant as I am to use that word in this Assembly, is probably something that is going to carry on to the life of the next government.

One of the main points of the consolidated clinic here in Yellowknife was to deal with the 14 or 18 percent of missed appointments that are, as the Member has indicated, costly and very inefficient.

Bulk purchasing, the Minister has indicated that we signed on this month. I would imagine we'll be seeing the benefit of that very shortly.

There are other things we could talk about. The other one that most immediately comes to mind is, of course, greater use of telehealth that we've seen, as well, that's now underway in the communities.

I will buy the Member dinner if he can come up with things that we have not yet considered. Otherwise, we'll probably have to arm wrestle for the bill.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Just to remind the Members that we're on page 7, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, \$6.801 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Community health programs, not previously authorized, \$250,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$11.134 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8, Justice, operations expenditures, community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$161,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$161,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 9, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures,

education and culture, not previously authorized, \$381,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Income security, not previously authorized, negative \$34.213 million

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$33.832 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 10, Transportation, operations expenditures, road licensing and safety, not previously authorized, \$188,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$188,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 11, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$305,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Environmental protection, not previously authorized, \$259,000. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of quick questions here. On this one, I just want to confirm that a wood pellet densification unit is a device for manufacturing wood pellets. Is that correct?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** My second question is: Is there a destination determined yet for this equipment?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** My understanding is that this is intended to be a mobile unit that can be moved so that we can see how it works in different locations with maybe different sources of biomass -- for example, fast growing willows versus poplar or other types of trees -- and to give us a way to get a better understanding of that whole area of the biomass cycle.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Environmental protection, not previously authorized, \$259,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Forest management, special warrant, \$4.130 million. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to again express my philosophical different path than the Minister on this. I understand that this special warrant was needed because at the beginning of the forest fire season we had quite a few fires and

we overspent our budget almost right off the bat. Again, I have to wonder why we budget a base amount that is fully used just to mobilize our forces to fight one or two fires. It would seem to me that we'd be far better off to go to a bit more realistic estimate of the number, in my perspective. Again I have to ask if we're budgeting on actuals, although I think I know what answer I can expect here, it is, as has been stated, we budget on actual, then we shouldn't have to be going for a special warrant this summer. To the Minister, again, is the amount that we budget for forest fires, this base amount that is funded year after year, does it cover more than just the basic mobilization of our forces to fight a large forest fire?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have indicated in committee, the budget that is there for fire suppression, pre-suppression and fire suppression, allows us to get to the early stages of fire season and then we know with certainty that we'll have to come back if there's any type of activity that's going on other than having rain every day.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we were fortunate to have rain every day. I have to just again express my disappointment, although I have to say that this is probably the one area of expense why I could understand why we would have a base amount and then would come back for an appropriation, because it is a very volatile activity and one can never tell from one year to the next how many fires we're going to have. But I do think that our base amount is not enough. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's pretty much a comment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Again, forest management, special warrant, \$4.130 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Wildlife, not previously authorized, \$622,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, special warrant, \$4.130 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.186 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that we have concluded Tabled Document 100-16(5)? Mr. Ramsay.

COMMITTEE MOTION 16-16(5):  
CONCURRENCE OF TD 100-16(5),  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 2, 2010-2011,  
CARRIED

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 100-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 100-16(5) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The next item on the agenda that we agreed to deal with is Tabled Document 101-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011. Mr. Minister, do you have any opening comments?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011. This document outlines an increase of \$100,000 for operations expenditures and an increase of \$1.706 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2010-11 fiscal year. The total supplementary request is \$1.806 million.

The major items of the supplementary estimates include:

1. \$600,000 for the Department of Transportation to purchase highway equipment required due to the repatriation of highway maintenance services in the Fort Resolution area;
2. \$500,000 for the Department of Health and Social Services for the purchase of two ultrasound units at Inuvik and the H.H. Williams Hospitals;
3. a \$390,000 special warrant was approved on September 27, 2010, for the Department of Transportation community access and road projects identified under the Canada-Northwest Territories Infrastructure Stimulus Fund 2009-2010 - 2010-2011 Agreement.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary appropriation document. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Before we move on, I'd just like to recognize the visitors in the gallery and thank them for coming today. Welcome to the House.

General comments. We can move to page 5, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, Transportation, operations expenditures, Community Access Program, special warrant, \$100,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, special warrant, \$100,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, Legislative Assembly, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$25,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$25,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, Public Works and Services, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$1.078 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.078 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health services programs, not previously authorized, \$500,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$500,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving to page 9. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$878,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, negative 878,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 10. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, Transportation, capital investment expenditures, highways, special warrant, \$290,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Highways, not previously authorized, \$600,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, special warrant, \$290,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$600,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 11, Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, environment, not previously authorized, \$91,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$91,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that we've concluded Tabled Document 101-16(5)? Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 17-16(5):  
CONCURRENCE OF TD 101-16(5),  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2010-2011,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 101-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 101-16(5) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to thank the Minister and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out.

We've concluded the items that we agreed to discuss today. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I will now rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 98-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010; Tabled Document 99-16(5); Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2009-2010; Tabled Document 100-15(6), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2010-2011; Tabled Document 101-16(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011, and would like to report progress with four motions being adopted and that consideration of tabled documents 98, 99, 100 and 101 are concluded, and that the House concurs on those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills.

Colleagues, before we go onto the orders of the day, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the Pages that have been with us this week.

---Applause

I'd especially like to recognize two Pages from my constituency, Hay River North. Aaron Moizis and Jessie Morfit were here with us this week.

---Applause

Also, colleagues, an invitation to anyone who is interested to attend the commissioning of our new wood pellet boiler, that will be happening immediately at the rise of the House.

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Monday, November 1, 2010, 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
  - Motion 22-16(5), Referral of TD 103-16(5) to Committee of the Whole
  - Motion 23-16(5), Dissolution of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 13, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2011-2012
  - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act
  - Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act
  - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Dog Act
  - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
  - Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act
  - Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act
  - Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project
  - Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits
  - Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard
  - Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
  - Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future"

- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
- Committee Report 3-16(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act
- Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights

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, November 1, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:12 p.m.