



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

6th Session

Day 4

16th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, March 10, 2011

Pages 6469 - 6510

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker
Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Mr. Glen Abernethy
(Great Slave)

Mr. Tom Beaulieu
(Tu Nedhe)

Ms. Wendy Bisaro
(Frame Lake)

Mr. Bob Bromley
(Weledeh)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Jackie Jacobson
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Krutko
(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Hon. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Hon. Bob McLeod
(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Human Resources
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board
Minister responsible for Energy Initiatives

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Transportation
Minister of Public Works and Services

Hon. Robert C. McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission
Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)

Hon. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)
Deputy Premier
Government House Leader
Minister of Finance
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

Mr. Dave Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations
Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk
Mr. Doug Schauerte

Principal Clerk of Committees
Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

Principal Clerk, Operations
Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks
Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Ms. Malinda Kellett

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	6469
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	6469
6-16(6) – Year of Road Safety (M. McLeod)	6469
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	6470
National Debating Society Meeting in Hay River (Groenewegen).....	6470
Update from Tu Nedhe (Beaulieu)	6470
Accomplishments of Nunakput Residents (Jacobson)	6471
30 th Annual Beavertail Jamboree in Fort Simpson (Menicoche)	6471
Auditor General's Report on Northwest Territories Health Programs and Services (Bisaro)	6471
High Cost of Living in the Sahtu (Yakeleya).....	6472
New Wildlife Act (Hawkins)	6472
Plebiscite on Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (Krutko).....	6473
Review of Current Budget Session (Bromley).....	6473
Need for More Curated Shows of Northern Artists in the Northwest Territories (Abernethy)	6474
Bill C-530, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Act (Ramsay).....	6474
Spring Carnival Season (R. McLeod).....	6475
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	6475
ORAL QUESTIONS	6476
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	6487
REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS	6488
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	6490
MOTIONS	6490
1-16(6) – Healthy Eating/Nutrition Programs (Bisaro).....	6490
2-16(6) – Optional Rent Scale in Public Housing (Jacobson)	6495
3-16(6) – Extended Adjournment of the House to May 11, 2011 (Bisaro)	6499
SECOND READING OF BILLS	6500
Bill 3 – Electronic Transactions Act.....	6500
Bill 4 – Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011	6500
Bill 5 – Write-off of Debts Act, 2010-2011	6500
Bill 6 – Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2010-2011	6500

Bill 7 – Community Planning and Development Act	6500
Bill 8 – An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act	6501
Bill 9 – Wildlife Act	6501
Bill 10 – Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act	6507
THIRD READING OF BILLS	6508
Bill 1 – An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.....	6508
Bill 2 – An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act	6508
ORDERS OF THE DAY	6509

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 10, 2011****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a personal matter under Rule 20(1). Yesterday our Member of Parliament, the MP for the Western Arctic, testified before the federal Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. The committee is considering Bill C-530. The MP's private member's bill is to amend the NWT Act to change the GNWT borrowing limit.

I am concerned his comments did not reflect all of the information that I conveyed to him. For the record, Mr. Speaker, in a letter dated October 20, 2010, I told the Member of Parliament the GNWT would await the outcome of the federal review of territorial borrowing limits before determining what further actions might be necessary with respect to our borrowing limit.

Mr. Speaker, that was and is still the position of the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 6-16(6):
YEAR OF ROAD SAFETY**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I know that all Members share my interest in doing everything we can to prevent needless deaths and injuries from occurring on our streets and highways. Every injury or loss of life is especially hard on our communities, especially when there is so much we can do to reduce the risks associated with the use of snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), and vehicles on our roads and trails.

Two thousand and eleven is the Year of Road Safety in Canada, Mr. Speaker. It is the first year of Canada's Road Safety Strategy 2015 as well as the

international decade of Road Safety 2020. This is a good time to take stock of what we are doing to increase road safety in the Northwest Territories, and to decrease the number of needless collisions, injuries and fatalities.

Increased safety and security is one of the action areas under this government's strategic plan. Through the Building our Future strategic initiative, we have invested in the Drive Alive Program which has a number of initiatives and partnerships to make our roads and highways safer.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, Members were asked to assist the Drive Alive "Be Visible, Be Safe" program by distributing retro-reflective armbands to their constituents, and the response from Members was enthusiastic. I thank each of you for your assistance, which enabled us to deliver this program in every part of the Territory.

Mr. Speaker, I would also ask for everyone's assistance for our Buckle Up NWT initiative which will be ramping up over the next few months. We recently learned that at 40 percent, seatbelt usage in communities outside Yellowknife is the lowest in Canada. We know from collision statistics that a person who is not wearing a seatbelt is 17 times more likely to die than those who do.

Over the next two years, the Drive Alive Program will have a special focus on seatbelt usage in our communities. Drive Alive will partner with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, municipal enforcement, regional leaders and the other organizations to make people aware of the danger they put themselves and others in when they do not wear a seatbelt. I would like Members of this Assembly to be among the leaders who help us achieve the Buckle Up NWT goal of bringing the use of seatbelts in the NWT up to the national average of 95 percent. Mr. Speaker, I will have more to announce on this important initiative in the next few weeks.

Other initiatives for 2011 the Year of Road Safety under our Drive Alive Program include:

- the current pledge campaign to reduce the number of people who use their cell phone while driving;

- an impaired driving awareness campaign, including impairment caused by driver fatigue; and
- a campaign to address speed as a contributing factor in collisions, particularly in bison country.

As part of our campaign on speeding, we will be informing residents that the penalties for violating the speed limit in construction and school zones have doubled. We will also be reminding drivers that when they are passing stopped emergency vehicles, they must slow to half the posted speed limit. We need to protect our police and municipal enforcement officers and our firefighters as they do their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, when trying to change the behaviour of drivers and others using our transportation system, our preference is always to inform and raise awareness of the better choices that each one of us can make. Voluntary changes like this are usually the most effective and are changes that last for life.

Our efforts to make our streets and highways safer are continuing. The support of Members to help make that happen continues to be appreciated. Every step we take towards preventing injuries and deaths help us deliver on this Assembly's goals of healthy, educated people and sustainable, vibrant, safe communities. Mahsi cho.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL DEBATING SOCIETY MEETING IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 2011 National Student Debating Seminar of the Canadian Student Debating Federation is taking place in Hay River from March 9th to 13th. There are 78 delegates participating in formal debates representing 10 provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. This is considered to be one of their largest debates and it is the first of its kind to take place in the North since 1975.

The participating delegates are accomplished students chosen by provincial and territorial debating organizations through a competitive process. The seminar theme has been appropriately chosen to be northern issues and the debates will be parliamentary, cross-examination and consensus styles. The resolutions for debate are: should cultural preservation be a top government priority; resource development is more important than environmental protection; and Canada should take more active measures to

assert sovereignty over the Arctic. Those are their topics.

The seminar will be a unique northern experience for these competitors. On the debating side, the seminar will feature two rounds of debate modelled on the NWT's consensus style of government. Each delegate will debate a topic twice; once for, once against the issue being debated.

The group of delegates will be kept very busy during their stay in Hay River. Some of the planned activities for each day are pond hockey, curling, dog mushing, ice fishing, a tour of Buffalo Airways, a variety of arts and cultural activities including beading, fiddling, drumming, storytelling and more.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our visiting delegates to the Northwest Territories and to wish all of them luck in their debating challenges. I would also like to congratulate and thank the people of Hay River who were involved in organizing this event. Gatherings like this don't just happen. It takes extraordinary volunteers. People who commit to working long hours, making arrangements for travel and accommodations, selecting venues, recruiting judges, programming entertainment and various other details and then pulling it all together. Many thanks to Geoff Buerger, the principal at the Princess Alexandra School in Hay River who accepted the challenge of organizing this major event. Thanks to his volunteer committee, all the volunteer judges and, of course, all the folks at the Princess Alexandra School who I'm sure will all be recruited to help out. I thank them all for their effort, commitment and hard work to have contributed to make such an exciting event possible. Best wishes to everyone involved for a successful weekend and we will see you down there at the debate.

I want to say that I think things like debating organizations are extremely important. In surveys it has been determined that fear of public speaking is right up there with the fear of death. These are the kind of things that give people confidence to speak in public and I challenge our colleagues today with this crowd here to do us proud and answer our questions today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON UPDATE FROM TU NEDHE

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to try to do as much of my Member's statement in Chipewyan today as possible for the elders in Tu Nedhe.

[English translation not provided.]

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
NUNAKPUT RESIDENTS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During this term as MLA I always start my Member's statements at the beginning of session to honour our loved ones that have passed away. At the end of each session I honour the accomplishments of our loved ones, especially our youth.

All across the Territories schools and families in communities will be beginning to gather to celebrate the academic accomplishments of their graduates. In our small and remote communities graduates are celebrated by everyone.

In the community of Ulukhaktok the following graduates will be honoured on June 8, 2011: Ms. Gail Ogina, Jerry Akoaksion Jr., Zachary Kudlak, David Roy Ekpakohak, Jasmine Klengenber, Troy Kataoyak and Kassandra Ekpakohak. In 2009 the YELS Program -- Youth Entry Level Skills Program -- outstanding student was Kassandra Ekpakohak.

The community of Sachs Harbour Inuvik graduates will be honoured on Saturday, June 4, 2011, in Inuvik. Potential graduates are: John Keogak, Jacob Kudlak, Kyle Wolki.

For the community of Paulatuk the graduates will be honoured on June 19, 2011. Potential graduates are: Bessie Lennie -- who is a past youth parliamentarian here -- Bernadette Green, Lauren Ruben, Rosalie Krengnektak, Georgina Wolki, Stephanie Illasiak and Tanya Ruben.

For the community of Tuktoyaktuk the graduates will be honoured on August 5, 2011. Potential graduates for Mangilaluk School are: Kelsey Lucas, Leeanne Pokiak, Caitlin Walker, Morris Nogasak, Shane Gruben, Chelsea Raddi and Darcie Bernhardt. In addition to the above-mentioned Mangilaluk School students there are Terri Lee Kuptana and Germaine Voudrach who are currently working towards their graduation and have indicated they would like to participate in the graduation ceremonies at Mangilaluk School.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, I wish to express my admiration and appreciation for all the hard work and dedication of our staff of this government, the Legislative Assembly and also my colleagues during this long session. We put in long hours and dealt with some very difficult issues that will affect the people of the Northwest Territories for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, enjoy your community carnivals this year and have a safe spring harvesting season. Quanami, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
30TH ANNUAL BEAVERTAIL JAMBOREE
IN FORT SIMPSON

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This week in Fort Simpson people have been participating in our ever popular Beaver Tail Jamboree. Celebrations began last Sunday. I wish to say special congratulations to the Beaver Tail Jamboree organizing committee and the sponsors and host organizations who have been making this event come alive every year for the past 34 years.

The committee members who worked so hard to make this year's Jamboree successful are: Ms. Cindy Browning, Ms. Cheryl Sibbeston, Mr. Nathan McPherson, Mr. Gerry Antoine, Mr. Troy Bradbury, Mr. Aaron McNabb, Mr. Jonas Antoine, Mr. Mike Squirrel, Ms. Ria Letcher and Ms. Celine Antoine. They all deserve honourable mention, ladies and gentlemen all, Mr. Speaker.

The community and Nahendeh region look forward to this event that is time to celebrate together that we have completed another long winter. There are activities for our youth and for folks of all ages. Events have changed over the years. Some old favourites are back like dog racing. There's much fun to be had. Today they crown the Jamboree prince and princesses. Friday is the best, firstly, because there is a half-a-day holiday. There is a free luncheon, corporate challenge competitions, youth talent show and a dance. Saturday has just as many activities including the premier event: the adult talent show.

I encourage everyone in Fort Simpson to come out and enjoy all that this jamboree has to offer. The best part of it all is that it gets families and friends together for the whole week. I hope that the weather is great and that everybody has a safe, happy and enjoyable weekend. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the Auditor General's report on the health programs and services. I also want to note here that the Auditor General did not look at social services during her review, just health.

The health report findings are similar to those of the findings in the Auditor General's report last year on education. The report indicates a lack of evaluation, monitoring and data collection on the part of the Department of Health. The Auditor General gives credit to Health for its strategic plan, described by Ms. Fraser as a clear direction to improve the system. But Ms. Fraser also says that the

department needs to follow through with the health authorities. By that she means monitor their activities to ensure that the priorities of the department and of the system as a whole are achieved by the regional authorities.

When the Auditor General examined the relationship between the Department of Health and the health authorities, she found that the department lacks performance agreements with those health authorities. As a result, there are no performance indicators on which the success or the failure of an authority can be measured.

Any devolution of programs and services from the government to a subsidiary organization should have as a basic component assessment, monitoring and evaluation structure. The Health department and its authorities do not. There are contribution agreements, Mr. Speaker, between the parties, but those contribution agreements do not address monitoring of the actions or the work of the authorities. There is no mechanism to gauge how the authorities are doing to determine whether they are successfully delivering programs and services to the residents in their region as is required by the department.

We give almost \$225 million annually to health authorities. I think we really ought to know what they are doing with our money. As a government, the GNWT has a poor track record when it comes to assessment, monitoring and evaluation of our programs and services. We're quick to decide on new initiatives and to put new programs in place, but we do not at the same time establish how we will evaluate them in both the short and the long term. That is the message from the Auditor General in her report, Mr. Speaker. The government as a whole and particularly Cabinet must change its mindset, its approach, if you will, to the implementation of new initiatives. When approval is given to fund a new program or initiative, that decision must be based on a proposal which includes a comprehensive evaluation plan.

I will have questions for the Minister of Health at a later time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH COST OF LIVING IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak about the unbelievable costs of not having a highway in the Sahtu. Mr. Speaker, we did have a highway at one time built in 1943. It went from Norman Wells to the Yukon Territory. It took about 13 months to build, Mr. Speaker, no problem. The U.S. government said go, and away it went. Mr. Speaker, that is the problem of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed and heard about the high cost of store bought foods and the expensive housing costs, just the basics to continue to be a major issue for our people in the Sahtu. In November, INAC updated statistics on the northern food basket for a family of four between 2005 and 2009. Not to my surprise, Norman Wells went up more by 17 percent. That is because we don't have a highway into our communities. We are paying the increase in price of isolation, Mr. Speaker. How can a family find the money to cover the food, clothing and shelter, let alone find money for vacation trips? We don't have a highway, so families are taking advantage of the two-month window of opportunity in the winter, drive out, do their shopping and possibly take a little vacation. Then they load up their trucks with a year's supply, drive back into the Sahtu.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago Cece McCauley wrote an article in the News/North called "The Cost of No Highway." She has some good points. A highway could save the Sahtu residents their hard-earned money by reducing the cost of freight of groceries and dry goods. Fuel and building supplies would also likely decrease, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime, something needs to be done. Disparity in the Sahtu doesn't reflect very well on the federal government. Build a highway, Mr. Harper. As the saying goes as in the movie, go west, young man, go west. Maybe we should open up the CANOL road again, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEW WILDLIFE ACT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, ENR has now formally presented and proceeded with the new Wildlife Act. As we have all heard, there are many concerns from mining, outfitting and tourism industries. For the sake of observation, Section 87 of the new Wildlife Act states, "no person shall, without a licence or permit authorizing it, establish, offer or provide an organized activity for profit in which big game or other prescribed wildlife is the object of interaction, manipulation or close observation..." Therefore, Mr. Speaker, by way of example, if an Aurora Village tour bus happened to pull over loaded full of those much needed Japanese tourists just to take a few pictures of ptarmigan, they would be in violation of the act because they would be breaking the letter of the law. Close observation is not permitted without a permit, Mr. Speaker.

Now, under Section 88, the superintendent may, by written notice, exempt a person from the requirement of a licence or permit under those

sections I just highlighted. Mr. Speaker, the point being here is the superintendent now is going to have to be writing exemptions daily. In fairness, ENR has agreed that they will work with ITI as a matter of accommodation to where ITI regulations, conditions and guidelines will help mitigate this issue that ENR has identified. However, accommodation is only a policy outside the act. Mr. Speaker, this needs to be in the act and regulations need to be drawn up to draw and create certainty. While accommodation will be appreciated, again, it does create interpretations and, to be honest, Mr. Speaker, industry sees it as a leap of faith.

So in short, more red tape and needless administrative policing. To keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, even if you were an entomologist and you wanted to harvest dragon flies, you would be in violation of the act and charged as well.

Mr. Speaker, the mining industry will tell you the Wildlife Act is putting undue pressure and probably turning the NWT into a park or game reserve. Mr. Speaker, more pressure on these types of industries will help identify the Northwest Territories as a place not open for business. Mr. Speaker, we need those much needed tax dollars and by scaring away or discouraging investment in the North does nothing for our Territory, and at the end perhaps Environment and Natural Resources will get what their asking for, which is nothing from everybody. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PLEBISCITE ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the fundamental principles of a free, transparent government is the ability for our residents to vote freely with regard to expressing their views on particular issues, voting people into public office and voting for things such as the division of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, there was a plebiscite held in 1992 to divide the Northwest Territories. At that time it was done through a plebiscite with the simple wording, "do you think the Northwest Territories should be divided." Mr. Speaker, since that time, division has come and gone. Yet, Mr. Speaker, there is still a lot of political manoeuvring regarding taking on federal powers and responsibilities to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I think we also have to allow the public and the people of the Northwest Territories to also have a say with regard to what's happening in the Northwest Territories with the transfer of powers from Ottawa to the Northwest Territories through

similar means, regardless of whether it's a plebiscite, freedom to vote, a general election. The public has the right to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot of what's going on with devolution in this House and elsewhere. A lot of full-page ads are being put out there with regard to people's views on particular issues. Mr. Speaker, how do we get feedback from the general public once their views have been expressed? Mr. Speaker, one of those ways is through a plebiscite.

Mr. Speaker, the Plebiscite Act allows a plebiscite to take place during a general election. I feel it's critical that this government and this Legislative Assembly allow the public that opportunity to have their voice in a very important issue such as devolution from Ottawa to the Northwest Territories by way of a plebiscite.

I, for one, agree that regardless what the outcome of the devolution process is, we all have to live with the decision. Is it the right decision or it is the wrong decision? The only way we can measure it, Mr. Speaker, is by means of a vote for all residents of the Northwest Territories to express their views and position on this important matter.

I feel that we do have to look at some options and alternatives such as a public plebiscite on the devolution agreement, which was signed by the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government, on how it will affect the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REVIEW OF CURRENT BUDGET SESSION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Budget sessions are always the most demanding and we've covered much ground over the past few several weeks. A review of these issues before breaking will serve us well.

We've made progress in law. We have set in motion the critical actions in the review of the Child and Family Services Act. There have been important revisions to the Dog Act. There have been modest improvements in our controls over Members' post-term activities and we've started on the Heritage Fund.

The debate on the social ills has dominated this session and with good reason. The issues of family violence, elder abuse, victim services and corrections, justice and rehabilitation were particularly stressed. We have spoken to our approach to solutions, expanding the Healthy Families Prevention Program, preservation of nurse practitioner training and service capacity, expansion of midwifery services, integration and improvement of mental health services, the desperate need for

more and better housing with affordable rents, the vital importance of school nutrition programs and emphasis on early childhood development. Common elements in confronting all these issues is the need for a cross-program integrated approach, renewed emphasis on gathering hard data that is lacking and meaningful action towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

On the environmental front we have highlighted key tools as essential components of a new Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy in order to take the government's substantial progress on renewable energy out into society at large. Examples include NWT-wide building standards and carbon pricing, with the latter at least getting good discussion. Our electrical utility and its very expensive rate review simply churned the old issues with little progress on renewables or the price stability and low carbon output we must achieve. Caribou populations, of course, remain a concern.

In many areas, however, the government ignores the will of the Assembly. Putting food in children's mouths is the best worst example. Successive business plans, motions for milk subsidies, motions on school lunch programs, resolution of public housing rent subsidies, Members insist, government ignores.

Two keynotes of this government and session: insistence on a devolution agreement without our Aboriginal partners and the long, sad story of the bridge are subjects of public lament. I look forward to working with my colleagues to break through the barriers and gain new ground on these areas, clearly of the greatest importance to our public and our future.

This government isn't over yet...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley, your time for your Member's statement has expired. Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR MORE CURATED SHOWS
OF NORTHERN ARTISTS IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last October I made a statement in this House and asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment a number of questions regarding the possibility of facilitating curated art and/or craft shows and exhibits here in the Northwest Territories. A curated show is usually one where a collection of items, such as paintings, are pulled together by a professional body who has an interest in displaying this certain body of work in order to highlight the cultural and historic value. The body of work is usually researched and its significance is

outlined as part of the presentation of the collection as a whole. This is not something done by a retail outfit but, rather, a museum or fine art gallery.

The Minister at the time indicated that he would be willing to meet with representatives of the NWT arts community to discuss the option of curated shows and how they could benefit both territorial artists as well as the population as a whole. I put together a meeting between the past-president of the Aurora Arts Society on behalf of the territorial artists and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, his staff, as well as the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment and his staff, which took place in December. It was a very informative meeting with a lot of shared information and opinions.

Since that, I have had some follow-up conversations with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and have received correspondence from the Minister indicating that they would be working towards the delivery of curated shows highlighting the work of northern artists over the coming fiscal year and ongoing. This is great news for both the NWT artists as well as the population of the Northwest Territories. Highlighting our northern artists will both promote the artist as well as the North. In addition, once our artists have been presented officially in curated shows, great opportunities for Canadian Council funding will open up to them.

I understand that this may not happen immediately, that the department has to figure out the best ways to do it, the most cost-effective method to facilitate these shows and conduct research into the extent that they can be done and shared both in the North and the South. Regardless, I appreciate the Minister's consideration on this topic and commitment to working with northern artists. I look forward to curated shows highlighting our northern artists and their great works.

I will be asking the Minister a couple of questions on this topic at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BILL C-530, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about Bill C-530. The bill and our MP, Mr. Bevington, were in front of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development on Tuesday, March the 8th, in Ottawa. I found that most of what our MP had to say about consultation with people here in the Northwest Territories and our government to lack, quite frankly, any semblance in reality.

In his opening comments to the committee Mr. Bevington used the word "legitimate" spending

without actually defining what he meant by "legitimate." Does our MP actually believe that sending a letter then selecting parts of the response you like is consultation with our government? He states quite clearly that, in his opinion, consultation has taken place. He said he discussed it directly with our Finance Minister, who happens to be his next door neighbour, but he does not say if this just happened over the fence over a glass of lemonade or in a formal meeting. The fact is, this consultation has not taken place in a meaningful way.

As Member's well know, we have had numerous discussions with the Premier and our Finance Minister about our borrowing ability. What is most important to me is letting the review currently underway to look at the borrowing limits of the three territories continue to conclusion. What good would our MP's solution do us if we continue to be required to treat all debt the same? We need to take the self-liquidating debt out of the equation. This is the way forward.

The review that's currently under review, yes, needs flexibility; this is just not the right approach by our MP. I appreciate that our MP means well, but on this effort he is completely off base and we should let the federal government know that he has not consulted us nor does he have the blessing of all Members of this Legislature.

I would like to concur with committee member of that Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Greg Rickford's, MP for Kenora, take that with the review of borrowing limits underway for the three territories, Bill C-530 is a redundant exercise.

I was glad to hear the Premier set the record straight and later on today I'd like to follow up with some questions to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SPRING CARNIVAL SEASON

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring is just around the corner, though you'd never know it by looking outside. I'm sure if the groundhog came out today he'd probably freeze. With spring -- and my colleague for Nunakput mentioned it before -- the carnival seasons are starting up and it's always an excellent time of year for folks in the Beaufort-Delta to gather and check out their new racing machines and check out their new dog teams and go up against each other. It's always an excellent time for folks to get together. They have their old-time dances. It's just a great time to celebrate.

Inuvik has their Muskrat Jamboree they'll be starting in a couple of weeks. Beluga Jamboree is

always a big success up in Tuk, and they have the Peel River Jamboree in Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic has their spring carnival. They try staggering them every weekend so you can pretty well make the loop and be going for five weekends in a row and after that you're played out and you gotta rest up until next year.

A lot of work goes into these carnivals. There are a lot of folks who started fundraising this year and a lot of good corporate support. We're really pleased to see that. Aklavik has their Mad Trapper Rendezvous. They always have it Easter weekend. It's a bit of a tradition. We look forward to the carnival season. We always look forward to the carnival season.

With spring also comes an age-old tradition up in the Beaufort-Delta, the muskrat trapping season. Folks have been doing this for years and it's always a good opportunity for them to go out and take part in something that they've done for many years. I hear the prices this year are fairly good, so people will be getting out there and setting their traps.

I just want to ask all those that go out there to be safe. Those that take part in the carnivals, be sober, be safe, enjoy your time and don't waste it going out and getting smashed or anything like that.

With that, I'm going to ask all those folks out there to enjoy all the festivities and if you're out enjoying being on the land, I just ask that you respect the gift that was given to us.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to recognize in our gallery, as Mrs. Groenewegen has stated, the 2011 National Debating Seminar. We've got a group of them, not the full group but we've got a group of them that have travelled here to Yellowknife and taken a little bit of our consensus style government at this point. I wish them much success in their debates and enjoy the Northwest Territories as the true beauty and emerald in Canada.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent, Sophie Call, who is accompanying our group of young debaters today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize a Page from Range Lake. Her name is Kathleen Gordon and she's been here for a number of days and I'd like to thank her for her wonderful work.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent of the Great Slave riding, Ms. Margaret Peterson.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two Pages from Yellowknife South: Monique Chapman and Stephanie Thibault, and also all the Pages who have worked here through this session. Also a constituent of Yellowknife South, Mr. Barry Taylor.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to recognize two Pages who have been working on and off with us for the last six weeks. They are members of the Frame Lake riding: Martha Hamre and Kevin Huynh, and I'd like to thank them for their service and again thank all the Pages for the work they've done. They've all done a great job.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here.

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 34-16(6): PLEBISCITE ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier. It's in regard to my Member's statement and one of the options we can look at to get feedback from the public through a plebiscite in regard to the devolution agreement that was signed by the Government of the Northwest Territories and federal government, also to try to get input from the general public. I know we're putting a lot of advertisements out there, there are radio announcements and whatnot, but again it's how do you measure the public insight into this issue. I'd like to ask the Premier if he has considered the possibility of having a plebiscite on this issue at this fall's general election.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We haven't considered a plebiscite as part of the general election. I'm not too familiar with the territorial plebiscite process. I know we do have them for different parts of our legislation. For example, under the Liquor Act in our communities, that type of thing. I'm not sure on the territorial side, but we haven't given it consideration as our signing of the agreement-in-principle begins the negotiation process towards a final agreement.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, we do have a Plebiscite Act in the Northwest Territories and it is being administered by the Chief Electoral Officer who is in charge of the election which will take place this fall. By having these two events taking place simultaneously, I think it's important that we do get feedback from the general public on this important policy and political issue in the Northwest Territories. I think it's important that we do allow the public to give us a sense of exactly where they stand on this issue. I know as politicians sometimes the only time we seem to get direction is during an election. I think this also gives the public an opportunity to have a say on this important issue. Again I'd just like to ask the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues if they will consider that as one of the options to get feedback in regard to the announcements and the important issue of devolution in the Northwest Territories.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: It's difficult to come up with a response or an answer that would be clear on this, because the fact is, as we've signed the devolution agreement to begin the process of negotiations towards a final agreement, I guess looking at the future as towards a final agreement is that something that can be considered at the time, I think the government-of-the-day would have to have a look at that. Our process in this fall election... What would a question be? The fact is we have signed an agreement and we're beginning the process towards negotiation.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, just on the issue of what the question should be, I just sort of wordsmithed a little bit of that in regard to: Do you agree the Government of the Northwest Territories have signed the Northwest Territories lands and resources devolution agreement in January 2007? Do you agree or disagree? Yes or no?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Again, the process I can see is we usually in plebiscites are seeking direction going forward on something and we have signed the agreement-in-principle. We are beginning the work of preparing for negotiations, where the advertisements, as the Member has spoken to, are to get information on the AIP out to the public for direction going forward. I guess that is something to be considered by a future government

as a final agreement and should the GNWT sign depending who's all at the table, in a sense. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, a plebiscite is to get feedback from the general public in regard to how they perceive a particular issue such as devolution. I know we're spending \$16,000 on radio announcements, we're spending a lot of money on full-page ads. We're doing all the advertising out there so how do we get the feedback from the public in regard to how do they see a particular issues? Do they support it? Don't they? I'd like to ask the Premier, in order to allow the public to give us that feedback, would you consider an option such as a plebiscite?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The processes we have available to us both as the Members of the Assembly and, of course, from the Executive side and looking at the devolution process, one, we count on feedback from Members of the Legislative Assembly, when they go back home to their constituencies, to provide feedback on that level. As well, from our departmental workings with Aboriginal governments and groups across the Northwest Territories, we seek their input from time to time on whether it's a piece of legislation or a piece of policy work. The way we're doing it now, providing information out there, again, from a plebiscite side of things, is it to ask about should we have signed it. The fact is we have signed it. I would say maybe more forward looking a government-of-the-day could ask the question of the people should we agree to a final agreement once we know what it might look like. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 35-16(6):
EXPANSION OF MIDWIFERY SERVICES
IN THE NWT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services. The Minister has responded in writing to my previous oral questions on midwifery and the answers are not inspiring. The reply says, "analysis to develop an expanded NWT model of midwifery care will be undertaken in 2011-12." Unfortunately, the exact same promise precisely mirrors a November 9, 2009, letter from the department's deputy minister. That work was to be completed in three weeks, Mr. Speaker.

When is the Minister going to get serious on this? Is the work starting now? Next month? When is the work starting? Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is quoting two different letters and without knowing the specific context of what we were speaking to in 2009 and 2011, I think it's unfortunate that he's making such a generalization.

I want to just state for the record that I, as the Minister, and the department have been very clear that we support expansion of the Midwifery Program in the Northwest Territories. The program has been under stress because we had to go through renewing the THAF funding, which is from the money that we fund the Midwifery Program now. The next phase that we are working on for 2011 and 2012, we are doing an in-depth analysis to see how much money will be required to expand the Midwifery Program and what the accepted standard is in the industry.

Mr. Speaker, the work that we did in 2009 is different than the work that we are doing in 2011 and 2012. I believe 2009 has to do with finding the money immediately to fund the positions in Fort Smith. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: The Minister says she is serious, but her written reply to my question goes on to say that the now 2011-12 analysis will be brought forward for the 2013-14 year business plans. Review promised this year, now in the coming year, not even in the business plans until the second year after that, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister has almost carried this baby to full term...

---Laughter

...the full term of this Assembly. Why does she think expanded midwifery should go into the incubator for yet another year before we even see it in the business plans?

HON. SANDY LEE: Because, Mr. Speaker, we have to be serious about the complexities of the budgeting process, the business plan process and the work required to give birth to a full-fledged Midwifery Program. As that letter indicated, we are reviewing the Midwifery Program and analyzing the cost requirements for 2011 and 2012 with a view to putting it into the fiscal year 2013-14.

Mr. Speaker, our department is doing the work that's required to see what kind of resource requirements that we need to undertake in order expand the Midwifery Program we have. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: That response is pitiful. We have people out there, having babies, that are demanding this service. To take four years to do this, Mr. Speaker, is, well, unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, we need to get on with this. The Minister

could take a page from her colleague, the Minister of ITI, who designed a film industry review with the full participation of industry in devising the terms of reference, participation from the ground up. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to including the informed and committed midwifery advocates and an early start on terms of reference for this analysis? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I hope the young debaters watching us in the House can carry their debates without using a word like “pitiful” and some silly words like that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we take this work of reviewing the Midwifery Program very, very seriously. We only fund two positions in Fort Smith, which is not an ideal situation. We also have a situation in Yellowknife where we have one midwife. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that we are doing an in-depth review of this and we believe that we need a comprehensive, wide-ranging program to make a real business case for real dollars. We believe that we need at least four midwives in a program, for example.

Mr. Speaker, we're doing a full review and, yes, we will consult with groups outside of the department. I would also like to advise the Members that we have a lot of knowledge in-house, as well. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not talking about groups, I'm talking about people with real experience. I would just like to say a personal note, Mr. Speaker. I've recently become a proud great-uncle for the second time.

---Applause

My nephew and his wife report the following experience: With her first baby and under the care from a midwife, benefits were clear. With the second baby and no care from a midwife, they were in hospital on repeated occasions. My niece reports these hospital visits would not have happened had she been under the same midwifery care as with her first child.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to tapping the wisdom and experience of midwifery clients by including interviews with parents in the terms of reference? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: We have lots of anecdotal statements from those who use midwives to tell us how well that works, but we also believe that the Midwifery Program we have right now is too heavily medically-based, so we are going to be looking at the experience and examples of Nunavut, where they have come up with a model that is less medically based.

We also, as the Minister and the department, would like to see the Midwifery Program expand outside of

Yellowknife, because Yellowknife has a lot more service from physicians and health care providers, but we would like to explore a model in regional settings where we could do more traditional and less medically-based midwifery programs. I can assure the Member that we will consult with the clients who have used the system as well as the midwives, but we are going to look beyond that because we want to come up with an original NWT-based and community-based Midwifery Program. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 36-16(6):

CURATED SHOWS FOR NORTHERN ARTISTS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By supporting curative shows here in the Northwest Territories, we are opening local artists to significant opportunities of a national level through Canada Council sponsored shows, training opportunities and international events. Mr. Speaker, these, by default, increase the national and international awareness of the NWT, which is great for tourism. Support for artists is a win-win scenario. As such, I would like to thank the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for committing to begin the work on facilitating curative shows of northern arts and crafts here in the Northwest Territories.

My questions are to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and are specific to timing. During the review of the budget, I didn't identify or I was not able to identify any specific funds put towards this initiative. I am wondering if the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment could tell me what we can expect to see with respect to support for curative shows in the Northwest Territories in 2011-12 and ongoing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Our curator initiatives involved various partners, as well working closely with the northern artists, as the Member indicated. We need to work with the museum as well, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Museum, the NWT Arts Council and also Canada Council of Arts. In the meantime, what we are doing now is we are working closely with ITI and my department of ECE. We are committed to working together to implement the NWT Arts Strategy action related to enhancing the profile of the northern arts regionally, nationally and also internationally. In addition, Mr. Speaker, in coordination with NWT Arts Council, my department will examine current funding criteria which supports

travelling, visual arts exhibits, displays and also curative shows in northern and southern venues. Mr. Speaker, we are working closely with ITI also in collaboration of new initiatives that are underway as well. We will be sharing that information once we make progress on these venues. Mahsi.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for that response as well as the Minister for ITI for agreeing to work with the Minister on this initiative. I am curious. There is a lot of good work being done, but can we actually expect to see at least one officially curative show just as a trial during the 2011-12 fiscal year? Do we expect those to be in subsequent fiscal years? I would like to see one, at least a small one, to show that we can do it sometime during the 2011-12 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, those are the discussions that we need to have with the NWT Arts Council and other partners as well. If we need to do a pilot project, those are discussions we need to have as we move forward. Mahsi.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that and thanks to the Minister for his response once again. I have a quick thought. The Minister was talking about working with the NWT Arts Council. The NWT Arts Council has spent significant amounts of money over the last 10, 20 years, whatever the case may be, to support our northern artists to have the new initiatives. I would like the Minister to talk with the NWT Arts Council to see if there is an opportunity to do a curative show on the history of the NWT Arts Council and all the projects they supported. Will the Minister consider that as an option for a pilot on one of our first curative shows? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, in coordination with the NWT Arts Council, those are discussions that we are currently having and how we are going to roll out the program, if we are going to enhance our program with the existing funding that we have, so those are the discussions that are ongoing. Once I get that information, more information on the new initiatives and also the research that we have done on the curator shows in northern and southern venues, we will be sharing those with the Members as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really look forward to seeing the documents and the research that they pull together. As they move forward, I agree wholeheartedly that involving the NWT Arts Council is incredibly important, but I know there are other arts organizations and other arts associations out there. I would like to encourage the Minister to engage these organizations like the Aurora Arts Society as well as

representatives from the Great Northern Arts Festival up in the Beaufort-Delta. I think there are a lot of individuals who could add some real insight to this. In moving forward, I would like the Minister to commit to working with some of these other organizations in addition to the great organization that is the NWT Arts Council. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I did commit to working with various northern artists and also the potential partners that would be out there such as the Member indicated. There are a couple more that could be added to the list. Mr. Speaker, we will be working closely with the museum, NWT Arts Council, Canada Council of Arts, Aurora Arts Society and also working very closely with the northern artists as well. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 37-16(6):
REPAIRS AND CONSTRUCTION
TO HIGHWAY NO. 7

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue my debate with the honourable Minister of Transportation on Highway No. 7. That highway is a gateway to our North, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to speak about the barriers and bumps that it has. I spoke time and time again about getting it into the capital planning process. In fact, just recently, Mr. Speaker, residents of Fort Liard did hand in the petition that I will action later on in this session. It is a very important document. They are going to get lots of support from all the communities in my riding. What stage are we at in the capital planning process for more resources and more maintenance money for Highway No. 7? Thank you very much.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We just recently approved our capital planning budget and there has been money allocated for Highway No. 7 as there has been money allocated for the last three years. Mr. Speaker, there are also some carryovers from previous years as we had to do further assessment. That has been done and we have committed to doing the work that has been identified through our planning system. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, in the past the work has begun late in the season and with the early fall they were unable to complete it. I would like to get the commitment from the Minister that the work on Highway No. 7 will begin as soon as possible when they can begin construction and use that operating and maintenance money and use

some of the new capital dollars to fix our Highway No. 7. Thank you very much.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we don't expect the money for Highway No. 7 to go anywhere except on Highway No. 7. I have to agree with the Member that there is a lot of investment that is going to be required over the next while to continue reconstruction of the road. The whole road needs to be reconstructed. It also needs to have a hardtop surface of some sort to protect it. That is going to require further investment.

I know the Member is trying to get some response from me as to what is in the upcoming budget. Mr. Speaker, that is in the process of being drafted.

There are huge needs right across the Territories in terms of infrastructure and highway rehabilitation. At this point we are just gathering information and it would be dependent on the different filters that we have to go through as to what remains on the drawing board and how much money will be available for investment across all our departments. Those things would have to be taken into consideration. Mr. Speaker, I can reassure that the Member's concerns are heard and we recognize that there are needs for Highway No. 7. We will move forward accordingly. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, the Minister points it out correctly that, yes, I am looking for a commitment for the future year coming up, because we finished this year's budget but I am looking forward to the next one. It is not good enough to say that because we are coming to election we can't really plan for the future. I think we can. The people want us to. I would like to ask the Minister if he can commit to that. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that is what I plan to do. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, I would like to get something in writing from the Minister about the work planned on Highway No. 7 and when it will begin this spring. Thank you very much.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I can commit to give it to him again. Mr. Speaker, this is information he has already received. We already approved our capital plan in October. As to what's coming up in the next plan, that's still being drafted and I'm not in a position to commit to something that I can't guarantee.

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

QUESTION 38-16(6):
BILL C-530, AN ACT TO AMEND THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier. I've had a chance to read through the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, the parliamentary committee that our MP, Mr. Bevington, appeared before on Tuesday of this week. It seems that the Member of Parliament is trying to convince people that he's actually consulted with this government when it comes to his proposed Bill C-530. Again, he's convinced himself that he's consulted, but I'd like to ask the Premier what consultation has actually taken place between our Member of Parliament that would lend this government's support to that bill.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process underway, as highlighted a couple of times by the Minister of Finance for the Government of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Miltenberger, is we've been working with Finance Canada for some time and, as I've stated in a response to the letter I sent to Mr. Bevington, the fact that that is the process, we're still engaged in working with federal Finance. I must say that I did have a meeting with Mr. Bevington on a number of issues. He did highlight this work and I raised the fact that we are doing our work and that's the process we will be sticking with on that.

I must say, over the years there hasn't been a lot of formal meetings on particular issues. It's more in general an update of the work that's going on.

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like to ask the Premier if he's sure that our Member of Parliament was awake when the Premier told him whether there was a process underway addressing the borrowing limit of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Was he actually awake?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: It's hard to respond to that particular lead in to the question. As I said, we've had a couple of meetings over the life of this Assembly and Mr. Bevington's representation in Ottawa on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. They've been sort of general in areas.

In particular in this area, when this one came up to inform him that we were doing our work and that's the process, and concern that the work that he does may interfere with some of our work and hopefully that wasn't the case. As well, I might say that I know as a Government of the Northwest Territories when the review of the borrowing situation was looked at, the Government of the Northwest Territories looks at its Fiscal Responsibility Policy and uses that as a basis for going forward.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Premier for that. I wanted to ask the Premier, there may be a federal election on the horizon here shortly. I'd like to ask the Premier if the work of this review on the borrowing limits to the three territories, is that work going to be concluded relatively soon or when might we expect some movement in that regard on that process?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Our Finance department, Minister Miltenberger has been in contact with Minister Flaherty around this work. We were informed that we should see a report as early as this spring, hopefully April, to move forward on this initiative.

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

QUESTION 39-16(6):
NEW WILDLIFE ACT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I talked about some concerns and observations about the development of the Wildlife Act and I specifically noted Section 87. Just to boil straight down to it, close observation does create some contradictions as to what's happening out there and, as I highlighted as well in my Member's statement, ENR has said that they would try to make some accommodations but I think it really develops an industry of red tape.

For clarity, to start off with, could the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources define for the House and perhaps those people in the tourism industry what his definition is of "close observation"?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can only assume that the Member in his reading of the 70-page bill would note as well that there's a tremendous amount of good work in there. That's going to be coming up for second reading. I know there's been some e-mail traffic that I've seen, that I'm sure the Member has seen as well, with the specific issues that he's raised. We believe that they've been addressed and if they haven't been addressed, there's going to be a time, should this bill be successful at second reading, to have those discussions so that when we come back after second reading and the consultation period, that whatever changes are agreed to are made that when we go for third reading we'll have a bill that everyone can support.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I'll remind Members that the question, the bill is up for second reading and there's time to debate it at

second reading. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not trying to debate the bill in this particular instance because it is question period, but I'm just trying to get some sense of what's actually happening and some definition of the particular bill that's before the House as people have questions. I certainly have questions. That's why I'm trying to get for the record what is the definition of the present bill of "close observation." Because I'm trying to get a sense as to the contradiction it may have with the work ITI is doing when they're trying to promote things like the outfitting industry to move towards the eco-industry.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'm going to rule that question out of order. The proper time to ask that question is under the review of the bill.

---Ruled Out of Order

The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 40-16(6):
FINAL APPROVAL FOR
MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Can the Minister confirm that the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline has received final approval today? Can the Minister elaborate on that?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this is another great day for the Northwest Territories. I can confirm that Cabinet approved the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and the National Energy Board issued a press release announcing that they have issued a Certificate of Public Convenience for the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project.

MR. JACOBSON: It's a good day today for Nunakput. This is a good news story. Will the pipeline go ahead now and when can we look forward to the go-ahead start-up date?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: This is another important step in the process to getting the pipeline constructed. The next big step is to get the two parties, the federal government and the pipeline proponents, together to negotiate and finalize a fiscal framework.

I want to emphasize that the proponents are not looking for subsidies. What they are looking for is loan guarantees so that the constructors of the pipeline will get some assistance with financing and that the pipeline will go ahead. We also have to finalize an access and benefit agreement with one

of the Aboriginal governments. That will put us well on our way to having gas flowing in 2018.

MR. JACOBSON: When will the social impact funds of the \$500 million be available to go ahead?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The arrangements that we understood were in place with the federal government was that the money would flow once a decision to construct the pipeline was made. So we have to go and confirm with the federal government that, indeed, this decision should allow those social impact funds to start flowing.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's time to tell the federal government "show me the money." What are we doing to get ready? What is the Minister's department doing to get ready for this future project?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We've been working very closely with the federal government to get ready for the pipeline. We are working to identify the permits that will be issued and how we can make sure that we process the 7,000 permits that are required for the pipeline to go ahead on a timely basis and that we can work together so that all the requirements are met so that the pipeline can go ahead.

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

QUESTION 41-16(6):
AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I mentioned in my statement that the Auditor General had some concerns with some of the operations of the department, and particularly I highlighted the concerns that the Auditor General had with the lack of performance indicators and performance agreements between the department and the various health authorities.

I'd like to ask the Minister, in response to the Auditor General's report, what is the department doing to address the Auditor General's concerns about the lack of performance indicators and performance agreements.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the understated language of the Auditor General, the report that we received from Sheila Fraser is a Gold Medal Performance Report. I am so proud of the way she recognized the great work that we are doing. She's told us that the Foundation for Change

Action Plan lays out clear direction and goals and action plans to the authorities. She's also indicated that we consult regularly and well with the authorities and it is due to the management and the staff of the department and the front-line authorities that we were able to achieve such a glowing report from the Auditor General.

MS. BISARO: I'd like to thank the Minister for telling me again what I already know. My question had to do with what actions the department is going to take going forward. There were some concerns on the part of the Auditor General. There were a number of things that were pointed out. I didn't hear any answer to my question.

In any organization when the devolvement of a program or a service is given to a subsidiary organization, there needs to be some kind of monitoring. There needs to be some kind of an agreement to monitor performance. To the Minister: what is the department doing to deal with the Auditor General's concern that we have no performance agreements with our health authorities and that, therefore, there are no performance indicators so that we can measure them?

HON. SANDY LEE: It's good to know that the Member agrees that we're doing a good job, I just never heard her saying that. On page 11 of the Auditor General's report, paragraph 29, the Auditor General said, "We found that contribution agreements between the department and the authorities included basic financial terms and conditions and corresponding reporting requirements. Current agreements specify that authorities shall use their contribution funds for categories of expenditures, including hospital services, physician services, medical equipment..." Basically the Auditor General is saying that our financial contribution agreements do talk about performance indicators, it lays out what they're supposed to do, that we keep close contact, that we follow up with them. In fact, she also said in reviewing the strategic plans of the three authorities in comparison with the Foundation for Change Action Plan, that we are very, very closely allied in terms of getting the clear direction, looking at the programs they're providing, and that overall we're doing a really, really great job.

As an extra point, the Auditor General indicated that we could strengthen that, but she also recognized the fact that we have contribution agreements is a great start and that we are on our way.

MS. BISARO: I struggle to get my point across. "Performance" is spelled P-E-R-F-O-R-M-A-N-C-E. "Contribution" is spelled C-O-N-T-R-I- et cetera. If the Minister wants to quote from the Auditor General's report, I can do that as well.

The Auditor General said, "...yet to implement certain other actions that could improve the health care system. These include establishing

performance indicators, working with health and social service authorities to develop performance agreements that set out results to be achieved with funds..." and then she goes on to another item. I ask the Minister -- again, I'm not talking about contribution agreements, I'm not talking about the funding, I'm talking about the evaluation of the authorities -- are they delivering the programs and services in the manner that the Department of Health expects them to. When will we see action on that? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: We have responded to all of the recommendations from the Auditor General. We accept those recommendations and we take that as on top as a pat on the back, these are the things that you could do to do even better. I just need to make that point clear, because our department and our staff and the management all across the Territories are working so hard to get the evaluation that we received from the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, on paragraph 24 of the Auditor General's report she says, "Finally..." in the contribution agreement "they identify some performance indicators to assess the success of their activities. The plans are consistent with discussions of the Joint Senior Management Committee and reflect the intention on the part of all parties for greater system thinking."

Mr. Speaker, I just say that, again, the Member can choose to read what is not there and what we are not doing and always looking at the glass as half empty, but I just want to say that the Auditor General told us that the financial contribution agreements do include performance indicators, that we are working very closely with the authorities, that we do a good job following up with them, and that the next step to get even better is to follow up on her recommendations, and we have accepted them. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct the Minister's attention to a recommendation which comes in paragraph 31, the second part of which says, "develop performance agreements that include expected results for key programs and services, and corresponding reporting requirements." Those are the words from the Auditor General in her report.

I'd like to ask the Minister, on another note, the Auditor General also mentions in her report that there's no formal mechanism to monitor compliance with the GNWT's Medical Travel Policy or to assess the program performance of the Medical Travel Program. I'd like to ask the Minister how that is being addressed.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to answer by reading her the department's response to the

AG's recommendation on developing performance agreements. We stated that we agree improving governance and accountability to ensure that delivery of quality programs and services and consistent financial management is a priority in the Foundation for Change, which the Auditor General likes. "The Department of Health and Social Services system action plan for 2009-12 key actions identified under this priority include the implementation of a new funding methodology and development of performance and service agreements with the health and social services authorities." The Member knows, as she is a member of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, that we are working very hard to do the right size and right budget for all of the authorities.

Mr. Speaker, we're on our way. We accept the Auditor General's recommendation and we also accept the pat on the back we received. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 42-16(6):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Menicoche talked about the barriers and the bumps to working on Highway No. 7. I'd like to talk about the bumps and barriers to even try to construct a highway up in the Mackenzie Valley.

I want to ask the Minister, has his department put together an economic analysis of benefits as to what dollars we could be looking at if a Mackenzie Valley Highway was put through from maybe to Tuktoyaktuk.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly listened to the Member's statement with great interest as he did some comparables there regarding the CANOL Trail and how fast that was built.

Mr. Speaker, I have to point out we are all anxious to see this road move ahead. We have had some good discussions with the federal government and certainly don't want to wait until there's another war before we see investment, Mr. Speaker.

We have done a lot of work in the life of this government on the Mackenzie Valley Highway, probably more work than has been done for quite a few years. We were able to partner with the federal government on a number of fronts doing some of the research as required. We recognized some time ago that we need to build and develop a business case for this stretch of highway. As part of going forward with that whole concept, we contracted some people to come and do an economic analysis

of the road and it has come back very favourable. I would be pleased to share that information with Members if they haven't seen it already. It would, of course, create a lot of jobs, it would open up the sense of isolation to the communities, and in a lot of the communities it would lower their cost of living. There are a number of things that are looked at in the economic analysis and if the Member hasn't seen it yet, I'd certainly be pleased to present it to him. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, in my research, it took the threat of invasion and the war to ask... Not to ask; I think the United States government said we're going to come up and we're going to build a highway west of Norman Wells and move some oil and this is what we're going to do. When that threat was no longer there, they left everything just as is.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not too sure if this is something that is even possible in the Northwest Territories, in terms of putting some priorities to building a highway up the Mackenzie Valley. I want to ask the Minister, in terms of his economic analysis of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, what type of dollars is in the report. I look forward to him sharing it, but what type of dollars does the analysis come out with, should we build a Mackenzie Valley Highway, some dollars that could be realized? I want to ask the Minister if he could give me sort of an estimate.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have to apologize to the Member. I don't have that information in front of me. I do recall that the report that was conducted and the research that was done in the communities came back indicating there would be huge benefit to the communities along the right-of-way. There would be huge benefit in terms of jobs in the area of road construction. There would be a lot of savings to the communities in the cost of living as they'd be able to travel on a year-round road. It would certainly increase tourism. That part of the country is very beautiful, as the Member knows. There are huge benefits, as this document has indicated. I can't remember specific numbers at this point but I'd certainly be glad to share it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has some very talented staff working on this project here and I want to commend him for the hard work as with the Aboriginal groups that have signed on with the PDRs. I want to ask the Minister, in his discussions with the federal Minister, why isn't there such a priority from the federal Minister to ask Mr. Harper, let's get some money into the construction phase of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We do appreciate the PDRs. Why doesn't Mr. Harper say, okay, we're going to put the dollars that need to be built for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, just as the recent announcement such as the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the concept of a highway down the Mackenzie Valley has been around for many, many years, even from way back as far as the Diefenbaker days. The idea has been brought forward from the Government of the Northwest Territories on many occasions. Almost at every Assembly there's been strategies developed over the years and they have included the concept of a highway, and we've indicated that there is a desire to see this move forward. Documents such as Corridors for Canada were drafted and included highways and to really no avail. It's our interpretation that maybe we needed to do more work to build a business case, which includes the economic analysis, project description reports that we're moving forward on.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't want the Member to start thinking about going west when we should be going east to get further investment. I've seen and tracked the Member's ventures on the CANOL Trail over the last three years. He's been trying to walk that stretch of the highway. He's shared some of the pictures and he seems to be riding a horse every time.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, there is a real need for the federal government to invest in this highway. We have taken every occasion that we had to bring the case forward. We have tried in different formats. We tried to bring it forward as a sovereignty issue. We brought it forward as a P3 concept. We submitted every project budget that came available from the federal government. Our last several discussions, the Minister has indicated that we just needed to wait and see if there is anything in the budget, so that is where we are at this point. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, just for the record, I think I rode on the horse for about five minutes. The rest of the 222 miles I walked on the CANOL Trail.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask again, within the life of this government I know this Cabinet is working hard with its different counterparts, can somehow the message get to the federal government in a short time with the Premier, with the Cabinet Ministers on different fronts and maybe let them know the importance of the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway to the people in the North? The reason why I am asking is I think that the rest of Canada should come up and discover the beautiful Northwest Territories.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make every effort to bring the message forward to the federal government that there is a real need for a Mackenzie Valley Highway. We will continue to take the opportunities, whether it is

myself as the Transportation Minister or the Premier or the Finance Minister or any other Minister that sits for this government to make the arguments. Mr. Speaker, it may warrant further trips to Ottawa. It may warrant involving other people. We will have to look at that. There are other considerations, of course, in terms of elections and things of that nature, but we are looking at all different opportunities that we can use to impress to the federal government that we need to get some investment on this highway. It may be for portions of it, it may be for a section of it, but I think this whole initiative is going to move forward. We certainly had that formal motion from this House and want to keep it a priority. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 43-16(6):

CONSULTATION ON NEW WILDLIFE ACT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ENR and having to do with the Wildlife Act. Hopefully, we will be moving this bill into the House, but it is a huge bill and there are big changes...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley, the Wildlife Act is coming up for second reading. That will be the time for debating the Wildlife Act or asking questions about it.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not debating the act itself. It is about consultation, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: You can ask your question. I will decide then whether it is allowable or not. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To help consultation on the Wildlife Act, will the Minister be able to put out a table of concordance that shows where the changes have been made and the most recent draft to assist people in making their comments? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I am going to rule that question out of order. There will be the time to ask that when the bill is coming before the House in the second reading.

---Ruled Out of Order

The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 44-16(6):

PROHIBITION ON SMOKING FOR
CORRECTIONS OFFICERS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions today for the Minister of Justice. I wanted to ask him about smoking by employees at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Obviously being a corrections guard is a very stressful

occupation, Mr. Speaker. A year ago they did away with smoking at that facility and now, if you are a corrections guard, you can't smoke on the property at all, even though shifts are eight hours in duration and sometimes folks work double shifts. But other staff are allowed to smoke. If you look downtown, other government employees are allowed to just simply go outside and smoke. I am wondering, I guess, why it is that we are treating corrections guards differently than we treat other government employees. I would like to ask the Justice Minister why that is the case. Why are corrections guards not allowed to smoke outside in a designated area by that correctional facility?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about staff, they have different professions. We have security guards there that monitor the inmates on a constant basis. They are required to be at the centre. We have other staff that may come and go, such as secretaries or clerical or administrative. They go downtown and do their lunch and they may come back. They may pick up a smell of smoke to some degree. Mr. Speaker, those securities need to be at the corrections. That is a big difference where they are required to be at the centre. We don't allow smoking at the centre, as well, on the premises. Mr. Speaker, this is a safety and also the health reason for our inmates as well and also the staff at the corrections. Mahsi.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I will just correct the Minister; they are not security guards, they are corrections officers. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be treating our corrections officers in the same way that we treat other government employees. I know that they are there. They are captive employees for the period of time they are at the centre. Why is it that we can't come up with a solution? Maybe it is a little ways away from the building, but a designated smoking area outside for use for employees, the corrections guards specifically that can't leave that building, they can't have a cigarette if they so choose on the premises outside of the building. Why is that not the case? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, these corrections officers need to be at the centre. They are required to monitor and also look after those inmates in case there are any issues that may arise. There is a constant issue that may be conducted at the centre as well. They are required to be there. Other staff may come and go, as I indicated before, administrative staff, but at the same time, these corrections officers need to be at the centre. That is a big difference. They can't leave the premises to go for, let's say, a smoke outside the premises because they are on duty eight, 10, 12 hours as identified by their supervisors or

regular work hours. Mr. Speaker, we have to keep that in mind that those are the corrections officers that are required to be at the centre. That is the reason why there is a big difference between administrative staff and corrections officers. Mahsi.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is making a good case for my argument. They can't leave the facility. That is the problem. They can't go on a coffee break downtown. They can't go on a lunch hour downtown or to their home to have a cigarette. They are captive employees. They are at that building for eight and sometimes 16 hours in a row. I just want to ask the Minister why can't we set up an area on the property away from the building where, if corrections officers have a short break, they can have a cigarette. It is a stressful occupation at the best of times, Mr. Speaker. Why can't we accommodate those folks that wish to have a cigarette? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, again, it comes down to a health hazard to the inmates. The corrections officers, when they go for, let's say they are allowed to go for a smoke, they come back and deal on a constant basis with the inmates one to one. They are always with the inmates. Second-hand smoke is even worse. That is what we have heard over and over through health discussions. Mr. Speaker, that is the very reason why we have stopped smoking at corrections premises. That is the very reason why we are not allowing those individuals that are on guard with doing their job and looking after those inmates. Mr. Speaker, it is about health issues as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The corrections officers aren't the ones that are locked up. They are there working. They are doing their job. They are performing a function, looking after the inmates that are there. It's the inmates that are locked up, not the corrections guards.

Again, I haven't heard an answer from the Minister on whether or not the Department of Justice can try to address that issue that's at the North Slave Correctional Centre in that... It's close to 50 percent of the corrections officers in that facility that are smokers. They'd like to have an area where they can have a cigarette, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This is an area of concern if the number is correct. We have to work with those inmates. Those corrections officers, again, they work closely with the inmates. We have to keep in mind the health hazard they may impose on those inmates, not only inmates but other staff members that do not smoke. Mr. Speaker, that's the very reason why we don't allow smoking on the premises due to health hazards. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 45-16(6):
INCOME SUPPORT POLICIES
ON ADDITIONAL COSTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other day I had a constituent come forward to me with concerns regarding income support and the ability to have a telephone as an allowance expense that income support can help them with. Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment why the policy of income support does not allow a person to have a telephone as an allowable expense when we consider that we provide expenses for daycare, shelter, food, clothing but when health and safety concerns could arise, a telephone is very important and that's not considered an allowable expense. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The income security is for basic necessities of life where food, shelter and clothing are required. So we provide those services to those individuals that are on income support. A lot of clientele do have telephones in their home units. Some just have local calls, which of course is very cheap. Mr. Speaker, this is an area where we need to focus more on what we could provide as a shelter, food and clothing. That has always been the mandate of this government and we continue to deliver that same messaging as we roll out the program. We made some changes to the program in 2007; same thing, we increased those areas. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Time for question period has expired, but I'll allow the Member a short supplementary. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The person talking to me has high blood pressure, probably other heart-related problems. I'm not a doctor, so I'm not going to try to diagnose him, but they said what would happen in this particular case if they were starting to have a health attack in some manner that required immediate assistance and urgency. What do they do? They have no one to call because they have no phone. So they find it seems to be more than a luxury item. Why does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, namely income support, define a telephone service, even a strapped phone that does not allow long distance calls, why are you defining it as a luxury service and not a necessity in this modern day? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, we provide services and funding through shelter, food and clothing. Those are required necessities. So we continue to enhance those programs specifically to those areas. With the surplus that individuals may have, they can purchase phone services if they wish to do so. Mr. Speaker, we provide the basic necessities. That's the very reason why we have income security, to provide those services in the Northwest Territories, the 33 communities that we service, to provide those basic necessities and we'll continue to do that. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: In many cases income support provides the cost of power at any cost, which runs into hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for that department. Again, they provide rental costs, actual costs which again run into hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Mr. Speaker, this is a health and safety lifeline which could help many families ensure that they are protected if something arises, whether it's a health and safety issue due to personal health as I highlighted as an example, or what if there were domestic abuse problems? What do they do? Do they have to wait until somebody else finds them? Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to investigate and do a cross-jurisdictional survey to see if this is a reasonable expense? Because I feel strongly that it is. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Throughout the Northwest Territories we serve over 40,000 people, 33 communities. Not everyone has phones per se. As indicated in the past, where there are individuals that are working, they don't even have phones sometimes, can't afford it. It's not only income support clientele. There is a variety of people who may have phones, but some don't have phones for various reasons. Again, to reiterate, our program is for basic necessities: food, shelter and clothing. That's what we've been providing over the years and we will continue to provide those services to the 33 communities that we service. Mahsi.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Income support is supposed to be the backstop of public policy if you are down and out due to whatever reason has brought you to that point. It's to ensure you have the basic necessities and I agree with that, Mr. Speaker, but one of the programs in income support is to encourage people to get out there and get work. I'm quite curious on how a person on income support could make that type of contact with a potential employer without a phone call or to be waiting for that opportunity and to say that they have extra money, I would assure you that at least 80 to 90 percent on income support would say that there is no extra money, especially when you have children and certainly there would be no

extra money for Internet again or a cell phone. So, Mr. Speaker, times have changed and I'm asking the department to change with the times and certainly recognize that. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to re-evaluate this particular case, take a look at cross-jurisdictions and recognize that the phone has become an integral part of basic service that we need as people, whether it's getting jobs or staying in contact due to health and safety concerns if you ever had to call an ambulance? Would the Minister look at that?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we can list a variety of areas where there are additional costs. There are not only phones; there are cell phones, TVs and others that are not really a necessity. I am glad the Member agrees that income security is an overall necessity that we provide services to.

Mr. Speaker, we have those clientele that have clientele service officers working closely with them. We know who the clientele are and we contact them through the clientele service officers and if there are issues or questions and concerns that are brought to their attention, there is a discussion. Communication is ongoing. So, Mr. Speaker, again we will continue to deliver those main essential services to the clientele. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Colleagues, before I go on with the orders of the day, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank a couple of Pages from Hay River North that have been here all week working with us. We have Skylar Constant and Logan Gagnier. Logan happens to be my oldest grandson. I'm very proud to have him here.

---Applause

I'd like to acknowledge a constituent of mine, Mark Stephens, in the gallery, who has been here as a chaperone all week. Great job, guys.

Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 5-16(6): COST OF DEVOLUTION PUBLIC CAMPAIGN

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

What is the total cost to date of radio, print and other media advertisement on devolution since the signing of the agreement-in-principle?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Replies to Opening Address

MR. YAKELEYA'S REPLY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To govern this Territory properly the GNWT and Aboriginal governments need to work together. Devolution is not about transferring controls, it's just not about transferring controls over land and resources, it's nation building.

Devolution will play a critical role in the GNWT's ability to provide citizens with adequate and sustainable programs and services. Devolution will play a major role in determining how the Government of the Northwest Territories shall share powers with the land claim and self-governments that represent the treaty and Aboriginal rights of 50 percent of NWT citizens.

We must recognize that any final devolution agreement will affect the Aboriginal and treaty rights due to the devolution deals with jurisdictions and management over the lands and resources. Along with the devolution AIP final agreement there is a proposed deal on resource revenue sharing. That deal will also affect how the Government of the Northwest Territories will certainly affect how self-government will be governed.

Like I mentioned earlier, devolution is not just about transferring control over lands and resources from Canada to the GNWT. Many questions have been raised about how this transfer of power will be funded. The funding will come from two sources: the money from Canada that will be spent on the transfer of responsibilities from the resource revenues flowing to the GNWT as a result of the proposed resource revenue sharing agreement.

In 2007 the GNWT walked away from the settlement offer of \$65 million a year to support the staffing programs that will be transferred from Canada to the GNWT. At that time the GNWT said the \$65 million was not enough to run the programs. Yet here we are in 2011 and the GNWT has changed its mind. This is in spite of the fact that Canada has offered \$65 million in 2005 dollars. This means that the funding will not account for the inflation that has occurred since 2005. So the GNWT now has settled for less than what was originally refused.

In 2007 the GNWT argued that a fair level of yearly funding would be around \$85 million. This is puzzling. Where will the additional \$20 million come from each year?

This leads to the issue of net fiscal benefit. The GNWT has signed on to proposed resource revenue sharing agreements with Canada. That deal says that the GNWT can have 50 percent of the Northwest Territories resource royalties up to an amount that equals up to 5 percent of the GNWT's gross expenditure base. The gross

expenditure base is in the amount that the GNWT would have to spend to ensure that everyone in the Northwest Territories can access the same quality of public service no matter where they live. Right now the gross expenditure base equals about \$1.2 billion per year. In this scenario the GNWT would at most get an extra \$60 million per year from the resource revenue sharing agreement. Considering the GNWT will likely have an annual shortfall of \$20 million we need to take on its new land and resource responsibilities, it makes sense that the shortfall will come from the \$60 million provided by the net fiscal benefit. But we must remember that it is optimistic to assume that the GNWT will receive \$60 million in resource revenues each year.

As a result of the \$20 million fund shortfall, the GNWT will really be left with \$40 million, and the \$15 million that will go to the Aboriginal governments to share, so really under this resource revenue sharing deal the GNWT at best-case scenario will benefit to the tune of \$25 million. The situation will not be good either for the GNWT or the Aboriginal governments.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council did a comprehensive review of the proposed resource revenue sharing agreement and a net fiscal benefit. The Premier quoted that report as supporting the proposed resource revenue sharing deal. The Premier's reading misconstrued the report's finding. The GNWT reported simply, note that it stands, it would be better for the Gwich'in Tribal Council to get at least some resource royalties rather than none at all. Specifically, that getting some of the resource royalties would be beneficial but not optimal. That observation does not constitute support for the proposed resource revenue sharing deal.

The same report goes on to take a closer look at how the formula was arrived at for this revenue sharing deal. Canada says that this revenue sharing deal is consistent with the principles of governed equalization formula for the provinces. The Gwich'in analysis shows that this is not the case. The GTC analysis shows that this revenue sharing deal bears no relationship at all to the approach taken to the rest of Canada.

When we look at this agreement closely it seems that a more reasonable arrangement, one consistent with equalization principles and convention, would see a cap of about 15 percent of the gross expenditure base. That would see the GNWT cap of resource revenue sharing amount to about \$180 million per year. The report notes that neither Canada nor the GNWT have provided calculations to justify how the proposed resource revenue sharing formula was determined. My view is that the GNWT is selling itself too cheaply to the federal government that's looking to offload programs and services and the costs and risks that go along with resource development and still retain

far more from a fair share of the profits of the resource revenues.

Canada set the royalty rates for the Northwest Territories resources and these are too low to support sustainable and effective government and environmental stewardship that is essential to our well-being. The Gwich'in Tribal Council notes that the monies that the GNWT gains from any net fiscal benefits will not adequately address the social costs or sustain the public expenditure requirements that resource development will bring boom and bust population and other economic scenarios and increased demands for the range of programs and services that this government provides. Some of these programs and services will be provided not only by the GNWT, they will be provided by the self-governments across the Territory.

The resource revenue sharing deal that is currently proposed would see the Aboriginal governments divide at least seven regions sharing at most \$15 million each year. In my own region of the Sahtu, once the Sahtu receives its share, which would then be divided amongst the five communities, some of them self-government. In three districts the net fiscal benefit for them is as would be maybe in the range of a few hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. In my region, communities such as Deline are close to reaching a self-government deal and are concerned about devolution. Deline negotiators do not yet know whether Canada and the GNWT will claw back those resource revenues under the self-government financing arrangements. The question for them to whether such funds were reviewed by Canada and the GNWT as own-source revenues, in which case a self-government would see little or no benefit. Because this question is unanswered, Deline is facing a situation they may be straddled with the growing cost of government, will have additional responsibilities related to post-devolution resource management systems, and they do not know how they will be resourced for that work or whether the community will actually be better off as a result of signing on to the devolution deal.

These kinds of questions require a person to take into account so many factors all at once that without having solid answers or facts about important variables are mindboggling. There are many such questions and the GNWT is asking the Aboriginal governments to sign on the devolution AIP without having the answers to these questions. The fact that we have clearly shown that in some important respects this deal is not a good one for the GNWT, it is not a good one for the Aboriginal governments, and this is before the Aboriginal governments even considered the potential impacts on the treaty and Aboriginal rights which are required, considering the whole other set of factors.

It is easy to understand why the Aboriginal governments had asked for more time to consider this AIP and why they're so concerned about whether there is any potential for changing the AIP and the proposed resource revenue sharing agreement.

This brings me to the issue of treaty and Aboriginal rights in relation to the devolution. At this time none of the Dene leaders have signed on to the devolution AIP. Dene leaders have told Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories they have outstanding issues with the agreement-in-principle. Chapter 4 of the AIP is proposing changing land claim implementation agreements to accommodate the transfer of authority from Canada to the GNWT. It is my understanding the land claims implementation requires the consent of all the parties to this agreement. To implement the land claim, the Aboriginal parties' government and Canada will meet together to determine what actions need to be taken to ensure the land claims are effectively and meaningfully implemented. Clearly, Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories will need the cooperation of the Dene leaders for a devolution agreement to work.

In addition, the Dene land claims contain provisions that say the Dene must be involved in the development and implementation of a Northern Accord or the devolution agreement. The Dene leaders say that between 2007 and 2010 they were not meaningfully involved in the development of the devolution AIP. They say that when they raised concerns, these concerns were not considered and no real effort was made by the GNWT or Canada to accommodate these concerns.

The Premier has insisted in this House that the devolution AIP does not affect Aboriginal and treaty rights. It is true that the AIP says it is not a legal, binding document, but the GNWT and Canada have, by signing the agreement, made the fulfillment of their land claim obligations to embroil the Dene in the devolution negotiations contingent on the Dene first signing the AIP.

Specifically, the AIP says that in order to be funded, to be part of the final devolution agreement negotiations, Aboriginal governments must sign the AIP. That applies to the Dene governments such as the Tlicho, Sahtu and Gwich'in, who have provisions in their land claims saying that they will be involved in the development and implementation of the devolution agreement.

Why is GNWT taking such a strong-arm approach? Why is the GNWT insisting that the land claim governments have to sign an agreement that they don't agree with before the GNWT will fulfil its land claim obligations and provide the land claim governments with funding to participate? This amounts to the GNWT and Canada requiring Dene

leaders to breach their own land claims and surrender their land claim rights. How is such an action supposed to inspire confidence in the Dene leaders that the GNWT will respect these land claim obligations in the future?

Aboriginal leaders have clearly stated that they are not against the devolution. What they object to is their involvement was not, over the last three years, meaningful. They object to the fact that their concerns were not taken into account when dealing with the deal being developed by Canada and the GNWT.

Similarly, in putting this deal together, the GNWT did not take it to our citizens and ask the people for their input. When the AIP was released to the public with only access through a leaked copy of it through the CBC website, after signing the deal, the GNWT decided to make the deal public. Only then did they begin to take steps to inform the citizens of its details.

The vision needs to stand on basic principles. By signing the devolution agreement, this government indicated that it's not willing to put any effort into ensuring northern governments moving forward together. The devolution AIP is no longer an agreement about the transfer of power between governments. The devolution AIP has become a symbol of what results when fairness and democratic processes are not valued. It has become a symbol reminding us that this government is willing to use strong-arm tactics instead of using other tools such as collaboration and democracy.

Actions have consequences. Relationships with the Aboriginal governments are not damaged by just this AIP being signed. The damage continues and is felt within our other processes. It has eroded trust and confidence in this government. To ask Aboriginal leaders to sign on this AIP should not be...(inaudible)...in terms of collaboration. Even if leaders sign onto this AIP, it is not because of the spirit of cooperation or collaboration with this government. The reality is that leaders may choose to sign on, but in doing so to have the responsibility of safeguarding their interests against the possible actions of the government. They have yet to gain trust.

Division for the Northwest Territories must be based on the principles that include justice, fairness, democracy, and respect the rule of law in the form of government observed in the contractual and fiduciary obligations to indigenous people. The actions of a government must convey that vision without exception. With respect to devolution, the actions of the GNWT do not embody these principles. I encourage the Cabinet to consider revisiting the issues I have raised today, not just to address the concerns of the Aboriginal leaders but to take a good, hard look at what we're dealing with

and what we should be aspiring to instead. Imagine a principle of what this government and Territory can become.

The people of the Northwest Territories do not deserve a devolution agreement that, as the Premier has called it, is not the best deal. The people of the Northwest Territories deserve better. Our children deserve better. This is the conviction and vision of the Aboriginal leaders that have had the courage to stand up to defend. They have demonstrated commitment and consistency in the pursuit of something better for their own people and all people who live here. The Government of the Northwest Territories should strongly consider following their lead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 5-16(6):
TRANSPORTATION OF
DANGEROUS GOODS ACT,
ANNUAL REPORT 2010

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: [Microphone turned off] transportation report to the Legislative Assembly for 2010 on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1990. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 6-16(6):
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES
FOR THE PERIOD
FEBRUARY 2, 2011 TO MARCH 6, 2011

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Pursuant to Section 5 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table a summary of Members' absences for the period February 2, 2011, to March 6, 2011.

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motions

MOTION 1-16(6):
HEALTHY EATING/NUTRITION PROGRAMS,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: WHEREAS nearly 5,000 children across the Northwest Territories arrive at school without having had a healthy breakfast;

AND WHEREAS school breakfast programs have increased attendance at many NWT schools;

AND WHEREAS it is well documented that hungry children struggle to succeed in school;

AND WHEREAS children who are fed at school also benefit from feeling welcomed and loved;

AND WHEREAS healthy eating and basic nutrition should be learned by our children, starting at a young age, first by example and augmented later by study;

AND WHEREAS in 2010-2011, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment allocated \$400,000 for a breakfast and lunch program in NWT schools and contracted Food First Foundation to deliver it;

AND WHEREAS this nutrition program has been cut for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, without any formal evaluation of its effectiveness;

AND WHEREAS many educators, parents and especially children support the program, making such statements as, "it has made such a tremendous difference in our school," and "I cannot think of another single initiative that gives so much for so little" and, "I like to eat breakfast;"

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment reinstate the sunset funding for healthy eating and nutrition programs.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion goes to the most basic of our Territory's needs, that of supporting our people, and it goes to the heart of the philosophy that this government espouses.

According to our strategic planning document from October of 2007, we aim for healthy, educated people. We will accomplish that, we said in October 2007, by a focus on prevention by promoting healthy choices and lifestyles and the role of personal and family responsibility. A focus on prevention, like teaching kids what healthy foods are so they eat the right things and grow and develop as they should, like making sure they get to and stay in school so they learn well and easily. Promoting healthy choices and lifestyles, like teaching kids what unhealthy foods are so they choose the right foods to eat. Knowing which foods are good and which are not is important and kids must be taught the difference.

The other day I mentioned comments from NWT schools about the Healthy Food for Learning Program, Mr. Speaker. There are six pages of responses to one simple question: Can you share any specific success stories about the program? Thirty of our 49 schools sent in a response to that

question. I'd say that's an excellent indication that the program is a success. Twenty-three schools mentioned improved attendance as a result of the Healthy Foods for Learning Program. Academic achievement was mentioned 21 times as a measure of success. Eleven schools indicated that 50 percent or more of their student population comes to school hungry each morning. These are staggering statistics, Mr. Speaker, especially the last one.

Children don't learn well, if at all, when they are hungry. They're inattentive, not alert and are often disruptive, affecting the learning of others as well as themselves. Healthy, educated people, Mr. Speaker. The Healthy Foods for Learning Program goes a long way towards creating both healthy children and educated children. Witness a comment from one school which said this of a student: She has discovered that being in school and not missing instruction leads to school being easier. That's what we want, Mr. Speaker, kids at school so they can learn. They sure don't learn when they're not in the classroom.

Both improved attendance and academic achievement are stated goals of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, a major focus of the Education, Culture and Employment department at the moment. How then can this department eliminate funding for a program that will achieve the successes desired by the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative? That initiative wants better attendance. Well, this program achieves that. That initiative wants academic achievement. Well, this program achieves that too.

What evaluation of the Healthy Foods for Learning Program was done prior to the decision to scrap it? It can't have been too comprehensive. My information shows that at least 30 of 49 schools think that the program is a success. I can only attribute the elimination of this funding to a lack of foresight and big picture vision.

This Assembly has just approved a budget which includes \$1.8 million for the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, an increase of \$500,000 from the current year budget, and much of that increase is going to staffing. In light of the success of the Healthy Foods for Learning Program, I have to say that the money would be better spent on the foods program.

We have to stop working top down, Mr. Speaker. We have to remember the basics. Educating our kids is paramount, and if the foods program helps us to get them to the school, then we should ensure that the program continues. Eliminating the funding for a successful, much needed foods program will not achieve healthy, educated people. Reduced funding will not contribute to the promotion of healthy choices and lifestyles. Another quote from a 42-year veteran of parenting and foster parenting

about the needs for foods programs: I cannot think of another single initiative that gives so much for so little.

The answer to the question of whether or not to reinstate the funding for the Healthy Foods for Learning Program in the 2011-12 budget is a no brainer, Mr. Speaker. Considering the negative impacts on our children and for our Territory in the long run if we don't reinstate the funding, the answer can only be yes. I believe in the saying where there's a will, there's a way, and it remains to be seen if there is a will on the part of this government to find a way to continue the funding for the Healthy Foods for Learning Program. Children are our most precious resource. They are our future. Are they not worth the money? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You have heard me speak many times about the price of food in our communities. The high price of food is one reason for kids sometimes going hungry in the morning. Families don't always have the money to buy the food. I am sad to say this happens in our Territory, Mr. Speaker. Hungry children are hard-pressed to do well in school while their minds are on their stomachs. It is hard enough to deliver a good education to our children as it is without distracting them with hunger. Educators and parents say feeding students who show up for school hungry is a big help. It may even help attendance, which is another big problem. But in my community of Tuk, Mr. Speaker, this last week, there were 108 kids with perfect attendance for the last month.

---Applause

Educators and parents say feeding helps and yet the Department of Education cut the nutrition program for the year ahead without even proper evaluation of the program. Mr. Speaker, most likely saving the \$400,000 the government spent on this program will end up costing much more in some other area. More importantly, this undermines the success of our children, Mr. Speaker.

The program was in the community, for example, for years. We haven't been able to eat our traditional foods as much as we want. There is caribou and that and dry meat, as the Education Minister just said. It is hard. This program that was cut helped teach the children about healthy eating. That is important, especially in small communities with traditional diets that are changing.

Mr. Speaker, the school's nutrition programs really helped. A little food shows our students that they are important. It shows that happiness and success is important too. It is very simple for the Education

Minister to restore this funding for these programs. He should do it. It is not a lot of money if we spread the cost to 33 communities, but this does make a big difference to our children. I thank the Members for supporting this motion and helping get the message across loud and clear to the Minister of Education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The key window of opportunity to feed the bodies and minds of our children and to support their brain development and their learning is their early years. The parents have a responsibility to feed their children properly, but as I have outlined in the House earlier and in my statements, they are not always able to meet that responsibility and there are many reasons for that. Do we want to let the children suffer the lifelong consequences of insufficient nutrition during their critical years, Mr. Speaker? Unfortunately, our lack of government action in response to repeated calls here in the House and our decisions on where to put money speaks louder than words.

Mr. Speaker, Breakfast for Learning notes that they were only able to respond to 38 percent of the requests for food from schools in the Northwest Territories over the past year. This is during the time that this government was putting in a one-time \$400,000 in school food programs. That also is a statistic that speaks louder than words.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent four years requesting action on this front. Finally, I ask to join my colleagues and I thank the movers and seconders of this motion. Let's get it done.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken in this House in the past about absenteeism and the great cost of absenteeism to the education system and the great cost of absenteeism to our society and to our government. The one thing that I have been told in Tu Nedhe is that this Food First Program is something that actually had the kids come to school. We had kids that were absent on a regular basis that were now coming to school. Another thing that the Food First Program has done is that it allowed a lot of the students to show up on time because the kids knew that there was a certain window in the morning where they could come in and have something to eat and then they were off to class. They were in class on time, Mr. Speaker.

I support this motion. I don't think the government should cut it. It created all kinds of positive things in one of the schools in Tu Nedhe. There was heavy parental involvement. The parents would come in

early, get up early with their kids, bring their kids to school, cook for the rest of the school. It was very positive for the kids to be with some of the parents and to have a good meal. It was also good for educating students. There were a lot of students that were assisting. The older students were assisting younger kids to cook. They were in the kitchen. They were learning that aspect of life, at least. It was something that was done and, also, for healthy food, the schools made sure that the breakfast was serving healthy foods. That was beneficial so that at least the kids were getting one good healthy meal per day. Most of them were getting more than that, but this was something that was guaranteed.

As Mr. Jacobson indicated, the one aspect of the small communities is the cost of living. The cost of living is high here too in Yellowknife, as it is right across the Territory. This was a little opportunity again for people to feed their children. Their children were fed in the school. It was doing what it could. Lastly, I think this is leveraging our future. If we keep kids in school by giving them one good healthy meal, it would pay dividends in the future for many years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be supporting the motion. I feel, for one, that this is a critical program to not only include supporting our students, but more importantly, developing our communities so we do have healthy, vibrant communities and help the most vulnerable residents in our communities, which are the young students and young children in our communities, so that they are able to grow healthy lives and be a positive role model in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this program is more than just having a breakfast program in the school. It builds relationships between the teachers, the students, the community, where the volunteers... This program is a majority of volunteers, by way of the parents, the high school students, the teachers, get together. They volunteer to deliver this program. It is no cost to government, if anything. It shows that the communities, by working together helping each other providing these types of programs, it is a building block of how people can help people in our society who may not have the means to provide the nutritional breakfast program without it.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important also for the students to realize that as you grow up, part of the value of life is more than just dollars and cents. It is helping those people in our society who may not be as fortunate as other children or other people in our community to help those people who may need a handout and help to basically get them moving forward. Again, Mr. Speaker, for a \$400,000

investment throughout the Northwest Territories and also realizing that we have a lot of these individuals who are on income support, who are struggling, like Mr. Jacobson says, with the high cost of living in our communities, people are just making ends meet. People cannot afford to purchase nutritional foods, regardless if it is fruit, vegetables and making sure that we are able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we realize that, as a government, we have to sometimes look at simply the dollar sign but realizing the value of these programs and how it helps us to not only develop our students in our communities but develop a community as a whole to help each other to be able to promote these programs and ensure we achieve what we say we are going to achieve, have healthy vibrant communities and that includes our children. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One time in our life, I remember growing up, we used to eat at home. We used to have porridge when we were young and growing up in Tulita.

Sorry, when we were young. When I was growing up in Tulita, I remember, when I was young, I remember before we went to school Mom always got us up early and we made a fire if it was real cold in the house and heat up the little pot there and make porridge and we all would sit around and have breakfast, have porridge or have some wild meat, then we went to school. That was the lifestyle that we grew up with. Slowly on, Mr. Speaker, we started to see that the school had hot chocolate, macaroni and hardtack during lunch and I think a couple of times during the week. That was really good to have food in school, Mr. Speaker.

Little did I know, Mr. Speaker, even at that age some kids would come to school without breakfast. They had hot chocolate and macaroni, hardtack and they just really enjoyed eating that in school.

Just recently we started to witness and even hear children coming to school without breakfast in our communities. That is unheard of. You know, then I started to see where school and the community started working together to raise money working with oil companies or working on different projects that they started to get extra dollars to bring the food into the school and have a program going there. That was one of the best moves that the schools in the communities have done, bringing breakfasts into the school. A lot of kids aren't eating breakfast anymore. That's the way we have it now.

The government has invested \$400,000 into this project. We looked at it and it's a good project; however, we don't have the money, so it might not

be funded anymore. Take out the nutritious foods, healthy eating in the schools, you guys go fend for yourselves. You go negotiate with the oil companies if you can get a deal. You raise your own funding. Our schools are into fundraising initiatives now. Kids should get good credit for fundraising to the programs they go to.

This government here is for the people, by the people and even those little people's health. And they're worth it. They are worth the investment. Surely we must reconsider this and give up something or sacrifice something for the good of the little ones, for an investment. Somewhere we can take some money out and put that back into the school or help the school. Just don't drop the ball on this like a hot potato in the communities. We can look at somewhere where we can work with them. I think that's what this motion is saying. That's why I strongly support it. We cannot let our people go hungry, especially the little ones. We've done this, Mr. Speaker. It has cost a lot in our communities and by not investing, it's going to cost us more, I think, I'm afraid.

I think this government here has very been vocal in some of its initiatives. They've showed some great leadership in some of their initiatives, that they can give this type of initiative another look at and see where this motion can be supported and they can look back and say where can we find the funding. For example, do you know that we have over 180 inmates in the North Slave Centre here and every morning their meals get wheeled to them? I think they could sacrifice breakfast for these little ones here. That's something we should look at. We've got to think about everything, how we can bring this money to the little ones here.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just say this is a good motion and I'm going to be supportive 100 percent.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say I'm rising to support the motion put forward by Ms. Bisaro. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I'll go to the mover of the motion for closing comments, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to first of all thank the seconder of the motion, the Member for Nunakput. I'd also like to thank my colleagues for their comments. I think you can tell that this is an extremely important issue. We are very passionate about it. Regular Members have fought very hard to get this funding and this program into our budget. Last year it was intended to be a food study and we managed to get that changed to a program where we could actually use

the money to go and buy food to assist the kids in our schools in the various communities.

We've been speaking about this issue, the need for providing funding for healthy foods, for nutrition, making healthy choices. We've been talking about this since we started in this Assembly, as my colleague Mr. Bromley has mentioned.

I want to mention, too, that the money that is in this current budget year has been distributed according to the contractor by need. So those communities that have higher food costs, where the food prices are far more than they are, say, in Yellowknife, those communities, those schools get more funding than schools in communities where the food prices are lower. That's a great way to go. But we are basically saying, as my colleague to my left has said, we are leaving the schools to fend for themselves. We are leaving the schools to try to find another method to get the kids to come to school. We are leaving the schools to try to struggle again to increase academic achievement. Both of those things have been proven to be successful through this program, and I'm failing to understand that the department, without an evaluation, is going to cut this funding.

Recently we heard from the Minister of Transportation that we've increased the Community Access Program from \$320,000 to \$1 million. That's \$680,000. I support the fact that communities need some assistance in trails and boat launches and so on, but if push came to shove when you ask the parents whether they would rather have their children have a healthy breakfast or whether they want a trail to wherever, I suspect the answer would be food.

I think in this particular case I have to say that I think the government has put their priority in the wrong place. I think really if the government believes in the success of this program and it has contributed to better attendance, higher academic achievement and better learning at school, the department and the government will look at the budget, will find the money. If we take some from each department, we can do it from within. As I said, where there's a will, there's a way. I believe it could be done if they want to do it.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I will ask for a recorded vote, and thanks to my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is requesting a recorded vote on the motion. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

ACTING CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Langlois): Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

ACTING CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Results of the recorded vote: in favour of the vote, 10; opposed, none; abstaining, seven. Motion is carried.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MOTION 2-16(6):
OPTIONAL RENT SCALE IN PUBLIC HOUSING,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: WHEREAS "economic rent" for public housing in small and remote communities is unaffordable for most working tenants, due to local economic conditions;

AND WHEREAS the system used to determine economic rent is not fair to smaller communities where there are fewer public housing units;

AND WHEREAS the current system of adjusting the rental rates in public housing according to the fluctuating income of tenants is unnecessarily complex for both tenants and housing administration;

AND WHEREAS arrears in public housing are a perpetual problem for tenants and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;

AND WHEREAS this government needs to stimulate the depressed economies of small and remote communities;

AND WHEREAS practical rental options in public housing could enable more tenants to continue working instead of turning to income support;

AND WHEREAS a maximum rent program, as an option offered to tenants receiving private income, could help reduce many of these problems, while maintaining the public housing program for those who wish to be there;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Minister responsible for the Northwest territories Housing Corporation establish an optional maximum rent scale for public housing in communities with no real private market, with rents set as follows:

- 1) \$1,200 per month for four or five-bedroom units;
- 2) \$1,000 per month for three-bedroom units;

3) \$800 per month for two-bedroom units; and

4) \$600 per month for one-bedroom units.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. We see arrears piling up in our public housing in the small communities and across the Territory. It's because even people who are working cannot afford the so-called economic rent that they're being charged by the Housing Corporation. Economic rent is so high it actually encourages people to give up working and go to income support. We have to do just the opposite.

We have to encourage people to keep working. They have to see that they are getting ahead. Economies in small communities are weak, with a few jobs. Everything is expensive, especially trying to buy food for your kids, clothe them. It's making it tough on families.

Housing arrears are leading to evictions and more eviction notices. The current system of economic rent is just not sustainable. We need an alternative.

It would be good if the alternative support local economy that would, is what its purpose was. The tenants in the public housing need affordable options.

The Maximum Rent Program addresses many problems. It helps keep the people in their homes and keep the people working. The Maximum Rent Program would also help the Housing Corporation with a simpler system and be able to do more. More people could pay their rent.

This is a two-tiered system. We're going to keep the system that they have already. This option that I'm providing is an option for if the people want to be able to pay for the four or five-bedroom. People that have dual incomes in the small communities, they would be paying \$1,200 a month instead of \$3,000. It would really help the people when people are trying to get ahead and be able to buy food and clothing for their kids and seeing that they're actually making headway instead of the government coming in and swooping 30 percent out of their cheque on their gross.

This option is one that I really encourage the government to take. I'm born and raised in the communities, like in Tuk, I'm an Inuvialuit and you never see people want to give hardship to another person. Government could do this. Government is in a position to do good right now to offer this option. It's an option with an open-handed approach. I really encourage the Minister and his department to make this happen.

I look forward to all Members who will support my motion and I thank them for their support.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I second the motion. I am aware that we have had passed, this would be the fourth motion of this type concerning this area. The problems are huge. It's not equitable as it currently stands. The rents in communities where there's few public housing, pay a lot more of their gross income if they get jobs. Right now, as it stands, this motion recommends an equalization across the board of people that go to work, go into a certain size house, they pay a certain amount across the board. It doesn't matter if you live in a community where there are 300 public housing units or you live in a community where there are 30. When you live in a community where there are 30, under the current system the cost of administration and the cost of maintenance and everything is distributed amongst the 30 units and it's very high. Also in most of the smaller communities the price is very high. Fuel is high, power is also costly, water and sewer is costly, because everything is on smaller scale and it's more remote.

This kind of equalizes it. This is where we should go. This is the direction we should go. This is a win-win for the people in the communities and for the government. It keeps people at work. It has people paying something.

Right now if an individual goes to work in a small community, there is potential for them to start paying \$3,000 a month. Even if you have a real good job, that's a little more than one cheque. That's one cheque. Because even though you can sit here and say it's only 30 percent of their gross income, well, income tax will take 30 percent too, and then there's the cost of working. There's the cost of daycare, if you have to have daycare when you go to work. There's those additional costs that the government must look at and take into consideration, not just looking focused in on the shelter cost. They have to look at all the other factors that come into play here. And the people will pay something. Like, you know, better than sitting at home drawing income support, having the government pay them for doing nothing.

So this is an opportunity to put people back to work, especially in communities where employment is very rare. A lot of these communities we're talking about, the reason they're non-market communities is because there's not much employment. It's very difficult to buy and sell a house. That's a non-market community because there's no employment, there's no income. People can't buy your house because they don't have the money. This kind of sets things in the right direction and I hope that the government does employ this policy change.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion suggests yet another way to skin the cat; an alternative to dropping the affordable housing threshold from 30 percent to 25 percent of gross income as proposed in another motion passed in the House this winter. This motion again recognizes the special considerations needed for our small communities where employment rates are devastatingly low.

I would like to compliment my colleagues for this innovative idea and request that the government clearly hear that our housing policies in this area are not working. New policies such as this motion proposes are required.

Ultimately we need a solid Anti-Poverty Strategy that embeds and delivers new approaches such as this one. That actually helps people get out of poverty.

I will be supporting this motion.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting the motion. I, for one, do feel that we have to fill the gap between market and non-market communities and we have to be fair to all our working residents in our communities. I think that we as government have provided housing in the past, whether we called it staff housing. We still provide housing in our communities for the nursing staff in our communities. They have a fixed rate. They know what their rent is when they go into those facilities in our communities. They know exactly how much they're going to have to pay for that particular unit. So we already have a program running in our communities. All we're asking is to expand the program to offer the same type of programs to the residents of the community with a set rate per unit based on the unit that's there.

I think it's the question of not only fairness but also of ensuring that we are as government being able to provide government programs and services and deal with the fundamental challenges we face in our communities. One of them is dealing with affordable housing and professional housing in our communities to attract those individuals to stay in our communities, provide government programs and services, and not see that as a barrier to delivering government programs and services. All I'm asking is, we already have a program similar to this in our communities with the nursing staff. We already know that they're paying about \$1,000 a month. We're asking that you provide the same program to the other working residents in our communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting the motion, but I do have more to add. It's a very good motion. I know that the honourable Member for Nunakput wanted some options for housing but I really feel that we should also be, it should be the whole program. That's the way we looked at it.

At one time we did have our housing program before it was converted to ECE and back again, and even further back it was listed at 75 percent of household income. It was a real break. Then the rent was at \$600 a month. I don't know, along the way somebody signed off to produce it up to 90 percent of income and then 100 percent of income and now to this date they don't even get credit for how many children they have. It's full economic rent. I've always been against that.

Other areas in Canada have special economic zones and they do have low-rental units, like \$500 or \$600 a month, in order to stimulate the economy and stimulate employment so that people can make a living and move into the depressed areas. I think our whole Northwest Territories should be a special economic zone and we should be taking care of the rent because that's what governments do. When there's a need, then the government comes to the action. It's not about because they can pay more we make them pay more. They're just barely getting by as it is. I had a constituent that actually told me, he said, don't call it a low-rental unit if it's not low rent. Just a couple of those things.

I strongly support the motion and I'm glad that it came forward. We have many motions on this side, like my colleague for Tu Nedhe said. Government's going to have to start listening. We're going to have to make those programs more flexible so that it fits the needs of our people.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support this motion. I believe that the intent and the background for this motion is very similar to something that I raised in the House last week. I was talking about transitional housing. This is talking about public housing.

---Interjection

MS. BISARO: I'm complimenting the mover and the seconder, you guys.

I think that the strategy that's espoused here is something that the government has to take note of. We need to look at enabling our people to get out of poverty, those that are there. The only way we're going to be able to do it is by providing them with

assistance. It is obvious to Members, certainly on this side of the House, that the policies and strategies that we are currently employing are not working. We need to totally revisit where we're at.

This motion talks about setting maximum rents in public housing. There have been other suggestions to change the maximum rent scale all over the place. There have been suggestions to assist people in transitional housing to keep them at work so that they don't go back onto income support.

The Housing Corporation I believe is doing a review of their Shelter Policy and that's a good thing, but Lord knows when we're going to see the end result of that review. I certainly hope that these suggestions and previous suggestions from Members on this side of the House and motions on this side of the House are going to be considered within that review. All of them go to the basic principle of getting our people out of poverty, and that should be where the Housing Corporation should start. Provide housing that enables people as opposed to housing that disables people and I think that this motion goes a long way to doing that.

I hope that the Housing Corporation is listening. I certainly support this motion and I encourage the rest of my colleagues to do the same.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to compliment the last speaker, Ms. Bisaro, because I think she said it perfectly. It enables hope and I think it certainly inspires people to do more and become more. That's a lot of the reason why we're here, is to help people and give them that chance. Government policy will quite often try to focus so hard on inspiring people to be more and when they do stand up on their two legs, we find these housing policies pull the ground out from underneath them rather than giving them a chance to get running and build momentum and inspire themselves again to do more and be more.

Mr. Speaker, as alluded to earlier, this is a process, this is a motion that works towards breaking the cycle of poverty, which is holding a lot of people back. For that fact, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. MLA Bromley has said it well, that this is just another way to skin a cat here, so telling the Minister and the government there's another option to look at. Mr. Speaker, I say that because in front of me here I have three motions speaking about the rental and the issue of housing in the Northwest Territories that were debated and passed in the House.

There's another motion for the Minister to look and to help our people.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006 the United Nations called the issue of housing and homelessness in Canada a national emergency. I think that's something that we're looking at right here in the Northwest Territories in Canada, that this government here and all governments, our responsibility lies with us. It's estimated that four million Canadians are in need of affordable housing, Mr. Speaker, and growing.

Mr. Speaker, as I heard from my colleagues, these issues here that we deal with, especially with what Mr. Jacobson has raised, is very, very good because we want to help our young people to get into the economy when there's work in our communities. The regions that I talk about, the economy is very short and then we have to, sort of, wait until we get an oil and gas exploration or we go trapping or, like it says, that they walk down to the income support office. People do want to make a difference in their lives. They do see the value of a house, Mr. Speaker, because you know the housing insecurity is sometimes a symptom and sometimes a cause of poverty in our communities, and that causes other issues that we have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that with the housing in our communities, and this initiative is a good step to bring other issues such as evictions. Mr. Speaker, I've been notified that in the Sahtu there were 33 rental orders -- 16 for Tulita and 17 for Deline -- to leave the premises, leave the house. Now this is going to cause 33 other issues with families, people asked to leave the units, because as we stand right here, they cannot afford the public housing units. We have to do something different. We have to do a made-in-the-north solution to keep people in their houses.

Housing has done a lot of work not to kick out, as the Minister said. His job is not about evicting people from their units. However, the policies that we operate under now lead us to that. As much as we try to do repayments, give them a chance, we need to look at something, as Mr. Menicoche said, look at a zone where a young man who has finished high school or college can come back into one of our communities, get a job for two or three months, learn how to operate his house, and pay a certain rent and not be worried that it's going to cost \$1,800, \$1,400, that he can afford it, and that he should not be penalized for working for a short period of time. Then we could look at situations like that.

I think that's what this motion is saying. It's about keeping people in their homes and making them feel good about them. They are dependent on us. Government has caused that dependence over the years and now we need to make sure that they can

handle these units in an affordable amount. Some of them can't even pay for their food or any other things that they want to buy for themselves and I think, again, as Mr. Bromley has said, this is just another way to skin a cat and I hope the Minister will look at this motion, as with other motions, look at how this issue here can be resolved in a manner that knows that people can live in a house and they do have a chance in life, especially in our small communities where it's very hard to find a job let alone live there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'll go to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Members have pointed out the fact they've brought forward a few motions and I assure the Members that we take those motions very seriously. We are looking at the motions that they've brought forward and some of the recommendations we've made. We've heard a lot of comments this afternoon on trying to get people more independent and getting them out there. That's our ultimate goal. I mean, we say the visions and goals of the 16th Legislative Assembly is to have healthy, vibrant, safe communities and have our people out there being independent. That's one thing we try to do as the Housing Corporation. It's hard sometimes to think that we're going to meet those goals that we set out if we continue to find ways that we can make people be less responsible.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I was looking at some of the recommendations and the motions they made here. I know there are a few of them that, I think, in my conversations with some of the Members, I believe we're addressing. We have the Shelter Policy review that's going on right now. The rent scale review is a part of that. I had spoken to Members about the regionalized assessments, which I think some Members thought was a very good idea. We are doing work on a lot of the motions you brought forward.

I want to point out a couple of statistics, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have, across the Northwest Territories, approximately 2,400 public housing units. We have 21 percent of people paying zero. We have 45, almost 46 percent paying \$32. So we have 67 percent paying \$32 or less. Out of the 2,400 units, we have approximately 12 to 19 at any given time paying economic rent. There are very few people across the Northwest Territories who pay economic rent. But having said that, I mean, we recognize the Members' concerns and some of the issues that they've brought forward, but I can assure them that the Housing Corporation has heard the other motions that you've brought forward. That's one of the reasons why we're trying to do the Shelter Policy review, is

to address a lot of the motions that you've brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, there is really not much more I can add. I was looking at the last part of the motion, "therefore I move," and I wasn't quite sure exactly what that meant. Do you want to cap the rents? Is that what it is? For a five-bedroom unit it doesn't say whether these folks are working or not. I mean, it's something that we'll have to clarify. Is it just going to be charging everybody so those that are paying \$32 living in a five-bedroom unit now may have to potentially pay \$1,200? These are questions that we'd have to have answered, so we'll look forward to having the discussion with committee on some of the recommendations they made and sharing some of our thoughts with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I'll go to the mover of the motion for closing comments. Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Out of the 67 percent of what the Minister is stating, the 2,400 units that we are paying the 21 percent paying zero dollars, 46 percent paying \$32, it's a total of 67 percent. The other 23 percent, Mr. Speaker, I think this option is going to help. It's an option.

What I'm asking for, the Housing Corporation can keep their economic rent scale. This is an option B. If people are working, say if myself and my wife are working, we're in a rental unit, we're going to choose option B. This is the option that I'm providing today. For a five-bedroom unit I'll pay \$1,200 a month for the family, and that's an option. If the people that want to stay under the current housing policy, they could go ahead. It's a choice. But we're providing a choice, Mr. Speaker, that's going to help the people in the long run so people can actually buy food for their kids, pay their power bill, be able to have extra funds to do things. For myself, the Minister said this is an option. For myself, when you look at it, this is going to help the people. The people should not have to worry, Mr. Speaker, about a roof over their heads. If we're lucky in the communities, we've got 20 government jobs. And those are the people that are lucky enough to get them.

The rent scale we are going off, this is an option. I'm going in with an open-handed approach because I'm not going to tell the government what to do. This is an option. I want to work with them to make this happen. The people ought to be able, like I said, not worry about a roof over their head and be a little bit proud of what they have because they're paying their rent and it's an option for them to do that. Our people in the Territories, we have to help them as much as we can as a government. This government can do that. This Minister could go and say option B, Jackie, we did it, we're going to do

something about it. Under their assessment that they're doing, it's possible. Again, this is an option. I'm not going to put fear into the communities right now. That's what I don't want. You can stay under the current system and this system is option B, it's up to the tenant to choose option B. Again, I don't want to get anybody in the communities scared of the rent scale I'm providing or trying to get into the system.

This has come forward so we can help the people in the Northwest Territories, people who are being evicted. That shouldn't happen. People shouldn't have to worry about a roof over their head. Again, we're just trying to make a better place for the people to live in the Northwest Territories. I know this Minister can do that.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a recorded vote to this motion. Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

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

ACTING CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

ACTING CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: Results of the recorded vote: in favour, 10; opposed, zero; abstaining, seven. Motion is carried.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MOTION 3-16(6): EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO MAY 11, 2011, CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You had to wake me up there.

---Laughter

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 10, 2011, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, May 11, 2011; AND FURTHER, that any time prior to May 11, 2011, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the

Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 3: ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 3, Electronic Transactions Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the recognition of electronic communications and documents under Northwest Territories law, in the absence of specific treatment in each applicable enactment. This bill does not require the use of electronic communications, but does establish minimum standards that must be met when electronic documents and information are used in transactions. The bill also makes consequential amendments to the Interpretation Act to further authorize and regulate the use of electronic forms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Bill 3 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

BILL 4: MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 4, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill corrects inconsistencies and errors in the statutes of the Northwest Territories. The bill deals with other matters of a minor, non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the statutes, and repeals provisions that have ceased to have effect. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Bill 4 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 5: WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS ACT, 2010-2011

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 5, Write-off of Debts Act, 2010-2011, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the write-off of debts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 5 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 6: FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2010-2011

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 6, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2010-2011, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the forgiveness of debts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 6 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Robert McLeod.

BILL 7: COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 7, Community Planning and Development Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill replaces the Planning Act for most municipal corporations in the Northwest Territories. It modernizes processes for community planning and development and for the subdivision of land. Consequential amendments are made to the Charter Communities Act, Cities, Towns and Villages Act, Condominium Act, Hamlets Act and Land Titles Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Bill 7 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**BILL 8:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS ACT**

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Local Authorities Elections Act to implement reforms jointly developed by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, and to make a number of minor changes to conform with prevailing drafting practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Bill 8 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**BILL 9:
WILDLIFE ACT**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 9, Wildlife Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill replaces the Wildlife Act. It modernizes wildlife management processes in a manner consistent with land claims agreements. Provisions respecting the harvest of wildlife are updated and measures for the protection of wildlife habitat are included. Consequential amendments are made to the Environmental Protection Act, the Forest Management Act and the Herd and Fencing Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few comments with respect to the principle of this bill. I am not 100 percent convinced that this bill is actually ready for second reading. There has been a lot of talk in the community about the bill and the concerns different groups have had. There is no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the bill does need to be replaced.

The existing bill needs to be replaced. It is old. It is antiquated. It doesn't meet the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories clearly. I have to applaud the department. They have been working on this bill for almost 20 years, two decades. There has been a lot of work done.

Listening to the Minister talk and questions we asked in the House, it is clear that they have gone out to people in the public in the past. I know that they talked to groups five, 10, 15 years ago. They have a lot of data to help them draft this act. Unfortunately, a lot of that data is old and things have changed since they talked to some of the groups that they talked to in the past. We need an act that is current and meets the needs of the people. The reason this concerns me is this government has made the mistake before of going ahead with projects or bills based on antiquated data. I will give you an example that I think relates a little bit.

Stanton Territorial Hospital, Mr. Speaker, was built in 1989. The design of that hospital was based on a health care methodology from the late '70s. As a result, we built a great hospital that doesn't really meet our needs because our methodology of providing health care changed. I am concerned that if we move forward with this act based on the data that we collected 10, 11 and 12 years ago, we might be dooming ourselves to the same failure and increasing costs and complexity that doesn't need to be there.

Regardless, we have moved forward. The majority of the work, in my opinion, that has occurred on this act, has occurred since the Species at Risk Act that was passed in 2009. The Species at Risk Act employed a unique approach to drafting bills. I think the department once again needs to be applauded on that approach of involving our Aboriginal governments and our Aboriginal partners actually in the drafting. It is significant and it does need to be applauded. I think it is a great approach, but they are still basing their design on data collected from many years ago. I question that.

Some other good things have happened. In November of 2010 the department did draw up their draft act on the population. This is really the first time that many stakeholders ever got to see a draft. Everything they were discussing before was based on an old act and what they would like to see in the new act. They didn't really see any new act until November. The department did something that I thought was actually quite brilliant. They actually included a plain language document, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the first times I have seen this government come out with a brand new act of this complexity and draw up a plain language document, which really helped people or hopefully helped people understand the act that was being presented in front of them.

Unfortunately, this is where I start to have some questions. They only really gave people 54 days to consult on that draft. People say, look, they have had 10 years, but nobody really saw this draft until November. They had 54 days to comment on it, if you insert the fact that there was Christmas holidays right in the middle of the consultation process.

I have asked the Minister a significant number of questions. He has demonstrated to me to some degree that they did listen. I know that there was concern out there that they didn't actually listen to the people. Some people and organizations clearly felt that they weren't listened to. To date, that still exists. I have a letter today from the NWT Chamber of Mines where they clearly outlined that there are still questions they have asked the department on this act that they haven't got responses to. Big questions; questions that will affect industry, tourism, you and me. They haven't got responses to that. That concerns me, Mr. Speaker. I want to make sure that this act is ready and that we have consulted the people. I want to know why we didn't respond to those people, or if we did, where is the response? Do we get to see it?

We end up where we are today, Mr. Speaker, with an act that, according to comments that the Minister made in the House when asked questions, has actually had changes since that November draft came out in the plain language. We only got to see the act yesterday. It was first reading when it was the first time any one of us would have got an opportunity to look at it, or anybody in the public. It's hard to tell after one day where the changes are that they have made. I don't have a summary of where those changes occurred. I would like to see that, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be great if the department could help committee.

It is my understanding, talking to colleagues, that this bill will likely pass second reading today, which means that it is going to take the next step. It means that it is going to go to committee for 120-day review. They have a lot of work cut out for them. They are going to take the time and they are going to listen to people, which is incredibly important, but for them to do a really good job to make sure that everything is truly heard, I think it is important that the department share with committee a summary of the changes that they have made since that November draft, what they heard. I want them to share what they heard in their community consultation with committee. I want them to share what changes they made based on what they heard, also the changes they didn't make based on what they heard. We are not going to agree with everything that we hear. There is no way. People will be coming to us with requests that may not be appropriate. I would like to know why we said no to certain things. I would like to know why we said yes to certain things. If that information is shared with

committee, they will have the best opportunity to ensure that they come forward with reasonable recommendations to bring this act back in line so it does meet the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories, but that has to be done.

I asked earlier, when I was asking questions a couple of weeks ago, about minutes. I would like to know what the summaries of the different community meetings during this 54-day consultation process were. What did they hear? I want them to share that. I know a lot of work has been done, Mr. Speaker. I know that. I know the department has gone out. I applaud the staff who have gone on and did the work, but I think there are holes.

I think this act is very important. It is going to affect so many people and so many lives in the Northwest Territories. Industry as well, tourism as well. We need to make sure that it is right. I am not 100 percent convinced that it is ready for second reading. I respect my colleagues' positions. I respect how they vote. I look forward to hearing the community speak when this does go out for consultation within the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure.

I had just a few comments. I am still concerned. I want this to be done right. I want to make sure we have the best act for the people of the Northwest Territories, who are our main concern. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to speak briefly today to the principles upon which this bill is founded. First I want to recognize the long and complex process that has resulted in this bill's presentation to the Assembly. The bill makes an effort to address and incorporate the new realities, not so new really, of constitutional and treaty rights of Aboriginal citizens with a new law reflecting the direction of constructive court decision. There has been earnest effort here and the Minister needs to be congratulated for pursuing the need to modernize our legislation. However, the basic principles this bill attempts to address involves the realization of a comprehensive regime of co-management based upon consultative decision-making.

As we learned in the recent caribou harvesting moratorium, co-management, consultation and common will are the indispensable elements of an effective management regime. In the development of this bill, and as my colleague has noted, it has been over a couple of decades. There have been serious challenges in living up to these principles through the legislative development process. The Minister has heard these concerns here in the Assembly through media reports and the correspondence received from a variety of

stakeholders. These concerns originate from throughout the spectrum of public interest, Aboriginal groups, resident hunters, outfitters and industry. It is unusual to see a piece of legislation move forward to the public hearing stage with so much discord expressed on the basic approach and principles addressed in legislative development even before it is tabled. This reality places an unusual and large consultative responsibility on committee.

Mr. Speaker, I will be working hard with committee to identify and address any concerns and to bring them back to the Minister through committee, but I am concerned that the consultation that has brought us to this bill has not been adequate or sensitive and that the resulting bill is lacking in its fundamental address of principles and concerns. Things that will help us to move forward are, for example, a table of concordance indicating where the changes have been made to this bill in relation to the previous draft and that this be made available immediately after second reading. I similarly request that notes of stakeholder meetings and earlier submissions be made available to help the public in its review of this important legislation. Finally, people have submitted comments with promises from government for feedback, but they have not yet heard from the department. That, obviously, needs some resolution.

To wrap up, Mr. Speaker, I do have some concerns, but I think the process is in place. I am looking forward to moving forward on this. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it kind of mindboggling that people say they weren't consulted. We've been talking about wildlife since the trapping industry moved into northern Canada back in the 1800s. From registered group trapping areas to game sanctuaries to looking at protection of different species on the basis of protecting species such as buffalo in the Northwest Territories, transplanting species, this stuff has happened over the decades.

One of the fundamental principles of legislation is to enact legislation that hasn't been enacted. I'm talking about the land claims. We have land claims groups who have been waiting 27 years to enact their legislation and yet at the 11th hour we have people in this House saying they haven't heard about it. I find it kind of insulting that today in this area realizing that we have constitutional land claims rights protecting the Constitution of Canada still not being enacted for 27 years.

The same thing when I came into this House some 16 years ago after being involved in the land claims process for 10 years talking about the Wildlife Act and talking about the Dene-Metis Land Claim,

talking about the settlement of the Gwich'in and Sahtu claims, ensuring those people that their fundamental rights as indigenous people to be able to harvest and to hunt and to have certain rights protected through a constitutional process. The only way that can happen is the legislation has to be enacted in a legislative process such as in this House. That's the whole intention of the legislation that's before us, to ensure that we fulfill our obligations under those constitutional agreements regardless if it's the Inuvialuit claim, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Tlicho and also those other self-government agreements that are presently in place. More importantly, the fundamental principle of the treaty entitlements under Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 which were one of the founding principles of those treaties to ensure that indigenous people were going to be able to continue to hunt and trap and fish as they always have without being interfered with and to be able to carry out that obligation under Treaty 8 and Treaty 11.

I think that I also took a glance at the e-mail coming from the NWT Chamber of Mines. They're talking about legislation that was passed in this House a couple of years ago called the Species at Risk Act to have the ability to establish protected areas for certain species. As we see today, we have threatened species in the Northwest Territories, whether it's the Bluenose herd or the Bathurst caribou. We are already realizing the challenges we are going to face going forward, regardless if we say it's climate change or industrial development or whatnot. We have species in the Northwest Territories who are now being threatened. We have to have the legislative tools in place to ensure we're able to do that.

I also look forward to going out on the road for public debate and hearing exactly from all sides. I think we also have to realize that we have an obligation to the land claim groups in the Northwest Territories who have been waiting some 27 years to get their land claim implemented in this Legislature and yet to say at the 11th hour, sorry, we didn't know anything about this. I think, for myself, someone who represents the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in, we've been waiting a long time for this legislation to come through this House and I've been waiting 16 years to see this day become a reality.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some comments which are very similar to some of the comments which have already been made, but I feel that I would like to express my point of view.

The act is described as a management act but I think some of the clauses within that act are more than a management of wildlife act. I also believe

that there are some inequities within some of the clauses in the act and I think those need to be addressed. Hopefully they will be over time.

I've expressed a number of concerns previously about some of the clauses and provisions within the act. I'm particularly concerned for our outfitters. I think that the act inhibits them growing and developing and adding to our economy.

The other area I'm concerned about is exploration and mining and other economic development activities which can be perhaps inhibited by some of the clauses within the act.

I've said before, and I still feel, that the representation on the conference of management authorities is not what it should be. The Minister has advised us that the GNWT is going to represent all the people who are not specifically represented by wildlife management boards or by Aboriginal governments. I'm sorry, but that's not good enough. I feel there needs to be representation for other groups. As an example, I'm not suggesting they should be there, but the NWT Wildlife Federation is such a group who could possibly represent non-Aboriginal people and other people who are not represented by wildlife management boards.

I think probably my biggest concern is with the lack of information from the time that the act was given to the general public in a specific form and now when it's been tabled in this House and read into this House. There have been changes made along the way, the Minister has told us that, but nobody knows what they are. I think that's a very difficult thing for the general public to look at the act and to know the act that they were informed on in November or December of 2010, what are the differences between that act and what's now in the House and being considered. So I totally support the request from two of my other colleagues that the department prepare a comparison document which shows the act that was put out for public information and/or consultation, depending upon how you look at it, and the act that we now have before us and where the changes have occurred. We've been advised that changes have been made based on the concerns that were heard from the public but, again, who knows what they are.

The other thing that I'm concerned about, and it was referenced by one of the other speakers, is the response from the department to all the comments that were made during the consultation, what they call the consultation phase. There were many, many people who spoke and expressed concerns. The department said, basically, we hear you, but there were many questions asked to which nobody has received answers. At one point when I asked questions of the Minister, I believe he said that there would be a document that would come out in April. I think he said the end of April. Well, really, that's far too late a time for people who have asked

questions to get an answer at the end of April when probably most of the public hearings on this bill are going to be concluded. So that information needs to come forward from the department much sooner than later.

I do look forward to the public hearings that are going to come forward. I think they are certainly going to be informative. I think particularly -- and I address this to every Member and every person in the general public who has an interest in this bill -- I hope that we can, all of us, keep an open mind. That we can look at the issues that are before us and the concerns that are brought forward, that we can consider them rationally and consider them with a view to getting a bill that is workable and that is a good piece of legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to speak to the principle of the bill. I'm certainly excited at the fact that the committee is going to eventually get the Wildlife Act finally and we are going to take the bill around the Northwest Territories. I just wanted to speak a little bit about the fact that we do live in a jurisdiction that values public input and the process that's out there. We want to ensure that it's a fair process for everybody. Anybody that wants to provide a submission, wants to speak to the committee, we will be there to listen and observe what people are telling us.

It's going to be a big undertaking going out to public consultations on this bill. There's been a lot of traffic on it already and I'm sure that we will certainly hear from a number of people across the Territory. We are going to try to get into as many communities across the Territory as we can in the next couple of months, so again I'm looking forward to this process playing itself out.

I don't think we should, you know, it's been a long time and I appreciate the comments from some of the other Members. It's been a long time getting to this stage. I think we owe it to the public that we serve to make sure that at the end of the day the bill that is going to be approved by this House is the best one that we can possibly get for everybody that lives in the Northwest Territories.

I want to stress again that we will be out there listening to the concerns of all residents of the Northwest Territories when we take into consideration Bill 9, Wildlife Act. With that, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am looking forward to this bill getting through second reading, ready for committee, going to committee to

do the public consultation so that the bill can be brought out to the people by the committee so MLAs can hear first-hand from the communities if they do have issues with the changes to the Wildlife Act with the new Wildlife Act. Give them assurances at the community level that this Wildlife Act is not going to adversely affect their ability as they manage their wildlife and give them some assurances, especially assurances to non-settled areas. In the Wildlife Act there are areas that cover the co-management for the areas where claims have been settled. There needs to be the same type of assurances given to people in non-claimed areas. Or non-settled. Pardon me. I'm looking forward to the group of MLAs going out to the communities with MLAs from the communities to discuss the Wildlife Act.

It's a long act. It's going to be something I think that the people need to see. Take the time to do it. It took a lot of time to get to this stage. It would be good to advance to the next stage. It's 180 clauses and it's going to be something that's going to take a lot of work by a lot of people to get it to the next level.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I will say I just can't wait to get on the road with this bill here and see the different views and hear the different values of how wildlife is looked upon in the Northwest Territories. I also want to say that the Sahtu has been a long wait of promises that were in our land claims. This bill is certainly... I didn't think I was going to see this day when we take it out on the road and listen to the views of the people. Also look at some of the issues that some other residents in the Northwest Territories have on this bill how they see wildlife and how they see how this land is being managed by the people.

So it will be a good education part for the public. It will be a good educational part for people who need to know, as Mr. Krutko said, a little bit of the history of the wildlife, and it will be a good educational part for people to know about the rights of Aboriginal people for settling their land claim.

We're starting to hear some things already from different groups out there that already have their opinion on the Wildlife Act. They're making assumptions. They're making statements. They're predicting how this Wildlife Act could be laid out. We don't know. I want to say that I look forward to, as the Member said, looking at all the different views. The foremost, you know, I'd rather have moose meat than eat dirt. That's important here of the wildlife, is to look at how we want to sustain our life for a long time.

It's going to take strong leadership from all of us to pull together to see where our Wildlife Act fits within

our lifestyle, because really, when you talk about the Wildlife Act and management, you're talking about Aboriginal people. So that's because their whole lifestyle is based on wildlife and the use of the land. It would be interesting to see what the people say.

I think it's about time and I want to commend the Minister for bringing it forward. Let's get this show on the road.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Wildlife Act has been long awaited by all residents of the Northwest Territories. The current bill is a large piece of work and I'd like to see it done justice, as well. I'd like to see it properly reviewed, and I will get actively involved in that as it tours my region. I really think that we have to review it and all the different aspects and that I don't believe that it should be rushed at all.

Just a couple comments there. I'd really like to have it passed or, well, I'd like to have it out in the community so that people can review it and have the proper information that they can make the proper decision and I look forward to helping the committee review that. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a similar vein, I want to stress, like Mr. Menicoche did, I think we still have a lot of work to do, which is to hear from people in a broad sense. Right now a number of us have heard from certain groups that they're worried about their particular areas. For example, as mentioned, Mr. Abernethy had pointed out the NWT mining had made contact, and I certainly received an e-mail from them. I think their concerns are valid in the sense that they need to be looked at and examined and see how it's weighed. I've been contacted by the tourism industry concerned about their particular issues. I think that there are a lot of people who have different perspectives on this particular bill coming forward and I think we need to take the particular time to ensure that we weigh and measure them all fairly.

I've heard from my colleagues that a lot of the community governments are supporting these types of measures that are coming forward, and I would like to reach out and certainly hear from their perspective, as well, to make sure that this bill does come forward. As we all know, it's taken almost a lifetime to build and, hopefully, this is the initiative that will kick it off in the right manner. I wouldn't want to see us prejudicing this by coming out and saying it's flawed or whatnot. Let's give it a chance and let the people guide us. On that particular note,

Mr. Speaker, I've even offered my own self to go on the road if committee needs extra participation to ensure that they have as many people out for public hearings. I certainly look forward to any feedback people provide to me on their perspectives on the Wildlife Act.

I just want to mention as a closing point, the chance for us to turn this into a divisive act is quite easy and we must find ways to transcend that resistance and rise above this. Because, I mean, we have to look well beyond emotion at this stage and ask ourselves what is best for the people of the Territories over the long haul. Certainly, time will tell as we pick it apart and I encourage the public as well as Members to pick every clause apart, and we ensure it is done right and every clause is justified and it makes sense. We would ask that on any particular bill presented to this House and not just this particular one because it's the Wildlife Act or not this particular one because it's presented by Minister Miltenberger, but the fact is it's such an important dynamic and a lot of work has gone into this. I would encourage people to invest the time, learn about what they're criticizing about and maybe get some sense and understanding as to why things were written in a particular manner as they were. Only with that, Mr. Speaker, will we truly understand why it was constructed in a way and certainly get the sense from the people as to what they truly need.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite an occasion to see so many people speak to the second reading of a particular bill, but with that noted, though, this is a very emotional bill but it's also a significant milestone being passed by this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, as well, take a few minutes to talk briefly to the principle of this bill, which I consider a very good bill. It is unprecedented in terms of the length of time it's taken, the amount of work, the amount of money, the amount of effort and the process used to get us to this day. I would like to acknowledge the work, of course, of the working group and the staff of the department who are still working, and in many cases have often worked themselves to near exhaustion because we're a very small operation and we have some of the best people in the business.

I've heard lots of questions: where, where are the answers? The answers are here in this House and the bill you have on the desk before you. That is where the proof is. That is where the test is. That we will give you the minutes. We will give you the feedback from across the land, but that is almost incidental at this point, because the product now is

here. The proof is here and we are prepared to bring it to this House and have it stand that test.

I can assure you that I don't think committee members are any more eager to have committee go on the road than I am. I can hardly wait for committee to go on the road, to go and talk to the people, to look at all the work that's been done. As has been said, you can take it apart word by word, clause by clause and I'm convinced it will stand the test.

We will travel with committee. We will work with committee. Committee will have access to every scrap of paper, every bit of work that's been done. Anything that the committee needs to do their job fully will be provided.

I also want to point out that in this bill, as it's been taken out and as it has developed, there has been a lot of talk, a lot of things said, and a lot of concerns raised. Many issues, I believe, are mixed. We're mixing and putting on the back of this Wildlife Act concerns about development. We have a Sustainable Development Policy that lays out very clearly the position of this government. It is not the purpose of a Wildlife Act to set out how we do development. There are other places like the Sustainable Development Policy, and we just announced and all celebrated the fact that the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline got the thumbs up today. We have to separate some of these issues and look clearly at what the purpose of the Wildlife Act is.

It is a good bill and there will be lots of discussion; there has been already. The recognition of who's going to be involved at the table to manage, the difference between rights and privileges. There are things we have built in and we consider absolutely fundamental to this government as territorial residents. As Canadian residents, Section 35 says very clear things. We have land claims, self-government agreements, treaties. Those are enshrined. They have paramountcy and they have a clear place in the work that's before you. We also recognize that there are many issues to deal with resident hunters, but the right to hunt and harvest is a privilege. We have to be clear about that distinction.

We will work on all the ways to make sure that this bill is the best bill possible. I believe that it is, for the most part, there. I look forward to the work of this committee. I look forward to this bill coming back. We'll have an opportunity to make amendments and adjustments that we can, hopefully, collectively agree on and bring this bill back into the House whenever the committee says it's ready, either May or August, but our goal has to be in the life of this Assembly to have this bill finally, finally a northern, made-in-the-north, tailored to the Northwest Territories bill that deals with the wildlife issues, that deals with unmet obligations under Section 35 finally, finally addressed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. Bill 9 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 10:
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HERITAGE FUND ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 10, Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill establishes the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund. The Heritage Fund is a trust fund for the benefit and use of the people of the Northwest Territories, and the Financial Management Board serves as trustee. Excess funds will be received into the Heritage Fund but nothing can be transferred from it for 10 years in order to build up the principal, which is to be retained and invested. Transfers of income from the Heritage Fund to the Consolidated Revenue Fund will be authorized by a special act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak to the principle of this bill. This bill is very late in coming, Mr. Speaker, but it is highly desirable and provides an important opportunity to begin capturing some lasting benefits from the exploitation of our richest resources, an opportunity we have simply not had in the past.

The bill has, however, a key shortcoming, and that includes that it fails to directly connect building the Heritage Fund to the exploitation of our resources as they are exploited and shipped afar. This bill leaves this role to future legislators and that, in my opinion, is passing the buck.

Again, this bill is necessary and overdue. I look forward to public input on this potentially key law.

I have to note, Mr. Speaker, that our gold mines have come and gone. Perhaps we will have some more in the future. Our diamond mines are also now saying they have a very limited lifespan. These are our richest resources, the ones that stick out so much, they are so rich that they are found

immediately and exploited immediately. We have missed this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

The resources are finite. We can learn from the lessons of others such as those of Alaska and Alberta, which I regard as failures, and that of Norway, which I regard as an amazing success. There are lessons to be learned. I am happy to see that some of those things are captured in this bill, but not all.

Nevertheless, we need to proceed. I note that this bill provides a very modest window of 10 years to build the fund. That is a very modest window, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly not what I had in mind, and perhaps my colleagues, when we initially discussed this legislation. This is a very short time, Mr. Speaker, especially given the lack of identification of funds to be appropriated for it.

Mr. Speaker, I often hear about devolution. Devolution will be the answer to everything. It will provide us with a huge net fiscal benefit and we are going to dump it in the Heritage Fund. With good luck, Mr. Speaker, devolution may happen, according to the Premier, in six or eight years, which I think is probably reasonable and with luck. I can guarantee the net fiscal benefit for the first few years will be in high demand and will be quickly allocated. I suspect it will be very difficult to direct those funds into this Heritage Fund. The fund is a necessary and good idea.

I support this bill, but it does have shortcomings. We will need to move as a Legislature to address those shortcomings and start giving some thought to how we are going to actually put meaningful dollars into this fund, because the purpose of the fund, of course, is to provide some benefits to our future people. We have an obligation to, as we exploit these resources and we all know that resources are finite to gain some benefits not only for ourselves, but for our future.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this bill, but I think we have a lot of work to do. I appreciate it being brought forward this time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. Bill 10 has had second reading and is referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Bill 1 has had third reading.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

BILL 2:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RETIRING
ALLOWANCES ACT AND SUPPLEMENTARY
RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Bill 2 has had third reading.

---Carried

Madam Clerk, could you ascertain whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable George Tuccaro, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills.

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. George Tuccaro): Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, and
- Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, mahsi cho, quanami.

---Applause

Speaker's Closing Remarks

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, this has been a very busy and eventful sitting of our Assembly. You have considered and debated 12 pieces of legislation including three appropriation bills. You have debated 10 motions. Ministers and committees

have met together at over 20 meetings on a variety of issues and there have been four public hearings related to legislation. Not included in this tally are the daily meetings of all committees and Cabinet as well as the ongoing work we carry out for our constituents.

The Fifth Session of this Assembly also prorogued during our sitting and began the Sixth and final session on March 7, 2011. Colleagues, for the first time an honorary presiding officer was seated at our table.

---Applause

During our spring recess I know that committees are planning travels to review legislation and the work of government will continue, but I hope that you can take some time with your families and your communities during this beautiful time of year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Pages who we have had in this House during this lengthy session. We have had students from Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Inuvik, Kakisa, Tsiigehtchic, Hay River, Trout Lake, Fort Resolution and Sachs Harbour.

---Applause

To each and every one of you, I extend the thanks of this House for your diligence and enthusiasm. Your role is important to the smooth operation of our Chamber and assists us in the work that we do here.

I would like to thank the interpreters present during this session: Jim Hope, Margaret Mackenzie, William Firth, David Black, Sarah Cleary and Mary Rose Blackduck.

---Applause

Colleagues, there are several other integral parts of our operation that aren't always front and centre. Our contractors assist us in a variety of ways and I would like to recognize and thank them today.

Firstly from PIDO, for sitting through dozens of meetings and operating the controls day after day in the Chamber and ensuring that our words are recorded for posterity, Mr. Rick Poltaruk who is in the recording booth today.

---Applause

Mr. Dave Sveinsson, also from PIDO operations, operates the camera when the House is in session. I am not sure if you can turn a camera on yourself in the AV room, Dave, but I thank both of you.

---Applause

Appreciation is also extended to our Hansard contractors, Ms. Janet Schreder and Ms. Michele Vanthull, all for allowing us to see our words on the page, often with mixed feelings.

---Applause

In the gallery, we also have Mr. Ray Jahner from SecureCheck. Our thanks to you and your excellent staff for the work you do, not only with regards to the security of our Assembly but also as a hospitable point of contact for our visitors to our Legislature.

---Applause

Also in the gallery this afternoon is Putte Nielsen. I'm sure Members join me in extending our appreciation to Putte and her staff for the excellent catering service that we have all enjoyed particularly during this session.

---Applause

However, Putte, I must inform you that you're also responsible for the surge in gym memberships and diet books.

---Laughter

Finally, I would like to thank Thien Nuyhn for the janitorial work that the staff perform every day. Thien and his staff do a great job during the day, every evening and in the early morning after a snowfall to ensure our building is clean and safe.

---Applause

The contributions of each and every one of you assist all Members of this Assembly in so many ways. In the busy life of a Legislature, we do not often take the time to say thank you and I wish to publicly extend the thanks of this House to each and every one and your staff today.

---Applause

Colleagues, as we depart, I wish you and your families a happy Easter and safe travels as you go about your work this spring. I look forward to meeting you once again in the Chamber in May.

Colleagues, March 4th to the 20th is the Rendezvous Francophone, also known as French Language Week. I will now ask our Clerk to read the orders of the day in French. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

ACTING CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Langlois): [Translation] Orders of the day for Wednesday, May 11, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions

10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, May 11, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

