



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 2, 2011****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:42 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

Speaker's Opening Comments

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. It is a pleasure to welcome you back as we resume the Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity, belatedly, but most sincerely, to publicly extend my best wishes to you, my colleagues in this House, and to all the residents of the Northwest Territories for a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Today is Groundhog Day. My note said I was supposed to pause here for laughter, but...

---Laughter

However, right across the country it looks like the groundhog will not see his shadow today. As you know, this means we are in for an early spring. Regrettably, our rules are silent on this matter, so you can still expect another six weeks of session after today.

Although it has been several months since we last met in this Chamber, I know that each of you have been working diligently in committee, Cabinet and your constituencies during the extended adjournment. Your work will continue as this sitting promises to be a busy one.

Unfortunately, we have lost some of our revered and most loved elders since we last met. I would like to extend condolences of the House to all those who have recently lost loved ones. We are a small and interconnected Territory and we all mourn these losses together.

Colleagues, I know you are eager to begin your work here and I offer you my usual support. I look forward to a productive session, with lively debate reflecting the issues and concerns of the people we serve. I ask that you continue to devote your time and energy to make the necessary and thoughtful decisions that will guide the 16th Legislative Assembly as we enter into our last portion of our mandate.

My expectation is that you will continue to treat each other and this institution with the respect and dignity that all deserve. I, in turn, will do my best to assist each of you to that end, applying your rules fairly and consistently to the very best of my ability.

In our efforts to bring the proceedings of this House to as many NWT residents as possible, the Assembly will continue to rebroadcast our proceedings in as many of our official languages as possible. During this sitting we will have interpretation in the following languages: Inuinnaqtun, South Slavey, Tlicho, Gwich'in, French, Chipewyan, Inuvialuktun, Inuktitut and North Slavey. Our thanks to the many interpreters who work with us to bring our words to your communities.

It is now my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of:

- Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2011-2012;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2010-2011; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2010-2011

during the Fifth Session of the 16th Legislative Assembly. Yours truly, George Tuccaro, Commissioner.

Thank you, colleagues.

Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 88-16(5):
SESSIONAL STATEMENT

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Members back to the House. I look forward to working with all of you during this last budget session of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

After decades of work it was my honour last Wednesday to sign the Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement-in-Principle on behalf of the

Government of the Northwest Territories. This is an historic step in our development as a Territory, an agreement to move to the next stage of negotiations that will, in the end, give the people of the NWT the authority and control of our own public lands and resources so decisions about our Territory, our home, are made here by elected officials who are directly accountable to the people of the NWT.

This latest agreement-in-principle is a result of almost 10 years of work and negotiation between the GNWT, Canada and Aboriginal governments. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a copy of the signed AIP.

History is never made quietly, and signing the devolution AIP was no exception. It would have been better to have all of the regional Aboriginal governments at the table, but in the end a decision had to be made to keep the negotiations going or to shut the process down.

I believe strongly that decisions about northern lands and resources can and should be made by our own residents. We should all embrace the opportunity to become the stewards of our own lands. I'm encouraged by those Aboriginal elders and leaders who remind us that we have to work together. I agree. I will be inviting Aboriginal leaders from across the NWT to re-engage with us in the coming weeks to determine their interest in finding a way forward together.

We now begin the next leg of our journey. As Premier I am committed to keeping the devolution process moving forward towards a final agreement. The AIP has provisions for the remaining Aboriginal governments to sign and join in the next phase of the process whenever they are ready.

At our table there is a place waiting for each of our Territory's Aboriginal leaders. The Inuvialuit have already joined us and the Metis Nation will sign next week. I hope the remaining regional Aboriginal leaders will give serious consideration to returning to the negotiations and help us guide and influence this process as it moves forward. To these leaders I say: come and be a partner in building our future together. Help us realize true self-determination.

Now is the time to make sure we can continue to capitalize on all the work that we have done to date. I believe that in the end we share a common vision:

- decision-making for the NWT, in the NWT, and by NWT people;
- ensuring that northern development benefits Northerners;
- a sustainable balance of development and environmental protection;
- a fair share of resource revenues staying in the NWT, benefitting our residents, their governments and their Territory.

I believe that this AIP will help get us there.

Mr. Speaker, this AIP represents a significant step forward in terms of the vision, goals and priorities we set out for ourselves as an Assembly when we first met more than three years ago. At that time we said that one of our priorities was to achieve significant progress towards northern control over administration of lands and the regulatory system and resource revenues. With the signing of the AIP last week, this Assembly has moved closer to achieving the goal of a strong and independent North than ever before.

More than this, real progress towards northern control over public lands and resources also moves us closer towards achieving the other goals we set out for ourselves as an Assembly. Devolution will sustain present and future generations by putting Northerners in charge of the decisions about how public lands, water and resources are developed and used. With this authority, we will be able to make sure development decisions are in the best interests of our residents and consistent with our own values and priorities.

Devolution and access to resource revenues will also help us pursue our goal of a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices. Devolution will give the GNWT additional financial resources that could help us fund economic development programs and make infrastructure investments that can help grow the NWT economy; investments like improved transportation links that will make our mineral resources more accessible and support for more sustainable development throughout the North. We could invest in our vast hydro potential, both lowering the cost of energy in our communities and reducing our dependence on imported diesel at the same time.

Devolution will also position us to achieve success on our goal of healthy, educated people. With devolution, we could invest in capacity building and education programs, ensuring that our residents are trained and qualified to participate in and benefit from the economic activity going on around them. With more choices and opportunities available to them, Northerners can hope to see more sustainable, vibrant and safe communities and be better positioned to lead healthier and more productive lives.

Mr. Speaker, the devolution AIP is only a step towards this future vision of the Northwest Territories, but it is an important step and a reminder of the fact that it will take time to create the kind of North that our residents want and deserve. Throughout the life of this Assembly, the GNWT has been making investments in initiatives designed to move us towards our overall goals, just as we have done with the devolution AIP. The time has now come to consolidate the gains that we

have made so that we and future Assemblies can continue to build on them. In the same way that the devolution AIP is a foundation for our future success, the work we have done to advance our goals over the past three years is the foundation for all the work that is to follow.

As Members we are challenged to make decisions that are in the best interests of all NWT residents while representing our home communities. While we may continue to have differences, we cannot let those differences distract us from the goal we can all agree upon: that we make decisions today with future generations in mind.

In this Assembly, at the northern leaders' table, and in our communities, we have sought and found unity when we have focussed on the future...

- when we have concentrated not on the difficulties but on the possibilities;
- when we have focused on realizing opportunities and choices for our people;
- focused on capturing the potential of our rich resource base -- in a responsible and sustainable way that maximizes the benefits of this wealth for residents of the NWT;
- when we have focused on taking our rightful place as decision-makers in the NWT.

I would like to thank Members for their shared commitment to this better future. With the signing of the devolution AIP, we have opened the door to an even better future than we had before. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION TO MOVE MINISTER'S STATEMENT
88-16(5) INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whereas Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, has been tabled in this House, and whereas this sessional statement requires further consideration, now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is on the floor. The motion is non-debatable.

---Carried

Minister's Statement 88-16(5) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration.

The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 89-16(5):
NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Thursday, February 3, 2011. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY
OF THE LATE JIM WYLIE

MR. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to use my statement today to acknowledge the loss of a constituent, a long-time resident of our Territory and our city. Mr. Jim Wylie passed away on November 15, 2010, at the age of 84 and he will be very much missed by family and many northern friends.

Jim was born on a farm in Saskatchewan, grew up on the farm and then worked it for a number of years. In December of 1965, Jim and his family -- his wife and four children -- moved to Yellowknife where Jim would start a job as a diamond driller at Giant Mine. They arrived to minus-40 below in early January of 1966. But all the family adjusted well to the North, loved being here and it soon became their only home. Jim continued to work at Giant for many years. He progressed from diamond driller to miner and then to mechanic in the machine shop up until he retired.

Lucky for us, he and his wife remained in Yellowknife on retirement. Jim was a family man and a community man. He was kind and generous and willingly helped out anyone in need; it didn't matter if they were a friend or a stranger. He fully participated in this community and then gave back to the community through volunteer work with a number of different organizations: The Elks Lodge, the Giant Curling Club, the Yellowknife Yacht Club in its very early years, the Yellowknife Golf Course, Meals on Wheels and the Yellowknife Seniors Society and Baker Centre activities after he retired. He was a boater and loved spending time on the water, especially Great Slave Lake.

Jim was open and loving to everyone he met. Strangers became friends in short order after their initial introduction to Jim. He and his wife Marion were happily married for 60-plus years.

It is said that good people deserve good friends. Well, Mr. Jim Wylie had many, many good friends. We have lost one of the good ones, as it has been said. My condolences and the condolences of this House go out to Marion Wylie and the Wylie children and grandchildren. Jim lived a long and a

full life, but with his passing, many will now notice a hole in their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY
OF THE LATE VICTORIA LAFFERTY

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Today in Fort Resolution, I would like to announce that... [Translation ends]

...some MLAs in the first day of sitting to set aside for remembering people in their ridings that have passed away between the sessions of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the oldest person in Fort Resolution until the day of her passing on January 19, 2011. Victoria "Lidor" Lafferty was born on January 1, 1920, and passed away on January 19, 2011, at the age of 91. Lidor, as she was commonly known, had 12 children, three of which predeceased her, as did her late husband Edward "Kayuse" Lafferty. Mrs. Lafferty lived all of her life around Fort Resolution, having grown up on the land outside of Rocher River and I think spent some of her early days around Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Lafferty had 32 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren and nine great-great-grandchildren. In addition to raising her own children, she and her late husband raised a few of their grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, Lidor will be sadly missed by her children, grandchildren, her great-grandchildren and her great-great-grandchildren. You could always visit her in her home, which she resided in until her last day. She spoke only Chipewyan and as a result, her children all understand Chipewyan and many of them are totally fluent in the Chipewyan language. Her grandchildren that lived with her had to understand her also; otherwise they were not able to communicate with her. She understood English but responded to the children in Chipewyan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to pass my condolences on to the family and friends of Victoria "Lidor" Lafferty. God bless. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY
OF THE LATE HENRY SMITH

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take a moment to remember a constituent of Hay River South and long-time

resident of Hay River, Mr. Henry Smith, who passed away on Saturday, January 29th, at the age of 77.

Henry and his wife, Angie, moved north from Saskatchewan in 1970. They built their home in Hay River, where they raised their nine children: Fred; Bernard, or Ben, as he's called; Perry; Janne; Raphvel, or Rafe, as we call him; Day; Miles; Eddie; and Angie. These were their nine children and they all grew up in quite a small house just at the outskirts of Hay River.

Eddie is to be married this spring to Diana Yaeger, Mr. Speaker's constituency assistant, and I'm sure that Henry not being there for such a family gathering and such a special occasion will be very felt by the Smith family.

Henry and Angie provided a spiritual home and a loving home for their family. Henry was well known and respected in the community and spent countless hours volunteering and serving others. Whether it was at church or working on the skidoo trails, he was a very hard-working and generous person. Henry enjoyed being outdoors, riding his motorcycle and skidooing. He is particularly well known for being the key person involved in creating the ski trails in Hay River, making signs for the trails to Enterprise and Great Slave Lake, which is now known as the Canada Trail.

Henry, by trade, was a heavy duty mechanic for highways, Department of Transportation for the Government of the Northwest Territories, from 1972 until he retired in 1995. He was a skilful mechanic and loved to work on machinery.

Mr. Speaker, I ran into Henry Smith at the airport just a couple of weeks ago and had a great visit with him as we reminisced about another mutual friend who had lived in Hay River for many years, Margurite Delancey, who had actually just passed away a few days prior. I did not know, from chatting with Henry and Angie that day, that Henry was as ill as he was. He was very, very sharp, he was cheerful, he was communicative and I was so surprised to hear of his passing when Rafe called me this past Saturday.

Mr. Speaker, Henry was a dedicated and loving husband, father and grandfather, and will be missed by everyone. I send my heartfelt condolences to the Smith family. Although no words can ease their pain, we hope that they will know that they are in our prayers and our thoughts today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE WILDLIFE ACT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current Wildlife Act is old and antiquated. It's definitely time to be replaced with a new act that recognizes the realities of the North and is developed by the people of the North for the North.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. ABERNETHY: I know the department has been working on this new act for a long time, well over 10 years. However, the majority of the work on the existing act has been completed since the Assembly passed the Species at Risk Act two years ago. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to applaud the Minister and his department for recognizing treaty rights and land claim agreements, and for actively involving the Aboriginal governments throughout the NWT in drafting of this new act. They had a legal requirement to do this and I'm glad that the Minister and his department lived up to this responsibility. However, initial drafting is only the first step. The second step is to obtain public input. To do this, the department has been conducting public consultations throughout the Northwest Territories since before Christmas.

As a public government representing over 42,000 people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike, we have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure that all of our residents are heard in a meaningful way, that their concerns are taken seriously and that their input to improve draft legislation is incorporated into the drafting of the legislation, where appropriate.

Unfortunately, I'm concerned that the consultation that has been conducted or completed over the last couple of months did not meet this standard. This was not consultation in good faith. For example, on January 15, 2011, the NWT Wildlife Federation had a meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to receive a briefing on the proposed Wildlife Act and to discuss concerns they had with the department. I was there. This was supposed to be public consultation. The meeting did start off well, with the director of ENR's wildlife division introducing the draft act, explaining it in detail and telling the participants that the department was eager for their input. Specifically, that the department asked the participants to identify the areas they thought needed work and to identify what they thought might help improve the draft. This sounds like the department was interested in meaningful, respectful consultation. Unfortunately, my optimism of the process disappeared later when the same director indicated that any input from this group would be included with all input that they have received over the last couple of months, but the department was not planning to make any substantive amendments prior to introducing the bill in the House later in

February or early March. Only editorial improvements are being considered at this point.

Only including minor editorial amendments does not demonstrate that this department is listening to the people. It does not demonstrate consultation in good faith.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. ABERNETHY: In fact, it's just insulting to responsible hunters of the Northwest Territories who are not covered by land claims or treaties. This group's voice is clearly not being heard.

This act is not ready to be presented in the House. It won't be ready until the department conducts real consultation in good faith with interested stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories.

At the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister responsible some questions on this topic.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories have been self-governing nations since time immemorial and also under Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, which established a nation-to-nation relationship between the Crown and the NWT First Nations that required the Government of Canada to respect Aboriginal rights and the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure that we protect the rights and interests in any process that happens in the Northwest Territories.

The process of negotiation of the devolution agreement is flawed in how it was conducted. There were many agreements made in the past, most importantly through the Dene-Metis Land Claim Agreement, which clearly defined the Northern Accord process as the avenue we were going to take to provide themselves with not only ownership of lands and resources but also management requirements and arrangements though the claims and an opportunity to participate in the oil and gas arrangements throughout the Northwest Territories similar to those worded in the Inuvialuit agreement, which is not in the Dene-Metis claim.

The federal government has a treaty obligation, not only constitutionally but also under the land claims obligations and Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. Involving Aboriginal governments is a matter of natural process and accommodating Aboriginal governments in the interests and the rights that they hold.

The land claims agreements are in place between the Gwich'in and the Sahtu and the Tlicho, and they have similar wording in all their agreements. With regard to the Tlicho Agreement under Section 23.5,1, and also in regard to the Sahtu Agreement under Section 22.1,6, the Gwich'in Agreement under Section 21.1.6, they clearly stipulate that the Government of the Northwest Territories shall involve the Aboriginal governments in development and implementation of a northern accord of oil and gas development in the Northwest Territories which is negotiated in accordance with the enabling agreement September 5, 1988, between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories, with regard to any other agreement and subject in regard to minerals, oil and gas, and also any transfer from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The issues for Aboriginal governments should have been heard loud and clear. They do not have a problem with the devolution process. They have a problem...

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: It is clear that the Aboriginal concerns by the Aboriginal governments were very specific with regard to the relationship between the federal government, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Aboriginal governments. The impact on devolution to the Government of the Northwest Territories on Aboriginal government jurisdiction and authority over lands and resources, both in settled areas and unsettled areas. More importantly, the inaccurate funding that's going to be in regard to the net fiscal benefit and how that will affect programs and services not only for Aboriginal people but the rest of the people of the Northwest Territories, and also in a manner which is based on a basic transfer amount to be determined. How is that going to be distributed between the central government, Aboriginal governments and other entities in the Northwest Territories? Finally, that includes the federal government's interest in the Norman Wells oilfield that is definitely defined in the land claims agreements. That is an issue that the Aboriginal governments have.

The items that I've mentioned are issues that the Aboriginal governments wanted to talk about. The government did not find the time of day and the federal Minister -- which is appalling with regard to our consensus type of government...

MR. SPEAKER: Would you conclude your statement, Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR
SUPPORT DURING MEDICAL ISSUES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say to the people in my region and to a lot of people in the Northwest Territories who contacted me over the last couple of months, I'm certainly glad to be alive today.

---Applause

I want to express my appreciation to the people who have made phone calls to me, who have talked to my wife. I really listened to some of the Members who made condolences to some of their own constituents who have passed away and people who have passed away in the past, and certainly my own people in the Sahtu region, of some of the difficulties that we as people go through when a loved one passes away.

Yet we still have a job to do. We still have to stand there and hold it together and continue on and make decisions. Sometimes, when I saw the anguish and the hurt in my wife's face or my little boy's face, I was really scared. I didn't know what was going to happen. I guess the big guy upstairs didn't want me today, because he said, go back down there and do some more work. That's the way I look at it. Or someone saying, I'm glad we're not talking about you, we're still talking with you.

These kinds of things wake me up in terms of how life is taken for granted sometimes. I look at that and I wanted to say to the people of the Northwest Territories, we really appreciate the phone calls and the prayers that the elders said. Prayers are so powerful today that when I went into my region, I wanted to thank the elders and the people who came up to me and said, we prayed for you, we prayed for you things would work out well for you, we also prayed for people in our meetings that things will work out good for them. There are people right now in the hospital that need our prayers and we need to think about those situations.

I want to say thank you to the hospital and the wonderful staff in the Northwest Territories and Yellowknife for really helping me out here and helping my family. Also for the Members here I wanted to also say I appreciated the time off to recover. However, I want to also say that life goes on. I'm back up in good form again and going to be representing my people in this Assembly, hopefully for a long, long time to come.

I want to say I really appreciate my family and I really appreciate especially my little boy.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all Members when I say we're happy to be talking with you and not about you as well.

The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker... [Translation] I am pleased to be able to talk to you today on things that are very important to my region. We have to work with all the people that are coming after us, so we have to talk seriously and consider our devolution seriously. I will be switching back to South Slavey. [Translation ends]

...resources to the GNWT are of great importance for my constituents in my riding of Nahendeh. Much can be said and there are many topic areas. However, the leadership in the communities of the Dehcho First Nations have great concern because of the uncertainty of how it will affect the Dehcho process.

As I travelled throughout my riding there were many questions of the impact of our GNWT signing the AIP, and I must say as well that there were many that understood the process and what it means for them and for all Northerners. However, I found that there were more people concerned at the speed of the signing and not having any information on the implications of the AIP until after its signing. There were also many concerns about the terms of the agreement itself. Sometimes our government has initiatives that could be a good thing, but if there's enough public outcry or if it's implemented badly, then it can be a bad thing.

Mr. Speaker, people in my communities want to see government travel around to the communities and explain this agreement-in-principle on devolution. People cannot make informed decisions, Mr. Speaker, if our government does not provide the opportunity and information, especially something as significant as this. I have noted that the Wildlife Act information sessions went to all 33 communities, and I believe that a decision of this magnitude that binds us for the future must get outside of Yellowknife and into all our communities. It is then and only then that people can be truly informed and make an informed decision, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I speak today on the process that led to the devolution agreement-in-principle to take stock of where this

leaves us now and consider where we go from here.

The Akaitcho and Dehcho governments will have nothing to do with an agreement they say threatens their treaty rights and resolution of their claims. Some say the process used to complete the AIP violates the terms of the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Tlicho agreements. The GNWT's and Canada's rush to sign the AIP has resulted in such confusion that concerns about content, process, or both remain unclear. Aboriginal opponents say the GNWT should never have agreed to negotiate without the First Nations at the table, while our government claims they were meaningfully involved all along, implying that Aboriginal partners were aware of and accepted negotiation points.

Yet we signed onto a federal divide and conquer strategy, a bilateral agreement that clearly does not sit well with our partners. At the very least, such a strategy reflects poorly on this government's relations with its Aboriginal partners. If they were at the table and involved, how could we have created a situation where some of the fiercest critics that this government has, say that this government has destroyed trust and partnership that has taken years to build? That's where we are now; right where we knew we'd be if we'd went ahead with this agreement in this way.

But what lies ahead? I and many others are on record saying that any deal to download an inadequate, underfunded and unrepresentative federal system is a bad deal. To move forward on a sound basis, we must do three things: first, go back to the basics with our Aboriginal government partners, insisting upon the full, main table participation their position deserves and salvage some mutual respect and common vision for the future; second, cut ourselves loose from any federal scheme to settle our constitutional future piecemeal; and finally, Mr. Speaker, take the time necessary to involve all our citizens in meaningful consultation on what our resource management regime should be.

Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal governments are major landholders and, as such, an essential partner of a sound, comprehensive and sustainable NWT land and resource management system. Before we have an agreement-in-principle we must all agree on the principles. I look forward to seeing this resolved in the immediate future. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like many of my other colleagues, I too will be speaking about the AIP devolution agreement today.

This agreement signed, I believe, is a great forward-thinking step in the destiny of all Northerners. It's about many things, but in my view, it's most importantly about one thing: it's about the transference of authority to Northerners. As northern people, we are ready to claim that future. This is about who is guiding the course of our future collectively. It's about who is making the decisions of the northern future.

I'd like to see someone in the North making those types of decisions, rather than someone in Ottawa who's never been here more than for a day visit. Or even worse, can you imagine our decisions to be continued to be made by a steward whose only knowledge of the northern people, the culture and the belief system up here is based on a one-page briefing note?

The North has a destiny to assert, Mr. Speaker. One of the many people that feel very strongly and who I constantly hear from are Aboriginal people who want to assert the destiny of the North together, collectively. I think this government needs to do whatever it can to ensure that they continue to be partners as we assert this future together. But it's a mandate we must not work alone.

Mr. Speaker, the signing of the AIP was one of many small steps going forward, but the motions of those steps were put into place over 40 years ago. The shaping of our North will continue over many more years going forward and this AIP is just one small piece. Some people say not this deal. Well, I'll tell you, it took a long time to carve out this deal. So it won't take weeks, months; it will take, rather, years or decades before we get back into the same position we are today.

Mr. Speaker, some people complain there isn't enough money. Well, the reality is no devolution agreement will ever have enough money.

Some say they were not included, not all issues, not all rights. Well, I say you should never give up on the priorities of all Northerners. So once we conclude this chapter, we should start fighting and working on the next one. We should never surrender on the rights and the destiny to empower Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here before us is uncertainty; the details of clarification of what's actually been happening. Mr. Speaker, if there's been fault to this whole process, it is that the message of communication has not gone out to every corner of the North to explain what this agreement does for our lives and how it improves it. Mr. Speaker, in my belief, this agreement does not

impede our future, it strengthens it. Mr. Speaker, that is the solution of this AIP, and I believe much work needs to continue to be done on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about devolution and the recent signing of the agreement-in-principle.

Mr. Speaker, this is and will be the way forward for this Territory and for the people who live here. What will devolution mean for our Territory? It will mean authority and control over the direction and decisions related to resource management. It will mean a transfer of close to 200 jobs from Ottawa. It will mean that finally, after years of fighting for a piece of our vast resource wealth with the federal government, we will be getting millions of dollars annually to help build and strengthen our Territory, our communities, our economy and our people. We will finally be able to be the masters of our own design.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to work with our Aboriginal partners in pursuing a final agreement. I understand and appreciate the concerns that have been expressed by Aboriginal leaders across the Territory in how our AIP has proceeded. I do remain optimistic that we can find a way to work together. We have to move forward, and it should be stated that clearly this AIP is moving this Territory forward. The question, Mr. Speaker, is that once we have a final deal, the jobs, the money and the authority, what are we going to do with this new found money and control?

Mr. Speaker, I, along with my colleague from the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko, have been part of the Northern Leaders' Forum representing the Regular Members of this House. The main objective for the Northern Leaders' Forum is to come up with a way forward on how governments across the Territory can work together and represent our Territory in advancing our collective well-being and to form a common vision for what our Territory will become. Now, more than ever before, Mr. Speaker, we need to be working together. We need to do the best job we can as legislators to articulate what devolution will mean to our Territory. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is what future governments must focus on: sustainable, responsible resource development that maximizes opportunities for training and employment opportunities for our people; developing our vast hydro potential; developing in a real and meaningful way our forest industry; opening up our Territory to the development of the Mackenzie Gas Project and the huge potential for exploration and development of our petroleum

industry, a Territory that leads the way in the management of our water, our wildlife and our environment.

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

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, business development, especially in our smaller communities, growing our economy has to be our primary focus, Mr. Speaker, and giving opportunities to our people. We must unlock the potential we have as a Territory and provide these opportunities for the people who live here.

We need jobs, Mr. Speaker. We need a strong economy and we must move forward. I can't stress it enough that we must find a way to work together. Our fight shouldn't be with ourselves, it should be with the federal government, and finally we should find the way forward.

Again, I encourage our government to continue to work with the Aboriginal partners across our Territory to find a way forward. This is the right direction, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although my constituents are gone at this point, I did want to recognize the attendance earlier of Mrs. Marion Wylie and her daughter, Lea Johnston. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 352-16(5):

DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement as well as many other Members who spoke today, we talked about the uncertainty and the communication plan of this government and how they are reaching out in explaining the AIP agreement to the everyday person throughout the Northwest Territories. My question will be to the Premier of our Territory. How is the Premier making sure that everyday Northerners are understanding truly what this agreement is about? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that we have a signed agreement-in-principle we will be able to reach out to all our households across the Northwest Territories. We are in the process of developing a householder that can go into the homes to give a plain language overview of the agreement-in-principle. As well, while that is being developed and hopefully once we have a draft copy, we can send it off. It will be a matter of weeks to get that out.

The other side of it is through the radio and using Aboriginal languages interpretation to reach out to our communities through the radio programs that are available to us and reach into the homes that way. We also prepared the media package as we did a technical review of that with the media part signing.

We are prepared to meet with the Aboriginal leadership. In fact, hopefully by later on today the letters will be going out to the regional leaders and the chiefs to see if they are interested in coming together in the first week of March to look at pulling all the people together again to go over the work and look at a way forward as we consider the work that needs to be done in the next phase. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Clearly the communication factor seems to be a significant roadblock on this particular issue for people understanding what is happening about the AIP. I know people are trying to form opinions, but, unfortunately, there have been very few, and the few have been very loud, which have caused a galvanization, polar points of views. Mr. Speaker, I daresay the communication plan may be a bit late, so I am kind of worried on how long this particular issue will take. When can the Premier expect to be launching a campaign that reaches out to everyday Northerners to make sure that people know what is happening? Because it has already been at least one week since the agreement has been signed. They need to know. People need to know what it is about. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Although the initial public release of the agreement-in-principle wasn't done by the Government of the Northwest Territories, one of the big things we will do is table in this Assembly the signed agreement. We have begun the process of reaching out to the homes across the North. As well, we will be doing that through the radio programs. I talked about a householder being ready in a matter of weeks, hopefully before the end of this month. We can start the delivery of those to homes. Prior to that, I expect we will be able to deliver through the Aboriginal radio programs what the agreement-in-principle means as well. Not even following up on that, but right now we are reaching out to the regional leadership and

the chiefs to see how they would come to the table and help us in preparing for the next phase. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, what is stopping the government today for reaching out to the local radio stations, whether it is CKLB, CBC or CJCD, in getting out there to get our message out there? Of course, like any campaign and any situation, it is about who gets their messages out first. Unfortunately, I have seen the naysayers campaigning out there loud and strong aggressively. I often wonder if these leaders are just spinning their points of view without giving people a chance to hear what the AIP is from the point of the view of the government. What is stopping the government from doing this in the context of today so we can get radio ads out maybe by Friday, and to the newspapers? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, we have done advertisements in the papers for Aboriginal languages. We need to have the document interpreted, the plain language document interpreted so we can get that message out there. That isn't a simple task to be done and to make sure it is done accurately. We are in the process of doing that. We will get that out as soon as we are able. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Timing is important. Even the Regular Members put forward a non-biased, plain language document. I can tell you that people scooped it up like crazy, wanting to find out just the average details of what is actually going on and how it is affected. We can do this in a matter of days with our fine staff here. I am just kind of concerned that the messaging from the Premier's office and Cabinet is dragging on this particular initiative on such an important issue. Can the Minister use what we have provided as an Assembly, Regular Members, to get that message out there to make sure that people know exactly the detail? Yes, some ads have been out there, but I don't think they are filling the average everyday person up with the details that they need. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I must say the Member is correct; the Regular Members have put together a brief paper on the devolution agreement. I believe it is very brief. To do this document justice, we are going to have to go into much more of it. I have already done a number of interviews with CBC, the call-in show, to try to address some of the specific concerns that are coming out there. But to do this justice, to get the accurate information in front of the people in the North in their own language as well as in English, we want to make sure we have done this right, and the interpretation right as well. We are going to be

doing that in reaching out. In fact, I think the very one of our early stages here is by tabling the signed agreement-in-principle, and we can refer to the very specific sections now as we go forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 353-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At last week's signing ceremony for the agreement-in-principle the Premier looked awfully lonely, flanked by only two of the seven Aboriginal government leaders who are necessary partners in this deal. We all heard the Premier's invitation to Aboriginal governments to sign on as partners. Unfortunately, we also heard that the federal Minister responsible for Aboriginal people refused to meet with those very same leaders who want their concerns heard before becoming a part of this deal. Can the Premier explain to this Assembly why he agreed to be the one stop shop for NWT Aboriginal concerns on constitutional development and resource management and how he ever expected our Aboriginal leadership to go along with this arrangement? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The simple fact that we have worked as a cooperative group across the Northwest Territories since 2001 -- and if Members want, we can table that type of information for Members and for the public to see if we want to go down that path -- but I think the way forward on this one is we have done the work together. In fact, the signing of that agreement is one that, yes, and I met with leaders Sunday prior to that, in the hopes that we can do some adjustments to the protocol work that we were involved in, and unfortunately that wasn't able to come about. In reaching back out to the leaders now and the chiefs, I want to see if that document can be used as the format for a schedule and how we would work together going forward in negotiations, realizing some of the negotiations.

I've said this to the regional leaders, some of them are bilateral GNWT/federal government, some of it bilateral Aboriginal governments/territorial government and there will be positions where we'll need to formulate from a northern perspective to Canada's. So there's lots of work going forward and that's one of the reasons to reach out.

The one thing I will say is, the Constitution piece that is to be dealt with at a different forum. I've met with, for example, early in the life of this government, Bill Erasmus on this issue, and as we looked at it, we fully recognize that future governments of the North will need to sit down and

talk about what a constitution could look like. But at this point I've expressed, from a GNWT side we were concerned that first and foremost we need to deal with the authorities that are now practiced by people in Ottawa and here in the North under the federal government watch, to move that to the North and then move on to next steps. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: My second question is recognizing the Premier's statement that this is a good deal for the NWT and NWT Aboriginal people, this is something I could take more seriously if indeed the Aboriginal governments were lining up to sign this agreement. Obviously, they were lining up with signs rather than to sign. As Aboriginals said in this building just before the signing and outside at their demonstration and elsewhere, their trust in this government has been destroyed. Now, if that's the case, how does the Premier expect to lure these partners back to sign on when the process he has used apparently has alienated them so much? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We've heard clearly for quite a number of years that some of the groups, in their opinion and their position developed, is one that clearly they feel they need to deal with their process first before any agreement-in-principle was to be signed. In fact, in our protocol work it was talked about having key issues dealt with first before having any signing, and those issues, as I expressed to the regional leadership, are actually in the agreement-in-principle talking about how we go forward in building that relationship in a formal way, so there is jurisdiction and sharing of the delivery where there is an overlap. For example, look at our land claims that are in place where there are co-management boards, those types of things exist and could be used in that area. It's a sense of not luring them back, but as we have consistently said, the table is open for them to join us and that we're looking forward to them coming back to this table, because to influence the overall outcome and decisions made, they need to be in the tent earlier rather than later. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. Two First Nations say the deal threatens their Aboriginal treaty rights and threatens the just resolution of their land claims. Others are insisting that it fails to meet their settlement requirements for involvement. At the very least, First Nations governments are, or will be, major land and resource managers, as I mentioned in my statement. Setting out to conclude new management arrangements one at a time can only further add to the complexity of this regulatory regime. How does the Premier intend to meet with Aboriginal governments even outside the discussion framework of the AIP and come to an agreement on these complex issues and processes to accommodate them, or at least how can we deal with this complexity? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I'll go with this in a couple of pieces. One, first and foremost, the language in this agreement-in-principle clearly states for everyone to see the position they hold and signed on to. By signing this agreement, we will hold those positions as we have in the past, that we recognize the land claim agreements are modern treaties and constitutionally protected, which gives them authority over what we can do and any law that we will try to set in place. Where there is a conflict between the devolution agreement and a land claim, the land claim would prevail. Where there is existing claims, anticipated devolution included, the status land claim would not prejudice the devolution of the jurisdictions from Canada/GNWT. There are clauses already built into those claims. As well, we include specific protections for existing Aboriginal treaty rights and settlements, as well as future ones. There's a clause in here that says that once a transfer is to occur, if a settlement happens that establishes larger areas that will be transferred for Aboriginal-specific ownership, they will come back and remove that land. That clause is also built in. So we've taken all the necessary precautions and this was done so with the technical folks and lawyers that worked with the Aboriginal groups at the table that influenced those decisions and that's what we're asking going forward in this next phase, is be at the table, help influence those decisions. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Premier for those remarks. With the climate surrounding this AIP, it looks like a final agreement will be a very long time in coming, which has some positive aspects to it. One of which is that it gives us time to do the work that we know we need to do. For example, the staging of a full and meaningful consultation with all NWT citizens on how to build a new sustainable resource management regime. The requirement to enact mirror legislation is somewhat paternalistic and I think it doesn't recognize that we have a lot of problems with that legislation. Will the Premier take the opportunity we have now and begin immediately, full consultations on a made-in-the-NWT regime to put in place soon after the devolution of resource management responsibilities? Mahsi.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: There's much work to be done as we look at this next phase and begin the work of preparing for setting mandates and negotiations. Those negotiations and the final outcome will then give us a clearer picture of what those exact authorities are drawn down and what areas of legislation that we will have our hands on as Northerners that we can rewrite. So we're preparing a work plan and getting the pieces together to see just the timelines that we'll have, the

people we'll need to put in place to help us with this process, the relationship with our Aboriginal partners on those initiatives that are bilateral, specifically for GNWT and Aboriginal governments. So there's lots of work to be done and I can commit to say we'll go down and do this one piece on legislation in how that legislation may look.

What I intend to do is we start to pull these pieces together now and what it will mean as we go forward. We're looking at documents; for example, the Yukon model as to what happened after their signing and implementation negotiations process and from our own work with the self-governments and at the Aboriginal tables and want to come back to Members to say this is what it looks like, this is what we're going to have to start to do and lay out those priorities in how we will progress on that. I expect that we will be able to start to highlight which pieces that we'll start to be able to put the energy into when it comes to looking at what specific pieces that we'll need to alter soon after we take on that authority. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 354-16(5):

DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up with MLA Bromley's question in terms of the impact of this initial signing of the AIP and the impact on the relationship with the Aboriginal governments. As I've witnessed on TV, while I was in Deline, seeing the initial and the amount of Aboriginal governments with the protestors out there to not have this go forward until some more work should be done on it, I want to ask the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs why they rushed in terms of initiating this agreement. There was some talk about waiting until May or something like that. Why did they rush when they did not have critical mass there at the table with them, in terms of signing this historical document? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say when you look at the work that was done since 2001, to rush this is not a proper use of our language in the sense of definitions here. The fact that the 2007 agreement that was signed by the Government of the Northwest Territories this day and for the Aboriginal partners, this agreement brings even further clarity and in fact is enhanced in a number of areas. When we've had groups sign on to this prior to that, they've been involved in a process as we started this up in 2010 and went through that process. At main table discussions all the groups were updated on some of the bilaterals specific to the GNWT and the federal government.

For example, human resources assets that are used by that department in those areas, that would be transferred. Things of that nature which are specifically bilateral, those are all still brought to the table for further discussion.

It is challenging at most times, even at the regional leaders' table. We've often said that as we come together and share our issues and hope to gain support for some of them, we fully realize at times there will be no agreement on some of the initiatives. I am hoping that as we go forward and by writing to the regional leaders and their chiefs to ask them to sit down with us and go on looking on a forward basis how we bring people back together, we look at the AIP and sort of set out a roadmap as to what's there before us, those challenges, time frames, resources that will be needed to bring success to this next phase.

MR. YAKELEYA: We're just about at the end of our term as legislators. Let's talk about hypothetical here. There is going to be a federal election in springtime, not too sure. This agreement here has been an issue. We don't have critical mass in terms of the strength to go ahead with the AIP in terms of making it a truly northern deal. The parameters have been set to negotiate some of the finer details of the agreement. That's why I use the term "rush," in terms that it may not be well taken by the Cabinet. However, that's the way it's been looked upon by some of the people in my region.

The important question that I want to ask this Cabinet here is how we now build a relationship with the majority of signatories of the Aboriginal governments. How do we start building that relationship? We certainly deteriorated the trust and good work that's been done over the years. How do we put together a unified, certified northern people to say, yes, this is a good deal? That's the question. How do we mend these broken hearts out there?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: That will be, I guess, the big question, is how we bring the folks back to the table for meaningful involvement in helping set the course of the next months, years, of discussion and to a final agreement stage. As we've laid out, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, the regional leaders' table model, where we bring all the regional leaders together and at times bring the chiefs along for other discussion, I am offering that to the regional leaders to meet with them, whether it's at a large group setting or if they want to do region by region with their community chiefs involved, to go through this process to see how we move to the next stage and how we would move through that next stage, and going forward on that basis.

I believe it's through that work, the continued commitment to keep the door open, keep offering the meetings and the chance to sit down on the way forward. I think we will be able to bring some of

the people back to the table. I fully respect positions put out by some of the leaders where they say they want to work on their process. That's where I come in.

As I said earlier to a question, this AIP does not take away from the existing land claims and self-government, and even the ones that are in discussions. We've made sure that wording is in place in this agreement.

MR. YAKELEYA: I consulted with some of the self-government governments in the Sahtu and I would agree to disagree with the Premier's comment in terms of taking away some of the existing land claims agreements or self-government issues here. I've not yet completed my analysis, but I'm hoping to bring it up sometime within the next couple of days to have a debate with the Minister.

I want to ask the Minister again in terms of bringing forward this and building a relationship with the Aboriginal governments in terms of is the Minister looking at, say, for example, the Dene Nation are going to be having a chiefs meeting sometime this month. Is this something that this Cabinet will look at to say we want to work with you and is there funding available for groups who do want to come together or governments who want to come together and look at this and say how can we go forward on this? Is there available funding to the governments?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Through the Department of Executive we have agreements signed with the regional groups for their participation in the devolution talks. We have a funding agreement for the regional leaders' table to have those meetings, as well, in this process.

Our process has been to work with the regional leaders. I have spoken to Mr. Erasmus of the Dene Nation and he did talk about seeing if he could pull chiefs together. We're open to working with the regional leaders, and if the regional leaders choose that venue, then we're prepared to sit down with the regional leaders through that approach. Ultimately it will be through the agreement of regional leaders how we proceed on this initiative and involving all the partners that would help move this forward.

I must say I was thankful for the call I had from Mr. Erasmus suggesting that this may be a venue, and we are looking at those options.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister about releasing the document. I understand it's going to be released shortly. I want to ask the Minister why it's taking so long to release this document. It's so important. I've asked before that it should have been released before. It looked like such a secretive document. Just now, because of the initialling, it will be released to the public.

Now even one of the leaders in the Sahtu is saying that we don't understand this document. I'm wondering why it's taking so long to be released to the public here.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The process is, as I responded to a question in a previous sitting about how we would go forward in respecting the process, we have already at the table with Aboriginal negotiations on self-government and land claims and resources, we honour that process, as it was not a signed document. The leadership across the North received letters from the chief negotiators, including ourselves, at the end of September, and from that process were involved in trying to come to a place where we could have mutual agreement on that. We've tried to stay out of the business of telling regional groups how they need to do their business, as we've learned from our history of allowing them to do their work, but as a way forward we're hoping that we will be able to find a satisfactory way of including the community leadership in providing them all the necessary information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Before I go on, I just want to ask Members if they would respect their own rules as far as question period is concerned. We've got half the clock used up and we've only asked three questions so far. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 355-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to follow up on my Member's statement as well. Most particularly, as the MLA that's in the whole Deh Cho riding, the communities that I went to and speaking with the leadership, they're concerned about the Dehcho process. They're not too sure about the implications about the agreement-in-principle. I think one of the questions they asked me is, okay, it sounds like if we're going to continue with our Dehcho process, now we have to negotiate with the NWT. Can Mr. Premier tell me how the process will continue for the Dehcho process from this point on?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The one thing we've made clear in this process with the agreement-in-principle is that we have no interest in taking on the federal fiduciary responsibility in that relationship between the federal government and the Aboriginal governments and First Nations. That remains intact. In fact, with discussions, we know Canada has made the offers to groups that have not settled and that these will not be affected as we go forward.

So again, the language in this AIP is very direct in ensuring that it does not take away from the processes that are underway. As I stated, there is a clause in here that says if the federal government was to make an agreement with an Aboriginal government for a larger piece of ownership than has already been identified, they have the right to come back in and remove some of that Crown land or public land at that point. We have worked hard to try to ensure that the processes that are in place are protected.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to thank the Premier for that explanation. I believe that people in my riding have been asking me for more explanation for the AIP. I'm not government. I'm not there to explain what Cabinet has done in moving forward with the AIP. They're asking for a communication strategy. I've heard it in the House here earlier on. What exactly is the communication strategy and will it include our government going to the communities and explaining this agreement-in-principle?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I'd mentioned earlier, there's a number of things we're doing with communications. One, first and foremost today, is tabling the signed agreement-in-principle. Secondly, working on the householder, which will go into all homes across the Northwest Territories, a plain language version of the agreement-in-principle. And probably more importantly and sooner to that plain language document, is through the Aboriginal languages be able to speak to the key points of the agreement-in-principle. Also more importantly, I talked about letters to go out hopefully before the end of the day, or as we wrap up here I'll be up in my office signing those letters to the leaders to look at which way they want to move forward. Is it at a regional basis with the chiefs, all the chiefs of the region, or is it pull all the groups together with their chiefs, or is it to go into communities? We're open to a number of scenarios that may be available to us.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: When I travel to my communities, people are happy to see me in their homes. They don't like writing. They don't like e-mails. They prefer sitting down with me eye to eye, discussing the issues that are important to them. This is the same approach they're taking for something significant as the AIP and devolution for the Northwest Territories. They do want to see the Premier and/or someone from our government in the communities explaining and going through the agreement-in-principle so that they can understand it. Will the Premier commit to including visiting all the communities in that communication strategy?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I said, we will work with the regional leaders and the chiefs to discuss how we would get through this, besides the householder, besides the radio, reaching out through the radio in Aboriginal languages, and

looking at whether it's us going into regions or sending a team into the communities. If there are invites, we would be prepared to look at that as well.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. From my point of view and the point of view of my communities is that they do want to see the agreement-in-principle devolution team in the communities explaining it to them, sitting at the table. I would once again ask the Premier to include that in the communication strategy, even if they're going to deal with the regional governments anyway. I believe they must also go to the communities. Can the Premier and his team do that?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As we correspond with the regional leaders and the chiefs in the communities, the elected leadership, we will have that as one of the options. Again, if the regional leaders bring their chiefs and they feel satisfied that's the approach, we would work with them. If there's a request to go in, we would take that into serious consideration of being able to go into the communities.

One of the things that we need to do as we prepare to do this, there's the first version of this is what the AIP is and what it says. Secondly, is our process going forward, and we will need much more time on that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 356-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Premier makes it pretty clear that the Aboriginal groups should come into the tent and we'll all be one big happy family, but right now we're not too much of a happy family. If anything, we've divided ourselves by regions, lands claims groups, and more importantly, the Dene and the Inuvialuit. I think that this government has an obligation, like I said in my statement, that it's clearly stated the government shall involve the Gwich'in, the Sahtu and the Tlicho in the development and implementation of the Northern Accord, no questions asked. It's in the land claim agreement. So yet you're saying, well, you have the right under the land claim agreement, but you have to sign on to this agreement before we'll invite you into the tent.

So I'd like to ask the Premier what is the condition of signing onto this agreement, knowing that a lot of Aboriginal groups find this agreement to be flawed, and how can they commit themselves to sign a

flawed agreement where they've done research on their situations and that basically the cap, the net fiscal benefit, and more importantly, Norman Wells. What is the arrangement for bringing the groups to the table? Do they have to sign or can they sign subject to those agreements being discussed?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quite clearly, it depends on what cap is being discussed. The AIP does not include a cap that ties territorial formula financing to the AIP. That cap that some spoke about is, in fact, a national program. Provinces and territories, the three territories, we hit a cap that's designed to meet the implementation of an equalization program across Canada. So that is not hinged on the agreement-in-principle. That is a financial issue that's been dealt with by every province and territory dealing with Canada. So, number one, there is no negotiation on that in the sense of the AIP. Secondly, the resource revenue sharing that would be a net fiscal benefit to the North, the AIP sets out a process where we will have bilateral discussions with Aboriginal groups in that sharing of that net fiscal benefit.

More importantly, the reference to the Northern Accord, the Northern Accord is appended to a number of the agreements, but let's be frank about that in the sense that it was initialled but was never voted on and endorsed. So we respect that and, in fact, the groups have been involved. They have received resources to be a part of that process and will continue if they sign on. The issue is, going forward, if they're to tap into the resources available, they'll need to sign on and work out an agreement with the federal government to have that money start to flow to them. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, again, the Aboriginal groups clearly and specifically stated that being involved is one thing, but fully participating is another. I think that is the issue that's at hand here.

In regard to the Gwich'in Tribal Council who submitted a letter to the Premier in April last year on six items, which basically they had a problem with the devolution process, to date they have not even had a response to that letter that was sent to the Premier. Yet he asked for Aboriginal people to have input into the process.

I'd like to ask the Premier exactly what extent of involvement will the Aboriginal groups have in exactly re-looking at this arrangement, seeing exactly does it meet the criteria. I think the other issue they have is in regard to the whole area of the base transfer. What are they going to do in the future if they decide to decentralize these positions from Yellowknife to other regions? Has that been taken into consideration? Also, in regard to the potential indexing and also are these fixed funds? Also, I think that we have to be realistic. The

numbers, we were looking at a number years ago, it was \$83 million. Now we're basically agreeing to \$63 million. What I'd like to know is how they are going to be involved in those decision-making processes.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Earlier as well, the Member mentioned Norman Wells as the one-third ownership the federal government has, and they call it equity as their ownership piece. The two-thirds that are there do provide royalties to the Aboriginal groups and to the Government of Canada. So two-thirds of that asset is already paying royalties. The issue is on the one-third ownership of the federal government.

Let's do some history here. The Sahtu and the Gwich'in took the federal government to court based on that being a royalty. In fact, we, as the GNWT of the day, we're quite supportive of that initiative. The unfortunate reality that happened in the case, and was considered as a good fortune at the time, was the signing of settlement between the Aboriginal groups and Canada. And that has then closed that door. We have consistently, as the GNWT through previous governments and even at the start of this process in this government, looked to having that brought forward if not purely on a royalty basis.

I spoke to the Prime Minister, who was looking at the revenues that come from that and reinvesting in the North in key projects. So we continue to put those forward, and the best way of coming to the table is sign the agreement, be a part of that team that helps influence the future decisions and direction. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other area of concern was the impact of devolution from the GNWT taking on these powers, and more importantly, the affect on Aboriginal government and Aboriginal authorities, regardless if it's land claims or unsettled or settled areas. I know that I heard comments on the radio from a legal counsel for the government, that this agreement will not affect the land claim agreements. This agreement is all about the land claim agreements, so I prefer to differ on that one. I'd like to know from the Premier exactly have we looked at the impacts on this agreement on Aboriginal governments and the land claim agreements.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, this agreement-in-principle has the fingerprints and handprints of the Aboriginal organizations and governments across the Northwest Territories. From the earliest days up until we picked this up and concluded a number of the bilateral issues, even to the point when this document was signed and sent to them, they started to look at what was presented. As the negotiators said, they reached their mandate. They've got their handprints and that's why there's language in here that talks about

protection of Aboriginal rights and interest in the Northwest Territories. We've incorporated that language. Again I say, by going forward, as they participate and join on, we can include that language and continue that involvement in helping us frame the right language as we go forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would refer this question to the Minister of Justice and have the Department of Justice look at the constitutional viability of this agreement and the affect it has on Aboriginal treaty rights in the Northwest Territories.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As the Member knows, when Cabinet and government looks at taking a position on things, we involve many departments from the earliest days to make sure the language we have in before signing any document meets the criteria that's set before us as the Government of the Northwest Territories in honouring our commitments that are made. That's why the language, as it's put in, is quite clear. Now, it's written in here, the ink is dried in the sense of those commitments to protect the Aboriginal rights and the recognition of Section 35, but if that isn't good enough for some, nothing will be good enough for some in the sense, because it is there. We get to set the mandates, and if they come in the tent and sign on, they get to help us with some of that work as we go forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 357-16(5):
EVALUATION OF IMPACT OF
MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

On February 11, 2010, the Minister announced the first increase to the NWT's minimum wage since 2003. I was thrilled to hear that announcement and I'm sure many of our residents were as well. In the Minister's statement that day he said that on April 1, 2010, the rate would increase to \$9 an hour. So my question to the Minister: since then, since April 1, 2010, has the department done any evaluation of the impact of this increase in our minimum wage? How have businesses responded? How have workers and their unions responded? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since we introduced the minimum wage increase we have had a deliberation with the

potential business partners and also the communities. As we legislated in the House, April 1, 2010, \$9 and then April 1, 2011, to \$10, those are discussions that we had. There were a lot of positive reactions on these initiatives. We haven't heard much on the negative side of the minimum wage increase, but we heard some business sectors in Yellowknife and surrounding communities that had some nominal impacts where they had to hire certain individuals on those wages. But those are the areas that we continually monitor within my department. We will continue to work with the Members to inform them of what is happening with our minimum wage increase. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister for that response. He mentioned that there will be an increase to the minimum wage again on April 1st of this year. I am very glad to hear that there is no change in that plan. In his comments last year, the Minister also stated in his statement that the department is considering ways to implement future increases that will see regular and reasonable increases linked to other economic factors such as inflation and the cost of living. I would like to know, relative to regular and reasonable increases linked to cost of living, what is the status of this work? Where is the department at on this? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct; those are the areas that we, as a department, work with other interdepartmental as well on the stats collected on statistics. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, the information that we receive will be helpful as we move along. Based on the consumer price index and the cost of living, we continue to monitor that. Once we increase the minimum wage in this fiscal year, the following year, we need to find ways of how much we can increase or status quo at that time. This is an area that we will need to discuss further within my department and with other departments as well. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister. I guess I have to take from his answer that work has not started yet on this aspect of future increases to minimum wage. I would like to know from the Minister, he is talking about talking to other departments and getting information from statistics. I think that is wonderful. We should be doing that, but what kind of work needs to be done cross-departmental in order to determine future minimum wage increases tied to the cost of living? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we need to gather information from other departments and business sectors as well. We need to hear from the people. We have done that in the initial stages. We collected information and data from them and heard their concerns and heard their ideas, as well, and suggestions. That is how we came forward in

the House here. That is important information that we will continue to collect from the general public and also interdepartmental areas as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that the department is doing consultations. I think that is valid. I did forget to say to the Minister that I appreciate that there has been some ongoing evaluation of the effect on businesses and workers. It is also nice to know that there is a positive response. I would like to know from the Minister when the House or when I could expect some kind of an idea as to how future minimum wage increases will be determined. When can we expect the results of the work that he is talking about? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I have to follow up on a specific or detailed information what the Member is referring to. I will get back to Members on the status of our findings and provide that information to the Members. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 358-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE
AND NORTHERN LEADERS' FORUM

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for the Premier today. It is getting back to my Member's statement where I talked about the signing of the AIP and what the future holds for our Territory. I also mentioned in my Member's statement that I am a member of the Northern Leaders' Forum and I have some questions to the Premier about the future of the Northern Leaders' Forum and whether or not the Premier sees that as a vehicle to try to bring Aboriginal leaders and other leaders from across the Territory to the table so that we can talk about what the Territory is going to look like post-devolution and what really we have here at stake and what the opportunities are for all governments in our Territory going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northern Leaders' Forum got its life out of the Regional Leaders' Table as it was through the Regional Leaders' Table where we set up the side group to include leaders from across the North, look at a common vision. We had a meeting following or just prior to the AIP process. Not all of the people who were involved initially were able to attend as they were preparing for the agreement-in-principle process. With what we received, our partners were there. We were incorporating their work, for those

that submitted documentation. We are going to send that out to the leaders who weren't there, to see if they will provide input on what was provided and hope to have another meeting sometime in the spring. We haven't ironed out that date as of yet.

As for our process forward, I believe it can be one of those avenues where we build on the strength that we have as a Territory and look at all the pros that present themselves in a sense of...as well as the challenges that present themselves as a result of the signing and how we need to proceed. I think that can be incorporated as we look to the future of what it means to have now the authority, once that is drawn down. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I have always been supportive of the Northern Leaders' Forum and trying to come up with a common vision, a way to work together with other governments in the Territory to move this Territory forward.

During my Member's statement and also the Premier in his sessional statement today alluded to all the good things that can come out of this agreement. I think we have lost so much, Mr. Speaker, in fighting with the federal government, fighting with ourselves for the past 20 years, and at some point in time I think we have to start putting numbers on paper, talking about what the opportunities are, talking about what we have lost and what we stand to gain. That is every government here in the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Premier if the government can look at putting some of that work together so that we can sit down and talk about what the future does hold. We need to get the leaders back to the table. April might be a little too far away, Mr. Speaker. I think it should happen sooner than later. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the April meeting or the spring meeting we are talking about, Northern Leaders' Forum, is to do with the work that was presented and we sent that back out. As I committed earlier, the regional leaders and the chiefs in the communities, we're going to get a letter out if not by the end of the day, first thing tomorrow to the leaders to ask for a meeting specifically to do with this phase of the agreement-in-principle, how we can work together going forward. We are reaching out. As stated, we would rather have all the groups sign on and stand together as we do some of this work as it is going to be required of us in the very near future. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the signing of the AIP and eventually a final agreement with the federal government on devolution and resource revenue sharing is absolutely a game changer here in the Northwest Territories. I think going forward, coming up with a vision prior to the signing of the AIP and even the thought of us having a final agreement,

that vision would look much different than a vision that I think we can come up with today that is post-devolution, post-resource revenue sharing here in the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Premier, that's changed, and how can we articulate or how can we get our message out to the leaders across the Territories on what these opportunities are post-devolution for everybody? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you. I believe there's a number of ways we can do that and as we set out a roadmap for the next steps we need to take since the signing of the agreement-in-principle and the work that we need to do in negotiations, and that we can pull that type of information together to show people what it could look like as we go forward. The challenges there are sometimes what we want to negotiate in the final deal might not be exactly as we've presented, so we have to be careful there as well. But we do know some of the facts based on our net fiscal benefit discussions, for example. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's things like that that will go a long way to helping people to come to the table. If you look just recently, the numbers on exploration dollars spent in the three territories, we're \$60 million behind exploration money spent in the Yukon, we're \$180 million behind Nunavut, we need to be looking at opportunities to get investment in our Territory, and I think investment in our Territories means something for all governments here in the Northwest Territories, and I think as much information we can pull together, the better off we'll be in these discussions. So, again, I'd like to thank the Premier for his efforts in that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I didn't hear a question there. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 359-16(5):
CONSULTATION PROCESS ON
PROPOSED WILDLIFE ACT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources in follow-up of my Member's statement where I was talking about the consultation process for the proposed new Wildlife Act.

I attended the meeting with the NWT Wildlife Federation on the 15th of January and at that meeting the director of wildlife started off saying we want to hear what you've had to say, we want you to tell us what's wrong so that we can fix it. Towards the end of the presentation the same director said, you know, we're going to be putting this bill in front of the House in late February or

early March and we're not planning to make any substantive changes, we'll make some editorial changes, which seems like a giant contradiction to me. This is supposed to be public consultation. How can we have confidence that this consultation that's been going on since before Christmas is open and real and genuine when the director is saying clearly that they're not planning to make any substantive changes, only editorial changes? How can the public have confidence that their voices are being heard with respect to the new proposed Wildlife Act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Wildlife Act was identified by this Assembly and by this Cabinet and government as one of the big pieces of legislation they wanted to see done after a process of some 10 years or so of work. We, as well, developed a unique approach with Aboriginal governments towards drafting this legislation where we had lawyers, working group members from the Aboriginal governments, as well as GNWT staff and lawyers working, and they've been working and put in thousands of hours over the last couple of years. They've gone to every community. They have come up with a process that's unique and does not exist anywhere in this country that I know of.

It's unfortunate the Member has chosen on the basis of one comment that he thought he heard in one meeting, at the tail end of one meeting, in spite of the hundreds and thousands of hours, the hundreds of hours of work and all the communities that have been visited and the dozens and dozens of groups that have been consulted with, to condemn the whole process outright.

There have been 54 drafts done of this bill; 54, Mr. Speaker, based on all the work that's been done, the feedback we've gotten. I've got a list here of 56 pages of the feedback that we've received and that we've responded to. So for the Member to say how can we have confidence, the proof will be in the pudding.

If you took the first draft and the 54th draft, I can tell you we haven't just been spending our time changing commas and looking at making it a little tighter from a grammatical point of view. So the process is there. It's been bought into by all the Aboriginal governments, it's a unique process and it's going to bring to the table a piece of legislation that is 10 years overdue. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. ABERNETHY: For the record, I said earlier that I actually applaud the department and the Minister for the unique process that they put in place. I think it's important, I think they did the right

thing, but we're still a public government and we still need to make sure that we hear the other half of the population, 50 percent of the population that don't feel that they've been heard, and it's the consultation process. Hay River had a problem with the consultation process. The Minister's department went in there, they advertised somewhere, nobody is quite sure because nobody showed up. Turns out there was no advertising or not adequate advertising in Inuvik and they've had to rerun those same meetings. That's clear that consultation is not going as clearly or as well as the Minister thinks.

Also, just for the point, it's not something I thought I heard at the meeting with the NWT Wildlife Federation. The director said it. I was there. I heard the director say exactly what I said she said. That concerns me. If they're only planning to do editorial amendments, are they listening to the people?

The Minister has said they've had 54 drafts. I've got a question for the Minister. If there were 54 drafts, how many of those drafts, those drafts where it's gone or changed significantly, have occurred since this consultation has ended? How many have resulted since the consultation ended in January? How many have resulted in substantial changes, or is it all just editorial? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We're going to be briefing committee and we'll provide you with the very many pages of all the groups that were consulted, all the individual feedback we received, public from all corners of the Northwest Territories. There has been full and adequate consultation. This is the most consulted on bill, in my memory as a legislator here for 15 and a half years. We've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, thousands of hours of time and we've gone to every community and we've asked for feedback, and there have been substantive changes. The Member should know this. You're not going to do 54 different drafts on editorial comments. You will see that there have been substantive changes and there are some issues in there of great concern to the NWT Wildlife Federation. Though I must point out, Mr. Speaker, the Wildlife Federation has shown a resurgence as of late. While this government says we fully support and recognize Aboriginal governments, that we respect Section 35, this group advertised their meeting to say that the changes have less to do with the preservation of wildlife than with the granting of special and exclusive privileges to special interest groups in the Northwest Territories.

So we have a fundamental disagreement, but in spite of that, we have made substantive changes, and yes, we went back to Hay River, we've gone back to the places we've been asked to go. So no one can say that there has not been consultation, that there has not been involvement and that we

are not serious about the changes. We're bringing forward the best possible act possible. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: I hear what the Minister is saying, but I still question the comments that were made by the director and that were actually made, I just didn't think I heard them. I'm still concerned that the consultations ended in January. They plan to put a bill in front of us in late February or early March. I want to know that the groups have been heard and what kind of changes have taken place since the last round of consultations. Can he guarantee to me that they have heard these individuals and that since the last round of consultation there's been more than just editorial changes, as the director said they were planning, and that people have been heard and, where appropriate, substantive changes have been made? That's what I'm asking. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'll get back to the point of the Member based on attendance at one meeting, one comment, and he's prepared to negate years of work, thousands of hours of investment and it's unfortunate. I'll give him one example of the issue that's in there that I know has been an issue. That's been the residency requirement to go hunting. It used to be I think it was four years, they've cut it down to two. Now, there have been a lot of concerns raised and the draft that's going to be coming forward is going to indicate that we're proposing one year. That's a significant issue and there's been huge debate on this and there is not unanimity. We recognize we're a public government and we are making the choices to bring forward a balanced, fair piece of legislation. The Aboriginal governments have worked with us collectively and collaboratively. We've drafted this document and it's going to reflect what we think is in the best interests of all Northerners. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your time for question period has expired; however, I'll allow the Member a final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, I am in no way, shape or form negating all the hard work that's been done by this department with respect to the Wildlife Act. I respect the unique approach that they've taken with respect to involving the Aboriginal governments. In fact, I applaud it. I think it's exactly the right thing to do. I am also not getting specifically into detail of the act. We can do that at another time. I'm talking about consultation process. I'm talking about listening to the people of Northwest Territories. I'm talking about hearing what they have to say and assuring them that we are hearing them and not saying things like we don't plan to make any substantive changes, we're only making editorial changes. That's what I'm talking about.

This government doesn't have a great record of consultation. Information sessions, on the other hand, we're really good at. Unfortunately, we call much of our information sessions "consultations." We do have a problem there. What I'm talking about is this process and how do we ensure confidence that people can feel that they have been heard. I'm telling you that they don't feel that they've been heard. That's what I'm talking about. How can the Minister assure people that they've been heard, that their input has been taken seriously, and that this act will represent 24,000 people in the Northwest Territories? Sorry, 44,000 people in the Northwest Territories. All the residents, not just half.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member is making a very strong assertion here that this is a biased piece of legislation that only represents half the people of the Northwest Territories. That's categorically and unequivocally false. It's egregious that he would even mention that in this Assembly. I'm surprised that the Member would stoop to such rhetoric on a bill of this importance.

The reality is, we did not just sit there and think, let me see, one year, there's a good idea. We went from every community. We even talked to hundreds of people, groups across the land. This is the working group with all the Aboriginal governments involved as well as the territorial government. We're coming forward with a bill that's going to be representative of what we think is in the best interest for wildlife, for the environment, it's going to have the support of all the governments and it's going to represent, we think, the North.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The time for question period has expired. 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 17:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. I wish to report that Bill 17 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

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

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

BILL 20: AN ACT TO AMEND THE EVIDENCE ACT

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the House that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act, and Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act, and wishes to report that Bill 14 and Bill 20 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 130-16(5): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LANDS AND RESOURCES DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement-in-Principle.

TABLED DOCUMENT 131-16(5): PENSION ADMINISTRATION REPORT – RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT AND SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT AS AT MARCH 31, 2010

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with Section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act and Section 11(1) of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I hereby table the Pension Administration Report - Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act as at March 31, 2010.

Mr. Clerk.

TABLED DOCUMENT 132-16(5): RESPONSE TO PETITION 8-16(5), RESPITE SERVICES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Glen Abernethy on November 3, 2010.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 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 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010; Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement; and Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have several items: tabled documents 4-16(5), 30-16(5), 38-16(5), 62-16(5), 75-16(5), 103-16(5), Bill 4, Minister's Statement 65-16(5) and Minister's Statement 88-16(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I move to report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'll rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. 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 Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 3, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
6. Returns to Oral Questions
7. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Replies to Budget Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. 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"
 - Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
 - Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights
 - Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.
Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until
Thursday, February 3, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

