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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 9, 2012****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 6-17(2):
AN ACT TO AMEND THE BORROWING
AUTHORIZATION ACT**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, later this session I will be presenting Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act. The purpose of this act is to increase the short-term authority to borrow provided in section 1(2) of the act from \$175 million to \$275 million.

This should not be confused with the federally set borrowing limit of \$575 million. The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to discuss an increase to that limit with the federal Finance Minister so we will have more flexibility to invest in the long term. We have recently received a letter from Minister Flaherty assuring us that the federal government recognizes the importance of a timely resolution to the borrowing limit issue so that we can move forward with our fiscal planning and infrastructure investments.

However, we also have to do a little housekeeping of our own with respect to our short-term borrowing authority. The Borrowing Authorization Act gives the GNWT the authority to borrow up to \$175 million over the short term. This allows the GNWT to manage its cash. This limit has remained the same for over 17 years while government operations and revenues have increased. As a result, the GNWT's flexibility to properly manage cash resources has eroded over time. Increasing the limit will make it easier to manage cash, especially if new infrastructure programs are announced by the federal government in the next three or four years. The GNWT will need to ensure that any borrowing under the Borrowing Authorization Act will still fit within the overall limit

provide by the federal government under the Northwest Territories Act (Canada).

There is some urgency to the proposed increase because we need to make a \$65 million corporate income repayment on March 31st that relates to an overpayment of corporate income tax from the 2007 tax year. In a sense, the \$65 million represents an interest-free loan from Canada that has come due and as a result will cause the GNWT to exceed its current short-term borrowing limit when the repayment is made on March 31st. The following day, April 1st, the GNWT will once again be within the current limit when it receives the first Territorial Formula Financing payment for 2012-13. This brief moment of being over the current limit is why we will be proposing introduction and passage of the amendment during the February 2012 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Although this proposal increases the short-term borrowing limit, the GNWT will, under its current fiscal strategy, start to recoup cash resources over the next few years and actual short-term borrowing requirements will therefore start to decrease. The increase will restore flexibility in our cash management and will not affect the GNWT's credit rating or factor into the discussions we are having with the federal government on the federally imposed borrowing limit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister of Energy Mines and Resources.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 7-17(2):
UPDATE ON BARREN GROUND
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the sacrifices of the barren ground caribou harvesters during the past several years have not been in vain.

Recent surveys indicate the Porcupine herd has increased from an estimated 123,000 animals in 2001 to 169,000 in 2010. The population estimate of the Bluenose-East herd has increased from 65,100 animals in 2006 to 98,600 animals in 2010.

Recent surveys point towards a stabilization of the Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-West herds, though overall numbers remain very low.

Reconnaissance surveys on the calving ground of the Ahiak herd in 2011 suggest that the herd is also stable but we are waiting for final results from the Government of Nunavut.

Preliminary results from last April's recruitment survey of the Bathurst herd show a 46 to 100 calf/cow ratio which is considered good and suggests that this herd has also stabilized. A similar survey done on the Bluenose-East herd indicates a 41 to 100 calf/cow ratio which is considered normal.

These are positive signs but we need to conduct population surveys to give us more concrete information on the status of these herds. Population surveys are therefore planned for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East and Bathurst herds this summer.

While good information on the status of the herds is an important part of management, so too is planning. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is working with our co-management partners and stakeholders to develop caribou management plans for all the NWT herds.

A Draft Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East Caribou Management Plan is in the final stages of public review, with final comments due by the end of this month. We are also engaging our co-management partners in developing a management plan for the Bathurst Caribou herd, with a goal of having a final plan this fall.

The results of this year's population surveys will be provided to our co-management partners and the public in the fall once the analysis has been completed.

The results of the surveys, the guidance provided by the management plans and recommendations on herd harvest levels from the wildlife management boards will allow us to re-examine current limitations on barren ground caribou harvesting.

All harvesters in the Northwest Territories have made sacrifices during the past seven or eight years. In the Beaufort-Delta, all harvest was suspended. Resident and non-resident harvesting was suspended in the rest of the territory while Aboriginal hunters limited their harvest substantially to help these herds recover.

The reduction in harvest has helped these herds to stabilize and, in some cases, increase. I thank everyone for their sacrifices and their commitment to maintaining healthy and sustainable barren ground caribou populations for current and future generations. I also look forward to ongoing collaboration and cooperation between everyone involved in the management of this important species. Thank you.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 8-17(2):
APPRENTICESHIP AND
OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATION

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, this government promotes the importance of trained and certified skilled journeypersons. We encourage our youth to consider skilled trades as a great career choice, and we celebrate the success of our apprentices and journeypersons.

Every year the Northwest Territories dedicates a week to those in the skilled trades and occupations. This year, Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Week is scheduled for February 6th to 10th. Each regional ECE Service Centre will host Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Award ceremonies for the 37 top mark awards achieved by our northern apprentices. Mr. Speaker, we thank our many partners and, particularly, northern employers. Without them, apprenticeship programs in our territory would not exist.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment commits funding to apprenticeship for both technical training for tuition and related training expenses, and job wage subsidies that assist employers in the Northwest Territories with their apprentices' wages.

From September to December 2011, the department issued 23 certificates of qualifications and eight certificates of competence to journeypersons in the Northwest Territories. Today there are 421 apprentices in the Northwest Territories. More than half of these apprentices are Aboriginal, but we still need more people in the skilled trades and occupations.

The vision for the 17th Assembly, believing in people and building on the strengths of Northerners, is the cornerstone of our apprenticeship and occupational trades program. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CLOSURE OF JOE GREENLAND CENTRE
IN AKLAVIK

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is almost a year since the government closed the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik to elders who cannot live independently. Now there is a lineup of elders waiting to go to the facility in Inuvik which serves the entire Beaufort-Delta region. I am not convinced

that the Inuvik facility can handle all the elders who need care. I am not convinced that sending the elders to Inuvik from the communities is the best way to care for them.

In my riding alone of the Mackenzie Delta there are more than 300 elders over the age of 60. They wonder what will happen to them if they can no longer take care of themselves.

In Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic there's only one home care worker in each community. Even if they can't stay at home, the elders themselves would rather live in one of the delta communities instead of Inuvik. That is because family and friends visit regularly and bring traditional food.

The Joe Greenland Centre is part of the social and cultural fabric of the delta. The community of Aklavik is proud of its role in taking care of our elders.

Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly agreed a year ago, they passed a motion to continue providing long-term care for elders at the Joe Greenland Centre. I know that our Health Minister supported that during the last Assembly when he was a Regular Member. For all these reasons I am asking the Health Minister to reverse his department's decision to end long-term care at the Joe Greenland Centre. I believe the current building can be renovated to meet the necessary standards, but if this is not possible, a new facility should be built.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FISHING INDUSTRY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As many of you know, Hay River is known for its long-standing history of fishing industry in the community. The industry is at one of its weakest points. The industry has many issues such as the price per pound that they can get for their catch, the price of gasoline and the limited amount of youth that want to work in that harsh of an industry.

One of the issues that has been debated is the marketing of northern fish, whether it be to the Fresh Water Marketing Corporation. Where else can we sell the fish that they catch in Hay River and the Great Slave Lake for the best dollar?

One area that I would like to open up to the fishermen is the NWT border. In today's economy with free trade, NAFTA, demands from provinces to open the borders to every province and territory, and even Europe wanting free trade, but the NWT fishermen cannot sell their fish to other provincial customers.

My questions today will be for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to open our borders for the fishing industry. We don't need to teach these people how to fish; we just need the NWT government to give the fishing industry a fighting chance.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TERMINAL ILLNESS COMPASSIONATE TRAVEL POLICY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister of Health and I did a tour in the Sahtu, we listened to the people in our communities of the Sahtu. One of the things that we heard was that people talked about cancer, people who are dying or have died of terminal illness, and they talked about a government compassion policy to help people at their last stages of their life. People talked about one of the hardest things they have encountered was when they take their family and loved ones to the airport not knowing if that would be the last time they're going to see them. If there's any type of policy in the government to help them be with their loved ones.

With the policy right now, we have to argue with the administrative medical travel to see if they fit the requirements. We asked if this government here could look at a policy that would be a compassionate policy that would support family members to travel either to Inuvik or to Yellowknife or even further south to be with their loved ones in their last dying days on this land here. The people talked about how hard it is. Sometimes they have to argue with government administrative offices to let them get on either as an escort, or they create some other barriers that just frustrates the people in our communities to travel with their loved ones.

What happens is that people go back to a time in history where a lot of our people went to Edmonton under the TB sickness and they have never seen their loved ones come back north. A lot of them are buried in the South. Today people are still talking about that, so it gets to be very emotional.

I want to ask the Minister later on what type of compassion policy the department has with people who have terminal disease and someone is dying, and what the family can do to help, and more importantly, how can the government help our people get down there on time with the people and stay with them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Colleagues, before we go on, I'd like to welcome long-time past Member Mr. David Krutko, a former Speaker, Minister and long-time serving Member for the Mackenzie Delta. Welcome.

---Applause

The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SECONDARY DIAMOND JEWELLERY INDUSTRY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our overall approach to development of a secondary diamond manufacturing industry has missed the opportunity to tap into the amazing artistry of our people. By pouring millions into a northern diamond cutting and polishing industry, we've gone head to head with global producers. Their competitive advantage of rock-bottom wage rates and established expertise has proven difficult to beat. In contrast, we have a strong local, regional and national market for art, foreign tourists looking for northern-made, authentic NWT souvenirs and a motherlode of talented but untapped artists to fill the demand.

Any cursory survey of our current artistic production – our painting, sculpting, fine crafts and designs – confirms the cadre of artistic talents equal to any on the globe. That's our competitive advantage.

What's been lacking is training in the skills and techniques of creating fine jewellery. Nunavut provides a successful example of combining northern skills with training in attractive silver and gold jewellery making. We see these beautiful products today in Arctic Co-operatives and other outlets. What we want to do is combine the proven artistic design talents of our unique northern artisans with the technical know-how to produce quality jewellery with a volume that modern technology allows.

I have no doubt that when unleashed with appropriate support, this product would develop a strong value-added market to our territorial and polar bear diamonds. We know that the diamond polishing route has been problematic. Let's respond and add the magic ingredient of our artists' vision.

One local highly successful producer of jewellery has been recognizing this opportunity and suggesting such training for years, and could provide some of the required training. Given that one of our diamond mines is a partnership with one of the world's prestigious jewellery producers, perhaps arrangements for local benefits could include access to these skills through training.

What I'm talking about is playing to strength, Mr. Speaker. Our artists' endless creativity and a northern artistic motif found nowhere else in the world; these are our strengths. As we enter into the business planning for our future ITI programs, I'll be looking for innovative support of this fertile sector and I'll be asking the Minister for his ideas on how we can make this happen. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING PROGRAM

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Breakfast for Learning program plays an important role in helping our children succeed in school, and I'm pleased that this government recognized them with a gift of \$5,000 following the most recent Governor General's visit.

Breakfast for Learning provides grants and support for school-based breakfast, lunch and snack programs. Last year Breakfast for Learning provided grants to 47 of the 49 schools in the Northwest Territories. More than half the students in the NWT had access to these nutrition programs on a daily basis.

When students are hungry, it is hard to learn. Nutrition impacts the student's ability to focus. It impacts their levels of fatigue. It impacts their classroom behaviour, their self-esteem and their classroom attitude. But most of all it impacts their health and their school attendance. We know that education opens doors, but the first step is to open the door to the schools and the classrooms.

This government is working hard to increase the schools' attendance and graduation rates. School meal and snack programs not only encourage students to get to school but they also help them learn once they are there.

Corporate donations and non-government agencies are keeping snack and breakfast programs running in our communities. By collaborating with organizations like Breakfast for Learning, we can maximize our efforts in supporting students. There currently exist a significant number of stakeholders that share a common desire to ensure that our children are well nourished and ready to learn.

We now need to solidify our collective efforts and establish shared goals and objectives while building on existing infrastructure and valuing work that has already been done.

Mr. Speaker, it is disheartening that in Canada one in 10 children and one in four First Nation children live below the poverty line. Those are national statistics and not NWT statistics. This places them at a risk for hunger and for food and security. At the same time, more than one in four children and youth in Canada are overweight and obese. While pairing hunger and obesity may sound like a contradiction, their impact is similarly devastating. The immediate and long-term consequences of childhood hunger plus overweight and obesity affect both the academic performance and the health of children.

Mr. Speaker, at this time may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement? Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Consequences range from inability to focus in school to behavioural issues. Combine these with the health conditions that were previously seen almost exclusively among adults but are now seen in children, such as high blood pressure, Type 2 Diabetes, high cholesterol and sleep apnea are all leading to a preventable health crisis, something that we can address here in the Legislative Assembly in this government. Recognizing the importance that nutrition plays in educating our children, we need to look for ways that we can ensure that children in our territory have daily access to healthy foods. School meal and snack programs are effective and measurable in this regard. Schools readily recognize the impact that hunger and poor choices have on learning, yet schools are forced to cobble together meal and snack programs, taxing already overburdened school staff to plan, shop for and prepare as well as serve the food. On top of this, schools are constantly having to source funds for these much needed programs.

Breakfast for Learning has been providing funding to the support of NWT schools since its inception in 1992. They are well recognized as leaders in the field of school nutrition. I am proud that our government brought public recognition to the work that they do. However, we must find additional ways to support their work and, by extension, school nutrition. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION OF FISHERMAN LAKE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak about the environment and the concerns of Fisherman Lake near Fort Liard. There is a difference between monitoring and remediation, just like there is a difference between a lake and a tailings pond. I have some concerns about the contamination of Fisherman Lake in the Pointed Mountain Gas Field near Fort Liard. This lake provides for seven families of Fort Liard. They have been there for generations. Groundwater, surface water and soil in the Fisherman Lake area, only 20 kilometres north of the hamlet, is contaminated after years of oil and gas activity, but remediation efforts seem sluggish.

Fisherman Lake has a long history of water quality concerns. Production drilling in the Pointed Mountain Gas Field started in the mid-1960s. The property has had various owners, the most recent being Apache Canada that took over from BP in 2010. Ten years ago the field was shut in after three flow line failures. Shortly afterwards, the wells were abandoned and the pipelines removed, but

surface and groundwater naturally flows towards Fisherman Lake.

Residents have noticed changes in the water and the fish five years after the spill. The environmental site assessment found high levels of solidicity, hydrocarbons and metals. Last summer Canadian Forest Oil re-entered two abandoned wells that test for gas reserves. Companies must submit waste disposal and remediation plans before the federal government can permit drilling. What are these plans? How are they being implemented and who will cover that cost? Annual site reporting, testing and inspection took place as recently as last fall as required in the existing land use plan, but BP Canada only authorized Apache to work under its land use and the plan expires in June of 2012, this year.

I understand that until we negotiate a strong Devolution Agreement, ENR can only take limited action to clean up Fisherman Lake. I urge the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to forward concerns about responsible remediation to federal regulators. Responsibility for land use plans must be clear to all stakeholders. Everyone has a role in being stewards to our land and resources and I will be asking the Minister questions on this topic at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDMONTON AIRPORT OPTIONS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Edmonton City Centre Airport is still facing closure, which will impact our medevac flights here from the North, but there is a viable alternative on the horizon. A well-known Edmonton city airport known as the Muni is facing closure, but the Province of Alberta has been working closely with the federal government to come up with a solution of using the old Edmonton Garrison airstrip, which is seven kilometres north of the city of Edmonton. The National Defence runway is located on a good transportation route, which connects to the Anthony Henday road, which rings it right into the centre of Edmonton.

Early indications say that this Garrison airstrip may be a cheaper, more practical solution for air carriers that are flying to Edmonton on medevac flights. Clearly, the option of flying into the Edmonton Garrison clearly warrants more investigation. At the same time, I'd like to hear our government taking a lead role in supporting this initiative.

The Edmonton Garrison may not be as close as the Muni Airport, but darn near close is considered a viable option. Yellowknife has had a close relationship with Edmonton over the years when it

comes to our medevacs. Last year Mayor Mandel came to the North on an invitation I had given him. I've spoken to Envision Edmonton, as well as many others. A lot of people want viable solutions for an airport there that provides good access. Hundreds of patients come from the North; they travel to that city every year, many with life-threatening conditions. The fact is every minute counts. So, safe, fast and effective medevac flights are critical when it comes to health care services.

May I remind the Minister of Health that medevacs are only one part of the continuum of health when it comes to this solution. We must look at the whole process as one problem and break it down to elements to see where we can help on all fronts of our medevac process.

Later today I will be urging the Health Minister to stay on top of this particular situation. I need to see that he is taking an active role and dialogue with the Province of Alberta, working to hopefully get the solution of the Edmonton Garrison once and for all to make sure that all Northerners who have to fly south on medevacs have a safe and reliable airport to land in, and clear access to good medical services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the GNWT departments are developing their business plans right now, I want to comment today on the importance of volunteers and volunteer groups, and I want to comment on the need for adequate funding for this most valuable human resource.

The GNWT seems to recognize the value of volunteers. We had a 2005 Declaration on Volunteering and a Volunteer Support Initiative. We all recognize the importance of volunteers, at least we should. The work of Northerners in the voluntary sector touches us daily. Volunteers and volunteer groups build communities through their work with community radio stations, carnivals, seniors, disability and youth groups, school councils, food banks, advocacy groups, churches, friendship centres, cultural activities, sporting events, daycares and many other services and programs that improve our lives.

Unfortunately though, our own government pays little more than lip service to the role of volunteers and the people in the voluntary sector. The GNWT has only two programs that focus on or support volunteers. One is the annual Outstanding Volunteer Awards, four of them, and the other is the Volunteer Organization Development Fund that provides funding for training up to \$4,000 per

organization. What the GNWT does not do is provide for coordinated umbrella support for NWT volunteers.

In 2008 when the federal government cut volunteer funding to provinces and territories, this government did not fill that financial void and Volunteer NWT ceased operations. Since 2008 no one has carried out the activities that Volunteer NWT used to do.

Contrast our commitment to that of the Yukon. Volunteer Yukon is alive and well, and has a long history of providing training services. It's Volunteer Yukon that provides public seminars and workshops on board roles and responsibilities, financial management, strategic planning, liability and risk management, and volunteer management. Their volunteer training fund allows individual organizations in Yukon's non-profit sector to hire their own trainer. Volunteer Yukon annually receives \$67,000 as core funding, funding which allows them to hire a part-time executive director. As well, Volunteer Yukon gets \$50,000 annually for programs and that's almost twice as much funding as the NWT, but it allows oh so much more support for non-profit organizations.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: Here in the NWT we also provide money for training purposes. What is missing is the core funding which would allow for enhanced training and centralized help for volunteers. Our hundreds of volunteers deserve the financial commitment to match our verbal commitment. I expect MACA's 2012-2013 business plan to include core funding for Volunteer NWT to show our commitment.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES RELATING TO GIANT MINE BYPASS PROJECT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will attest that this will not be the last time that I will be discussing this topic during my term in office. This topic is how this government has and is dealing with its procurement guidelines, negotiated contracts and sole-sourcing arrangements. What makes this so bitterly sweet is that my questions later today are for the very Minister whom not that long ago was the MLA champion of such nonsense, but we'll come back to that in a couple of minutes.

It's come to my attention via some very concerned businesses in my riding and the riding of Kam Lake that the Department of Transportation has entered into some preliminary negotiations with a group of proponents for the contract of the Giant Mine

Bypass Road Project. What's interesting is that this project was being fast-tracked and only recently, due to some pressure by some of the businesses not invited to the dance, has now gone back to the department and Minister for option consideration. I find that interesting.

Is it wrong for a business to be considered for a project? Is it wrong for a business to ask for an opportunity to do business for the public with the use of public funds and a transparent environment? We think not. I think the proper phrase people use here is opportunity, not exclusivity, as it pertains to one being faced against a negotiated or sole-sourced situation; a situation that happens all too often in the history of past Assemblies.

In the end I can stand here and quote the various passages in the GNWT procurement guidelines and procedures manual or I can use fancy terminology like negotiated contract, which really means sole-sourcing, or terms like building competitive capacity, which I think should be called government market disruption program. I won't stand here and regurgitate such a leading and misunderstood contracting process. Instead I wish to leave the Members here today with a statement, one of many statements that repeated itself countless times in Hansard and one that one could really not tally up, and a statement that might seem very familiar to a certain Minister here today as these are his words as a Regular Member: "When you do go to a sole-sourced way of acquiring goods and services, the transparency and accountability take a back seat. The people of the Northwest Territories deserve a better way of doing things. We are stewards of public funds and we can't forget that fact." I couldn't agree more.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES RELATING TO HAY RIVER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about a very frustrating flaw in our procurement policy. We hire engineering services for the Department of Transportation for transportation infrastructure on a standing offer agreement basis.

A constituent of mine, Darrell Dean, born and raised in Hay River, Aboriginal, owns a drilling company called Procore. This company has expended resources to buy equipment and hire employees to be involved in geotechnical work. Last winter and again this winter he has observed our government continuing to use the services of a southern company called Mobile Augers.

Mobile Augers is doing work for which my constituent had no opportunity to bid. The frustration is compounded by the fact that the GNWT work instigates their mobilization into the North from the South, and while already in the North they then start to clean up on the private work from the private sector because they're in the neighbourhood.

We as a government, with all our glowing claims of wanting jobs and economy in the North, can ill afford to be forfeiting any jobs to the South. Look at our Stats Can report on population. While my constituent is laying off his employees and his equipment is sitting idle, he has to drive by a southern competitor doing work in his home territory for which he had not even an opportunity to bid.

I took it upon myself to speak with officials in the Department of Transportation about this. What I was told is that the engineering services are awarded through a standing offer agreement and they have no control or say over who the engineering firm subcontracts to for geotechnical work. May I suggest, on the principles set out in other types of contracting methods, that northern content should play a large and decisive role in the consideration of proposals for engineering services. It appears that Transportation officials are acting within the policy but the policy is flawed. It's a glaring gap.

Again, in summary, we must support northern companies who live, pay taxes and hire people in the North. Later today I will be happy to question my friend Mr. Ramsay, Minister responsible.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize former Behchoko resident Peter Beggair who is here with us.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the former Member for Mackenzie Delta, David Krutko.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife Centre, the former Member for Mackenzie Delta and a guy that

could out-talk everybody in this Assembly, and certainly a guy who knows a heck of a lot of the goings on in the Northwest Territories, the one and only Mr. Krutko.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity one more time to recognize my constituency assistant Maia Lepage, doing great work here at the Assembly this week.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. I'd like to welcome all visitors in the public gallery here today who are taking an interest in our proceedings. Thank you and welcome. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 25-17(2):

CLOSURE OF JOE GREENLAND CENTRE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. How does moving elders from the Mackenzie Delta communities to Inuvik for long-term care fit with the government's priority to foster healthy and independent communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu. Members, Mr. Beaulieu has the floor. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The closure of the Joe Greenland building coincides with the government's plan to provide long-term care where the care can be provided best, where there were services available with doctors and nurses and so on. However, with the closure of the Joe Greenland building, the department has increased their support for elders in the community as well.

MR. BLAKE: Is the Minister willing to at least review the decision to end long-term care at the Joe Greenland Centre and come up with a plan that meets the needs of elders in the delta communities?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The department is always looking at better ways to provide services to the elders in the communities. An example is coinciding with the closure of the Joe Greenland Centre in Fort McPherson, we've upgraded the services that are being provided to the elders in – I'm sorry, not Fort McPherson but, rather, Aklavik. We used to do 139 visits annually and we've increased those visits to almost 700 visits to the elders and we added a

nurse to work with home care and one licensed practical nurse as well.

MR. BLAKE: At this time I have no further questions.

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

QUESTION 26-17(2):

PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES FOR HAY RIVER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement today, it seems that we have a gap in our procurement policies. Standing offer agreements can be offered to firms who can then turn around and subcontract southern companies to do work here in the Northwest Territories. I'm not sure if it's the Minister for which the work that I'm referring to is being done or if it's someone else on the other side that's responsible for this policy on standing offer agreements. I would like to know why standing offer agreements do not uphold the same standard of northern content that other contracts do.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That certainly is something that I believe the government can take a look at on the standing offer agreements. The situation that the Member speaks about in Hay River has been dealt with by departmental officials sitting down with the individual to get a better understanding of when that equipment was procured by that company. Hopefully going forward that company will be involved in any future procurement that requires that type of equipment in the South Slave.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: One of the features of a standing offer agreement is that it's in place for a period of time. Can the Minister tell us if standing offer agreements are usually in place for one year or for longer? Because I do appreciate that Mr. Dean has made the department now aware of his equipment, and his capacity and his ability to do this kind of work, but how long before an engineering company can be taken – not taken to task, that's the wrong word – can be held to account for making sure that they subcontract to northern contractors?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I agree with the Member that we have to ensure that the money we are spending, whether it's through standing offer agreements or other sources of procurement, is done so that it maximizes the benefits to the economy here in the Northwest Territories to local businesses. I want to assure the Member that this

is something that this government is going to continue to pursue.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Can the Minister assure me that no more standing offer agreements will be awarded by this government without clearly identifying what the northern content and the requirement for northern content is, and for procuring the services from northern contractors, that no more standing offer agreements will be let until this matter is resolved?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We hear the concerns from the Member for Hay River South very clearly and it's something that we'll take under consideration.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: At what point and through what vehicle, by what method do we Members on this side of the House get to be involved in the revision of the procurement policies of this government to ensure that Northerners get the work and get the jobs?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I think as we move forward there will be ample opportunity for Cabinet to work with the Regular Members to do just that and I look forward to the Regular Members' participation in that policy review that will take place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 27-17(2):

SUPPORT FOR NWT FISHING INDUSTRY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I made a speech on my Member's statement about the fishing industry in Hay River, I'd like the Minister of ITI to maybe let me know if they've had any discussions about opening the NWT borders. We have, throughout the country, everybody wanting to open the borders through NAFTA and through European agreements. Are they looking at that availability for fishermen to sell out to the other provinces?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. I think the department is very interested in finding a way to do just that. The FFMC has gone through a corporate review. There's a meeting in a couple weeks' time where some of these recommendations will be presented. There are jurisdictions looking to pull out. Back in 2010, the NWT fishermen voted to stay within that organization. I do think that, going forward, we need to find a better way to get things

done and work with the fishermen and the industry here in the Northwest Territories to maximize those opportunities. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I'm aware of the discussion on Freshwater. My concern is the availability to allow fishermen in the Northwest Territories to go out on their own and market in those areas. Some believe that BC and Alberta may be areas to expand. My question is: Has the department been working on other marketing of the fish along with Freshwater, I guess?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: ITI has been working on promotion and support of commercial harvesting, processing, and marketing of fish and meat program that we have here in the Northwest Territories. It's designed to increase the availability of locally produced healthy food in NWT communities. We've done some of that work such as a holding facility and processing facility in Kakisa. We've also renovated a building at Wool Bay and are looking at mobile processing facilities in the Sahtu. Any opportunity that we get to enhance the ability for people that are harvesting fish in the Northwest Territories to get it to not just a market outside the Northwest Territories but to markets here in the NWT, we're interested in pursuing that. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: That goes right in line with my next question. Is the department working with all the other departments within the government to ensure that these types of fish products from the Northwest Territories are in the jails, in the hospitals, in the schools? Are they working to market in those areas?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The short answer is yes. This is an important aspect and will be an important aspect of a future economic development strategy here in the Northwest Territories that would include an industry like the fishing industry, again, so we can maximize the opportunities and get fish to market both locally and south of our border.

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

QUESTION 28-17(2):

SECONDARY DIAMOND JEWELLERY INDUSTRY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement today, keeping the Minister of Transportation and ITI, ITI in this case, busy today. I'd like to start by seeking the Minister's statement of principled support for the issue I raised earlier. I know ITI's SEED program identifies value-added manufacturing as a priority sector for program support, so promoting value-added manufacturing is definitely government policy. In this case, does the Minister see the diamond jewellery industry as value-added opportunity and support the development of training

programs in the skills of producing fine jewellery incorporating our world-class diamonds with our northern artistic talent? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back to the election campaign in the fall, in my election material I had specifically stated in there support for the northern jewellery manufacturing industry. I think, going forward, we have to try to find a way to create jobs in the small communities. In my mind, jewellery manufacturing is one way to accomplish that. They've met with a great deal of success in looking at jewellery manufacturing in northern Russia, in small communities. I think, you know, if we put our minds to it, we can come up with a program that's going to allow us to move forward with a jewellery manufacturing program. Maybe we could start in one community and try to branch out from there. Some of the best jewellery makers in the world started out as carvers. We've got an abundance of those here in the territory and very talented ones. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I look to the Aurora College calendar and I see a traditional arts program which offers a three-month hands-on course providing the skills to create and market high quality Aboriginal arts and crafts for local, national and international markets, so again, I see an opportunity here for a similar diamond jewellery program, and apparently the Minister does too. I'm glad to hear it. I appreciate that support.

Will the Minister commit to working with his colleague, the Minister of ECE, perhaps including inquiries of Harry Winston Diamonds on the development of a diamond jewellery skills program right here in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe in getting some work done very quickly on that and working with my colleague not just in ECE but my Cabinet colleagues. We're going to have to try to find money as we go forward. If we're going to do a pilot project or something to that effect, we'll have to work with the Members and come up with a plan on how best to start that jewellery manufacturing. I could see it including diamonds and also other metals that are produced here in the Northwest Territories. I look forward to doing that. It's something I really believe in. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks again to the Minister for those remarks. Of course, the reason I'm focusing on diamonds is because we are already unsuccessfully spending millions and millions of dollars on trying to get a value-added industry, so I'm talking about taking some of those unsuccessful dollars and shifting them into a successful program. Again, the Minister mentioned it's tough to do this.

You know, a real partner might be Harry Winston, because, of course, if we were successful they'd be selling a lot more diamonds.

Of course, our greatest resource here is the artists. Will the Minister commit to ensuring that there is a wide invitation and support for the involvement of our artists from all regions in the investigation and development of any programming? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: You don't develop a program and get it off the ground without seeking the input of the stakeholders involved, and that would include, obviously, the artists in the territory. Again, it's not something that is going to magically appear in all the small communities out there. I think we have to be strategic in how it's done and try to at least get something started. Again, I do look forward to doing that. I've had some initial discussions with the department and we have to find a way forward. I thank the Member for raising those concerns in the House today. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks again to the Minister. I know that he's onto this. Finally, in the consultation aspect of it, obviously we need to produce products that meet the needs of our sales outlets. In developing any training program we need to start modestly, perhaps one or two artists from each region or something, as the Minister said. Will the department include consultations with the retailers and wholesalers so that skills can be developed to produce a range of products that are relevant and well designed for the marketplace? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, I think that's an important part of this or an aspect to this. We need to talk to industry, as well, in preparation for a program, a pilot project, whatever it may end up being, but certainly, they'll play a part in that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 29-17(2):
MORATORIUM ON EVICTIONS DUE TO
PUBLIC HOUSING ARREARS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are going to be a follow-up on a moratorium that was brought forth to us earlier or actually towards the end of our last session. It is for the Minister of Housing in regards to the short-term moratorium on evictions due to public housing arrears. I just want to get an update from the Minister on how many tenants were in arrears or actually getting caught up on their rental payments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was recently a meeting held in Yellowknife with all the LHO managers across the Northwest Territories. One of the items discussed was the moratorium. At the time, it was noted that of the 20 people that were facing eviction, none of them have actually come forward and entered into a repayment plan. It is not going as well as we would have liked. We have two months left. We are hoping there is not a rush at the end and hoping that people start dealing with it right now. That way, we are not faced with mass evictions come April 1st. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: As the Minister stated, we have less than two months to get our orders in place here to have more tenants get their orders in place and get caught up on their arrears or come into a payment plan. Has the department looked at an action plan to help these tenants who are in arrears to get into an action plan to get their payments back on schedule? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: In communicating with tenants of the public housing portfolio, they were asked to come into the LHO and work out a repayment plan. I am not sure if we are following up with that, but right now the opportunity is there for them to work with our LHOs, enter into repayment plans and honour them, and come April 1st there is a possibility that they would be able to stay in their units. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, as stated in the moratorium, on April 1, 2012, the NWTHC will once again be carrying out its evictions. We have a number of tenants who have not got into a payment plan. Is the Minister of Housing committed to possibly having their LHOs go out and speak with these individuals? In some cases we may have some individuals who have some language barriers or some mobility issues. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we would do the best we can to try and work with all of these tenants, those with language barriers. We are more than willing to work with them so they understand the whole process. The same thing goes with mobility issues. If there are mobility issues, we are more than willing to work with them.

Again, we have a lot of tenants that don't face these challenges. The onus is on them to come into the LHOs and try and work out repayment. Part of the duties of our LHOs is they try to communicate with the tenants as much as possible. This is one of those cases where the tenants would be wise to come into the LHOs. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This last question deals with the tenants that have not gone into a repayment plan. Do we have a number of tenants across the Northwest Territories who will possibly become evicted April 1st that will result in some of our other programs being accessed such as income support? Does he have a number of tenants that are possibly going to be evicted come April 1st? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, right now we stand at about 20. The number was at 36. We are at 20 right now. There could possibly be more. We are encouraged by the fact that there were many people that were non-payers, as far as rent goes, before this moratorium came into place. A lot of them are actually stepping up to the plate and entering into repayment plans or working with their LHOs. There has been some positive news come out of this. Those that have always paid their rent are continuing to pay their rent. There has been some positive come out of this, but again we are hoping we are not facing mass evictions come April 1st because we have given people every opportunity to come in and enter into a repayment plan. Unfortunately, it is not working out the way we would have liked. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 30-17(2):
ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION
OF FISHERMAN LAKE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to follow up on my Member's statement wherein I spoke about Fisherman Lake just across from Fort Liard and the contamination that is present. I would like to ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, it has been on the agenda for some time for Fort Liard and the residents. It is almost 30 years there. During my recent visit to Fort Liard, the concern of the families there is that it has been contaminated. What type of mitigation efforts, what type of ongoing monitoring is happening in Fisherman Lake?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a project that is on federal land and regulated by the federal government. We have a marginal role, as the Member pointed out, due to the fact that that responsibility is a federal responsibility, and should the day come with devolution, we would be able to have a much more fulsome and thorough discussion. We review their plans if the remediation plans are available on their website doing their testing. There has been testing done in 2011. The Member's point is well taken. It is a long existing project and there are concerns as

he indicated. The steps that are being taken fall within the requirements under their land use plan. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: When it comes to the water and the fish that is in that lake, there is potential contamination of that as well. What can this government do to work to get the water also tested and monitored? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We monitor and track what is being done. We work with federal agencies and officials to ensure that they take the right steps. There are the concerns that the Member has stated. We have, as well, our own officials, as I indicated, that will work with the federal government keeping in mind still that they have the lead role to play here. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: All this contamination will affect about seven families, not to mention all the users from Fort Liard. I would like to highlight this as a grave concern for the community. I would like to ask the Minister how can the community act on highlighting this with the federal government to ensure that it is a priority on the federal agenda. What steps can we take to heighten the awareness of this contaminated area? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, having the Member stand up in the House to voice their concerns is a good way to do it, but in the long term the Member himself has observed the key way to get control of these matters and these issues is to sign the Devolution Agreement and take over that authority or responsibility. There is a separate chapter under remediated sites that would allow us to make sure that work is done. It would be a federal responsibility, but once we have the authority, we can make sure of the legal ability to go after the federal government to ensure that they honour their responsibility. If the Member stands up and says that devolution is going to help us sort this out, the leadership in the Deh Cho say we have to take over control over land, water and resource planning because looking to the future, we want to avoid these various situations. That is the surest, most imminent way to make those significant changes. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am well aware of the government's intent to have devolution for our northern territory, but I think the most important thing for the residents of Fort Liard is to address their serious environmental concerns that are affecting their people. I would like to ask the Minister once again how can we raise and heighten the awareness of the environmental concern of Fisherman Lake for the residents of Fort Liard. It could be up to and including a public inquiry. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We will be following up based on this discussion in this House. There are officials from all levels of government that listen closely to the debate here. I am completely and fully serious when I talk about the benefit and the ability for us to do this job properly being greatly enhanced within the next very few years and within the life of this Assembly, as a matter of fact, to be able to have that transfer over to the Government of the Northwest Territories so that we don't have to have the discussion about a third order of government that has their headquarters in Ottawa. It's very real, it's very imminent and it's very doable. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 31-17(2):
EDMONTON AIRPORT OPTIONS
FOR MEDEVAC SERVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. In my Member's statement today I talked about medevacs and I need not remind anyone in this House how important those services are. A lot of Northerners depend on them and it's more than just lip service when I say that in a lot of cases it is life or death on those medevac services. So of course time is very important.

Yesterday I was speaking to someone which has caused the reason why I need to make today's statement to talk about medevacs. I found out that Deputy Premier Doug Horner of Alberta is moving towards the Edmonton Garrison solution for the medevac problem on the pending closure of the Muni Airport.

My question to the Minister of Health and Social Services is: Is his department willing to get behind this particular initiative, work with the Province of Alberta, work with the City of Edmonton and lobby the federal government so that Edmonton Garrison can be turned over to the Alberta government as a viable solution for medevacs? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although the department and the Government of the Northwest Territories has no official role with the Alberta government in these deliberations, we do understand preliminary discussions have occurred between the government and the Department of National Defence on the possibility of using the Namao strip, which is the Garrison strip. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Last term our government did mention or at least talked about their somewhat willingness and participation in the Health Quality Council in Alberta in their dialogue

and overview of services, and the Alberta province itself says until we have a solution we won't be closing the Muni. This is a solution, but part of that relationship would be that the Health Council of Alberta is the Northwest Territories government through the Minister of Health's office was formulating some relationship on this particular subject and it may have been weak, but at the same time they were still involved. That said, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he will take an active role on this particular file to make sure that the northern voices are heard and protected when it comes to medevac services.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The discussions that I was referring to were discussions about the Garrison Airport. As far as the airport and the Edmonton City Centre Airport, one runway is shut down, but medevacs are continuing to use that airport. The only time the medevacs are diverted to the International Airport at this time is because of weather. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. The fact is we have a missed opportunity. We're going to have to go wherever they present us. Well, let's be part of the solution when I say where they present us. That means if they're going to tell us what airport we can send our medevacs to, we should be on the front of this problem rather than just being told at the very end of the equation and that's kind of what I'm getting at with the Minister of Health and Social Services here. We need to get involved in the solution to ensure that northern needs are taken care of; otherwise we're going to have to put up with whatever they give us.

That said, I once again ask the Minister of Health and Social Services will he be willing to take an active role in finding out what's going on and perhaps even join the deputy premier of Alberta on lobbying DND, that's the Department of National Defence, so they'll turn over the Edmonton Garrison for Capital Health of Alberta to ensure that our medevacs arrive safe and in a timely way in Edmonton. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The Department of Health in the Northwest Territories is involved with this and had been involved, but this is a relatively new development and we know that that airport could be a viable alternative to the International, but we know that it also requires upgrades and we do believe that it warrants full consideration. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister saying to this House that they're now involved in this particular observation and discussion and evaluation of the Edmonton Garrison solution? I think it is a viable solution and I just want to make sure our government is involved

in the final decision. Even if it's a small voice on there, it needs to be a voice at that table. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. As I indicated earlier, we play no official role but we are aware of the discussions. We're staying in the loop, but we haven't engaged officially either with the National Defence or any involvement with the City of Edmonton at this time. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 32-17(2):

UPDATE ON VOLUNTEER SUPPORT INITIATIVE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs and I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement. Since Volunteer NWT folded, I think most non-profit and non-government organizations in the NWT have found it much more difficult to do their job. They have volunteer boards and they have less volunteers to work with. I think it's been a loss to all of the NWT in the fact that they can't provide the same services to the effectiveness that they could before when Volunteer NWT was alive and well.

I'd like to ask the Minister, I noted on MACA's website that the Volunteer Support Initiative Action Plan is listed there. It's dated Action Plan 2005-2008. The last Volunteer Support Initiative status report was dated 2006-2007. I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not there is any document that exists other than what's posted on the website with regards to the Volunteer Support Initiative that is more up to date. Has there been any activity on the part of MACA to do updates and to do work on the Volunteer Support Initiative? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The final report on the Volunteer Support Initiative is expected in the fall of 2012. So we're hoping to get that out by the fall and it will be an update to the past work that's been done. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thank you. That didn't really go very far to answering my question about what kind of activities have been in the works, but I'll wait anxiously for the updated report.

From my information, MACA's volunteer budget this year is some \$263,000, and that, I understand, goes to staffing and management of the two programs that I mentioned, but only \$70,000 of that \$263,000 goes to the actual programs. It would seem to me that it would be possible for the department to re-profile \$50,000 out of that \$263,000 so that we could have a Volunteer NWT

back in business. I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not he would be able to see his way through that. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. Volunteer has a budget of \$150,000 in the past year and that goes out to help support a lot of the volunteer groups under that particular umbrella organization. As well, the volunteer organization development contribution increased from \$20,000 to \$70,000. Again, our preference would be to put money right into the volunteer groups themselves and not in an umbrella organization. However, we're coming up to a business planning process and it's an issue, obviously, that the Member will raise and it's something that we'd be more than willing to listen to. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'm hoping that he's listening now as I raise this issue. I agree that certainly, and I was very pleased to see that the department has increased the contributions to volunteer organizations from \$20,000 to \$70,000, but without a coordinator, without a centralized person to assist organizations, they lack the ability to do the training that is needed for volunteers that allows our NGOs to do the business that they need to do for us. So if the Minister at this point, as he seems to have indicated that \$50,000 is not available to reinstitute Volunteer NWT, what can the Minister suggest he could do to get Volunteer NWT back up and running? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I can assure the Member that the Minister is listening, and the Minister is listening also to other voices from across the NWT. I've heard nothing, really, on Volunteer NWT. They're pleased with some of the volunteer support that they're given; however, Volunteer NWT provided a service that was required by some organizations. We'd not be willing to commit money at this point; however, as I mentioned to the Member, we are going through a business planning process where it would be an opportunity for the Member or Members to raise any monies that they would like to see put towards Volunteer NWT again. As I said before, we're listening and we'd be more willing to listen further.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I'm really pleased to hear his assurance that he's listening and I can assure the Minister that, yes, I will raise this issue when we review business plans.

If the department doesn't feel that half a PY or some kind of human resource is necessary for Volunteer NWT, is there any hope that the Minister may see his way to increase the \$70,000 going to the various organizations could be increased so that it could go to more than the 17 organizations – or, sorry, 16 I guess it was last year who were able

to access it. I'm sure there's a lot more organizations who would access it if they could.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Obviously it is something that we would have to look at. If we're getting more requirements or needs for the money that we have, or more demands, then it's something that I think as an organization, as a department that we would have to have a look at and see how we can best support those groups that are actually out there delivering these programs to their communities. We understand the importance of volunteerism and every one of us in here has volunteered at one time or another. We need to ensure that we do our part in assisting volunteers as much as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 33-17(2):
PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES FOR
HIGHWAY NO. 4 REALIGNMENT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I alluded to in my Member's statement today, I will be asking the Minister of Transportation questions today on sole sourcing and the methodologies or process management policies he and his department will be using for projects such as the Giant Mine bypass and projects for the coming years.

Bottom line, I have a bit of trouble understanding the rationale when the government decides in its best interest of public funds to sole source contracts and when not to. My first question to the Minister today is: Under what circumstances can the Department of Transportation, deputy minister, Minister and Cabinet award contracts without some sort of competitive process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we have an obligation to ensure that all the information is on the table, that we maximize the opportunities for local involvement in projects, and I want to assure the Member that no decision has been made on how this realignment project will be delivered. It isn't being fast-tracked. I think I heard the Member say it was being fast-tracked during his Member's statement. This project has been in the works for several years. It isn't being fast-tracked, nor will the procurement delivery model that will ultimately be decided upon by Cabinet be quickly or fast-tracked to arrive at.

MR. DOLYNNY: So in the case of Highway No. 4 Giant Mine Bypass Road Project, I won't use the word fast-tracked but I'll say perceived rush to have started on the pathway of a negotiated contract and

then later removed for consideration by Cabinet Ministers. Can the Minister explain that process?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again, I don't believe we are in a rush. I think we are getting a little bit behind schedule when it comes time to make a decision on procurement on the realignment of Highway No. 4.

Again, this project has been in the mix now for several years. Construction was to begin in the winter/spring of this year to be completed by this fall. We're moving now to look at a construction start date sometime in April.

We need to find out the best way to maximize the benefits to the economy of the Northwest Territories. We're interested, as your colleague Mrs. Groenewegen stated in her questions to me, in trying to ensure that the money that is spent stays in the North as much as possible, and the jobs and opportunities and training are going to local people. All those things will be put on the table and ultimately Cabinet will have to make a decision on the best way to proceed with the procurement of the realignment of Highway No. 4 and that will happen in due course.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the Minister's response on that. To dig a little further here, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister, did the proponents in this case approach the GNWT, or did the GNWT approach the proponents for this project?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe it was the former, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for clarifying that, Mr. Minister. My fear on the subject is now that we're waiting for the Cabinet and Minister to rule on whether to have what's in everyone's mind an open and transparent process, and because the House will not reconvene until May 23rd of this year, which is well into the spring construction season, can we expect to have the Department of Transportation or the Minister confirm their decision to open this public project to public tendering before the end of this next week's sitting?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: A decision on procurement will be made by Cabinet sometime this month. To the dates, I wouldn't want to pin it down to a certain date, but certainly by the end of the month we will have a way forward on the procurement of the Highway No. 4 realignment, at which time we'll gladly convey that to the Members of this House.

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

QUESTION 34-17(2):
EDMONTON AIRPORT OPTIONS
FOR MEDEVAC SERVICES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my questions that were posed by Mr. Hawkins from Yellowknife Centre with respect to that welcome news that we read in the media recently that there is an alternate airport to the Municipal Airport being contemplated as a landing point for medevacs out of the North, that being the Garrison. Now, I can't say that I heard every single answer that Mr. Beaulieu provided, but might I suggest that the cooperation and the agreement... The contract between our government and the Alberta Health Services for medical service for our NWT residents in Alberta is an extremely integral piece of the infrastructure of the services that we provide to Northerners. I'd like to ask the Minister if he is going to take a proactive role in the discussions to identify a more suitable landing location for medevacs from the North than the Edmonton International Airport and pursue this idea of the Garrison Airport and be involved in that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the discussion previously that involved the Municipal Airport and International Airport, the GNWT provided input to the Health Quality Council last winter. From the Territories we had our deputy minister, the Stanton Senior Management Team, we had the Joint Senior Management Council representative, we had a medical director, we had the emergency physician and personnel representative. We also had representatives from the medical travel people involved with this. So we have been involved in that discussion. This is a relatively new thing and we're aware of some of the information but we haven't engaged at this time.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: From anything that I heard, and I don't pretend to be a professional or extremely knowledgeable in this area, however, from anything I heard, the time between getting people from the International Airport to the hospitals that are in city centre, basically, was a concern. The time factor, if weather was an issue, the ground transportation, these were all concerns. If there is an alternate landing site for medevacs coming out of the North, will the Minister ensure that he puts his voice forward in promoting something that may well be in the interests of Northerners travelling?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, as I indicated earlier, we feel that this airport at Garrison deserves, warrants full consideration and I will ensure that the Department of Health does fully consider this as a viable option for landing.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'm sure that the Alberta Health Services is very interested in having a say in

this as well. Certainly, we do spend millions of dollars on a contract with them and they give us excellent service and have over the years. This Municipal Airport closure is something that could prove to be problematic. I would like to ask the Minister if his department would not be bystanders in this discussion but will really put some resources into examining the viability of this Garrison alternative and take the first step and a proactive step to determine if that is a better solution than Edmonton International Airport.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we will contact the appropriate people. My understanding is the Department of National Defence are the owners of the strip and we'll be in touch with them to see if this is a viable option for medevac flights.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Colleagues, before we continue I'd like to welcome back Ms. Regina Pfeiffer, former analyst with the Legislative Assembly research branch and current executive director of the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories. Welcome back, Regina. It's always good to see you. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 35-17(2):

TERMINAL ILLNESS COMPASSIONATE TRAVEL

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I spoke about the need for a compassionate policy and I want to ask the Minister what special accommodations, if any, does the health system make when a person is dying of a terminal illness.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time the various health and social services authorities approach this from different angles. We don't have a standard policy across the board from the various health and social services authorities at this time on handling the area of compassion.

MR. YAKELEYA: Would the Minister work with his department and the government to see if there is a way to look at a compassionate policy that would handle situations such as this and this nature to help out the people in our communities?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we have, based on some recent deaths and how we recognize that the authorities are handling the compassion, the assistance to the families and so on. We've looked at a policy that was once developed but never signed by a particular health authority and we are looking at that to develop a policy for the sick, dying and also in the area of compassion.

MR. YAKELEYA: Would the Minister of Health and Social Services look at this policy, this compassion policy we have within the next, say, before the business plan so that we can have some discussions with the appropriate committee and see if it meets the needs of the people? Bring forth the policy maybe by May or June, if that's possible.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The intention was to look at this right away. The direction has been given to the department through the deputy minister and other senior management to look at this policy, and if I know the department and senior management well, I am expecting some drafts soon. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 36-17(2): EDMONTON AIRPORT OPTIONS FOR MEDEVAC SERVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Member Groenewegen picking up on this medevac issue. The Minister, earlier today in some of my questions, had pointed out that his department has no involvement and no role, so all that boils down to is simply that it's none of NWT's business. But the fact is, medevacs landing safe in a good way, in a timely way in Alberta are very important and we should be having an active role. We're really faced with a complexity here. We can either be driving the bus on this issue, we can be behind the bus on this issue, or we can take the Minister's approach, which sounds like we're under the bus as it keeps on going by.

I'm asking the Minister how much money does the Northwest Territories, through the Department of Health and Social Services, spend in Alberta health. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the exact amount but I do know that if we're talking about medical travel, medevac planes landing in Alberta, we land there approximately 350 times a year.

MR. HAWKINS: Although the Minister didn't answer the question, I will thank him for the point he emphasizes, that we need that service in the size and the magnitude of the problem. That's only just one element. We've got lots of health services that go there. My point being is that we have an active role and you'd think as their client that they would be very interested in our opinion. I'd like to reaffirm my question, similar to Mrs. Groenewegen's earlier, which is: What type of active role is this Minister going to take in this particular problem and will he join the lobby effort

by the Alberta government to get DND to turn over the Edmonton Garrison as the medevac solution? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, as I said to the other Member asking questions, yes, we will take an active role in this process. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Will the Minister commit to do this and report back to the House on his particular activities as well as report to standing committee? Because this is an active issue and many Northerners care. Will he make that commitment? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, I would be more than willing to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 37-17(2):

REVIEW OF BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of ITI. We were talking about procurement. Can he inform me when the last review of the Business Incentive Policy was completed?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was done last year.

MR. BOUCHARD: My question is about the involvement as we discussed about the... I think Mr. Dolyunny had also discussed about the involvement of northern companies in government contracts. Is there a way to maximize those? We have some of the big projects: the Mackenzie Valley, the Tuk to Inuvik highway coming forward. Is there a way that we can maximize through procurement the northern content in those projects?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: To a large extent, socioeconomic agreements and IBAs cover off a great deal of that. I think, as a government, we have to continue to again maximize opportunities for local companies and persons looking for employment here in the Northwest Territories wherever possible, and we will continue to do that. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question is concerning the northern manufacturing policy along with the BIP. Has that part of that policy been reviewed as well?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That was recently updated as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 38-17(2): CARIBOU OUTFITTERS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment, talked about an update on the barren ground caribou management and a particular question that's come regularly from the constituency is the outfitter problem. We can see significant growth in the population of the herds. I'd like to ask the Minister of ENR when the outfitters can expect to get back into the business of providing outfitting opportunities. Because the caribou setback and moratorium had done considerable damage to the reputation of the North, and certainly these outfitters are bleeding when it comes to financial support, because they have had to shut their lodges down. When can the Minister of ENR expect to lift the ban so these folks can get back to business?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I tried to indicate in my Minister's statement this afternoon, once the surveys are done and the information has been collated, we will share that information with the co-management boards. We will share it with the stakeholders and the public. At that time we will be able to see what the information tells us and if we, in fact, have room to move in terms of adjusting any of the restrictions. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: That still leaves the outstanding question as to when can we expect that type of result to be publicly delivered. These outfitters are sitting, waiting patiently. Their outfitting lodges are in mothballs. You know, they still have to pay the mortgages and they're sitting there without any revenue. They've been sitting patiently a long time as partners to this problem. When can we expect that type of answer to be delivered?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: In the fall of 2012, once the work has been done and the results are before us, we'll make sure we collectively look at that information and make that determination. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: If we're waiting until the fall into 2012, which is obviously still good. I mean, it's good to hear that we're going in the right direction, how are we supposed to work with the ITI counterparts about getting out there, from an outfitter point of view, of selling some of these packages? Is there any way to work early with these outfitters and draw some early indications so they can actually get out there, sell their packages and get back to business, which, by the way, brings a lot of money into our economy? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: It's only with the most current information before us that we'll be able to sit down in the fall and determine whether there is an ability to re-examine the current limitations and make any adjustments that may be appropriate, based on that information. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 39-17(2):
DIABETES PROGRAMS IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what type of programs are there for people in the Sahtu that are dealing with diabetes.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The health authorities had run diabetes programs and so on. I recognize that recently a diabetes program was shut down, but the services right now are basically in consultation with the health professionals in the various communities in the Sahtu at this time. That is what is available.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can the Minister tell me and tell the House what type of programs the Department of Health and Social Services are working on with other community agencies or partnerships with the Northern Store or the Co-ops to support people who have to deal with diabetes?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Diabetes is a chronic disease. The department does have the medication needed for chronic disease that is available to the people. Also the home care for individuals that have diabetes, a home care worker will go in and do work in...

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to remind the Members on the sidebar conversations that Mr. Beaulieu has the floor. He is answering the Member. Mr. Beaulieu, you may continue.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The home care people will work with the feet of elders, especially elders with diabetes and so on and also trying to work with programs such as advising people with diabetes on activity and also diet. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: There has been an increase of diabetes in the Sahtu and in our smaller communities. I want to ask the Minister to continue this type of support that he just talked about, working with the Northern Stores, working with the Co-op to bring in some of their diet supplementary foods that people can purchase in these local stores to help them with the disease of diabetes. Does the Minister have a strategy with the local

stores to bring in supplies that would help people with diabetes?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Member is right; diabetes is increasing by 200 people per year in the Northwest Territories. That is pretty extreme for a small population. We are developing a Diabetes Strategy. This is something the department is doing.

Currently we do various programs in the schools where we're teaching kids about healthy choices and looking at their lunches and so on, discouraging any drinks or any type of food that has a high content of sugar and sodium, so we are trying to promote in the schools for the kids to eat a good, healthy lunch that includes lots of vegetables and fruit. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My mother had diabetes. She died because of diabetes so it is very close to me that this program here has the attention that is needed. There are people in the Sahtu that do have it today, people in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister tell me if this diabetes program we have now will receive a little more priority in terms of bringing programs into our communities that will give some indication to some early screening for our people in the communities that may not know that they are getting signs that diabetes could come into their life?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This very important item for the department is part of our overall prevention strategy. We have had discussions at a national level on childhood obesity which leads to diabetes among other things. Not only is this something that we are paying attention to in the Northwest Territories, but really it is a national issue. We are all on board and we all want to see a decrease in diabetes. It is a very bad disease. Many people have died from diabetes in the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 9, written questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 1-17(2):
DIABETES RATES AMONG SAHTU RESIDENTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. Can the Minister provide the rate of diabetes among Sahtu residents for 2003?
2. Can the Minister provide the rate of diabetes among Sahtu residents for 2001 or the most recent year for which the data is available?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Lafferty.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 9-17(2):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION 2012 CORPORATE PLAN

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Corporate Plan 2012." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 10-17(2):
BUYING A CONDOMINIUM: A USER'S GUIDE

TABLED DOCUMENT 11-17(2):
OWNING A CONDOMINIUM: A USER'S GUIDE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents, entitled "Buying a Condominium: A User's Guide" and "Owning a Condominium: A User's Guide." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 1-17(2), An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading with Bill 1, an Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is seeking consent for the second reading of the bill.

---Consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you can conclude.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act, be read for the second time.

This bill increases the allowance that may be borrowed by the Commissioner to ensure that the Consolidated Revenue Fund is sufficient to meet the lawful disbursements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Bill 1-17(2), An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act, has had second reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 1 moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister is seeking unanimous consent to move this bill into Committee of the Whole.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 1-17(2) is moved into Committee of the Whole.

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 1-17(2), Interim Appropriation 2012-2013; Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012; Tabled Document 3-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012; and Bill 1-17(2), An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of matters before us. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 1-17(2).

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. We'll do that after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are still dealing with Tabled Document 1-17(2), Interim Appropriation 2012-2013. Yesterday when we had left off, we had dealt with all the departments with the exception of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 2-17(2):
RESUME CONSIDERATION OF ITEM NO. 11,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
INTERIM APPROPRIATION 2012-2013,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee resume consideration of item 11, Department of Transportation, contained in Tabled Document 1-17(2), Interim Appropriation 2012-2013, summary of interim appropriations found on page 3. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion has been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called.

---Carried

Department of Transportation, as per your documents it is item number 11. Appropriation authority required, \$29.848 million. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In order to conclude this process, I would request permission to go to the witness table and bring in some witnesses.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort Mr. Miltenberger's witnesses to the witness table.

I'll ask Mr. Miltenberger if he'll please introduce his witnesses for the record.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. From the Department of Finance I have with me the deputy minister, Mike Aumond, and the director of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Olin Lovely.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Department of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In the previous day's deliberations in Committee of the Whole, I was asking some questions on Highway No. 7 and the plan for the department to deal with the conditions on Highway No. 7, fixing it up. I know that some of the issues have been because of lack of capital dollars and I continue to remain frustrated that there were zero dollars allocated in the 2012-13 Capital Budget as it stands.

Another issue that I do have is that there are appropriations in the interim budget and in our budget for operations and maintenance of Highway No. 7, but myself, my constituents and communities continue to be frustrated that the expenditures are done in August and September during the rainy season. It's late in the season and I've continued being at the table; I've been in the House saying look, we've got to spend the money early. I get verbal commitments that the money will be expended earlier so that we can address some of the highway conditions and get it done early in the season. But that's been falling on deaf ears.

So, once again, in yesterday's deliberations I asked for a plan for Highway No. 7. I'm pleased that I did get a note from the Finance Minister's office, but the plan that they indicate for me for Highway No. 7 is to monitor conditions during the spring, and that's not something that either me or my constituents wanted to hear. I'd like to know when will they be constructing, what will they be constructing, and I'd like to have a firm written commitment that they'll do this construction early in the season.

I've been here almost nine years, I've been fighting for Highway No. 7 for that long and that was the biggest concern out of Fort Liard and Fort Simpson, my whole riding of Nahendeh, anybody that travels down Highway No. 7. It affects our tourism years. Over the years we used to have busloads of tourists that would go to Fort Simpson. That has declined. In fact, the recent statistics from ITI show that tourism has declined in the Nahendeh region and if there's anything that adds some economic stimulus to any region it's tourism, and that cannot be happening when Highway No. 7 is known to be impassable.

People from Fort Nelson, people even from the Yellowknife tourism office, Hay River, Enterprise, they all advise people not to use Highway No. 7 every year and that takes away from us. It's a real shame that Highway No. 7 has that kind of a reputation. In fact, talking with one of the guys in Simpson that has international contacts, even people from Germany phone him up about this time of year or else in early spring about the condition of Highway No. 7 as we get lots of European tourists and they do want to make the trip up to our northern territories and one of the ways to do it, if they do want to access the Nahanni National Park,

a lot of them do it fly-in, but a lot of them drive in as well. Once they know about Highway No. 7 it scares them away.

So the reasons are many that we should pay attention to this highway and I'm frustrated with this government for their inattention to Highway No. 7. There's zero dollars for capital in 2012-2013 and then we've got our interim budget appropriations. Like I said, I want to know the plan for Highway No. 7. There are some carry-over dollars from last year, but the key is to spend it early in prime construction season, and I don't see that. I've got no commitment about that and it's equally frustrating. So I'd like the Finance Minister or the Transportation Minister to give me some commitment, some written commitment that they'll spend these funds early.

Every year about April or May Highway No. 7 does collapse. So we've got to be prepared for that and I would like to know how they're going to be prepared for it other than monitoring it, because I really believe that we need a plan and we're here early enough, I'm raising it early enough that I believe that we can come up with an adequate plan that the roads are open. If there's an issue, then it can be addressed right away. I'd like to know the plan about that, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct; the capital budget was passed in November and it was a very modest capital budget as we are all aware going into the deliberations given our fiscal circumstances. We do have some plans in the midterm to address that as we've been discussing in this House over the last number of days.

In regard to the specific timing and sequence of the use of the O and M money this coming spring, Madam Chair, with your concurrence I'd ask Minister Ramsay to speak to those specific program questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's concerns about Highway No. 7 and the condition they're in. Also, the condition as it relates to tourism in the Deh Cho, in his riding, it's a situation where we have approved a capital plan. We are having some difficulty trying to come up with a long-term plan, which will be required for Highway No. 7, but we are going to need to do that. It needs to be reconstructed. Most of that highway will need some substantial reconstruction in the neighbourhood of \$250 million. Those dollars we just do not have today. I think going forward we need to try to find a way to get some capital dollars in a substantial way

into Highway No. 7, but currently that's just not the case. The Member has talked of it and I know the Finance Minister has talked to this, as well, about the fact that we're carrying over approximately \$1.3 million. I don't have a crystal ball, but that money will undoubtedly be spent early in the season and if need be, we are going to have to come forward with some type of emergency or special supplementary funding if an emergency does arise, and I think that's something that we have to live with. We just don't have any other choice.

So we're going to have to watch things closely as they play themselves out, and I just want to assure the Member that we need to find a long-term plan to address the condition of Highway No. 7 in a meaningful way and that is going to include a substantial amount of capital dollars to begin the reconstruction of that road. That hopefully can happen here in the next few years that we can chart a course forward for Highway No. 7. But again, we need the dollars, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Like I said, for nine years I've been here and I still find it incomprehensible and with disbelief that they did not allocate any capital dollars to Highway No. 7, because I've stated time and time again, almost every session, about the condition of Highway No. 7 and every spring it collapses. Previous Ministers have always said yes, we'll spend the money early in the season, but I hear that again. So it's not good enough for me. I want a written commitment, perhaps from the Minister of Transportation, that yes, they will spend a little carry-over money and capital money that they have early in the season and spend it, because for the past eight seasons construction always happens in August and September and that's when the rainy season is. It impacts the construction and leads to poorer construction. I don't know why that is. Why do we continue to put the Nahendeh highway systems on the backburner?

We approved the capital budget in November for the last few years actually, but still last August they were tendering out a contract to chipseal Highway No. 7, which I was very happy to hear about, but they were tendering it out in July. What's going on? Why are they tendering it out in July? We gave them approval in November.

So that's the kind of frustrations that I'd like to bring to the table today, Madam Chair. When it comes to this O and M budget, whatever money is there I want to ask and get a commitment from the Minister of Transportation that, yes, they will start construction early in the new year. I don't want to hear soft commitments. I've been hearing that for eight years and that's not good enough for me

anymore. We've got to take care of the needs of Highway No. 7.

I know that our government is spending lots of time putting the Inuvik-Tuk highway on the Prime Minister's lips. He's got to hear Highway No. 7 as well. That's equally important to our North. It's beneficial to our North. We've got a couple of major infrastructure private sector projects in the region that will depend on Highway No. 7. The Enbridge oil spill depends on Highway No. 7. They're moving all their product down there. It will be in even poorer shape when springtime rolls around there.

I'd like our government and the Department of Transportation to start paying attention to Highway No. 7 in my riding, and that begins by the commitment and the action of working on that highway early in the season and early enough. Like I said, your commitment to monitor and respond to road conditions as they need is just not good enough. We need firm commitments. We need action, not words. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I allowed a little bit of extension beyond the 10 minutes there. We can come back to you after if you like, but next on the list I have Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to respond to Member Menicoche's concerns once again. We are hopeful that the \$12 million that we have spent over the past four years on Highway No. 7 will help to address past problems that we've seen with Highway No. 7. But going forward, the reality is we have \$1.3 million. That's all we have for next year. If the Member wants a commitment that that money will be spent early in the season, that's something we can look at. My belief is it will be spent early in the season and we will undoubtedly require more money if the road conditions are such that we need to come back for supplementary funding to address the concerns.

It is a tough situation, but as I mentioned before, I want to work with the Member and this government to try to come up with a long-term plan to reconstruct Highway No. 7, and that's going to include some substantial capital dollars that today we just do not have. We have to try to find that and get that work done. I agree with the Member on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next I have on my list Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a few specific issues on transportation and I have one comment on the Deh Cho Bridge.

I want to go straight into the Sahtu concerns with the proposed funding here that we are looking at. The first one has to do with the O and M on the Bear River ice crossing at Deline. I received an e-

mail from the regional office in Fort Simpson and the ice crossing at Great Bear Lake is at 30,000 kilograms. Hopefully by the end of this day and further days to come, the weight category will go up to 45,000 kilograms within days.

My question to the Minister is that people in Deline also need to support themselves, the heavy equipment and construction companies that are there, and they certainly can't put their heavy equipment to work because the weight limits are not safe and it's not advisable for them to cross on the Great Bear Lake. I'm asking the Minister if there are any further types of machinery with your O and M that could be brought to Deline to increase their weight limits so that these heavy equipment machines can be used to work in the Tulita district, the oil and gas exploration. They are losing a lot of money in Deline.

The ice crossing at Great Bear Lake is a concern for the people, for the businesspeople there. They also looked at in the plans for future roads. They are looking at a route that would go around the lake so that would cut out a lot of concerns for the people. That is something that I want to raise with the Minister.

The other issue I want to raise with the Minister is a portable licence machine. Some of the communities such as Colville Lake do not have that type of service. They have to drive to Norman Wells in the wintertime, and that is about a six-hour drive, or in the summer they have to fly the machine, when available, to Colville Lake. People would like to see this portable machine being brought to the communities on specific times in the regulations as they require them to receive that service.

I was in Fort Good Hope in September and people were coming up to me and saying we need to get our licence updated or we need to get our vehicles registered, and there were some problems about having somebody come in from Norman Wells into Fort Good Hope. They couldn't wait, so some of them actually had to fly to Norman Wells, get the licence, make an appointment, stay overnight and fly back. It cost them \$300 or \$400 to get their vehicle registered. I know the department made several attempts to try to get the people into Fort Good Hope. It just didn't work. I want to see what the Minister can do to strengthen this service in our communities and see if within the department they could make that service more, how do you say, the community said the contract to do this is not very high and it costs them more, it costs them more to operate it, so more beneficial, I guess, to the organization that's running the road licence program. That's something that I want to add on to my concerns.

The third one is I want to ask the Minister if he would look at the operations of Transportation. I've raised it over a number of years that the Sahtu now

should be considered as a regional office. The winter roads and the highways come from the Fort Simpson regional office. The airports come from the Inuvik regional office. We have outside people dictating or have the authority within the region. I think we have done enough and I think it's time that the Sahtu has its own regional office. I'm hoping that the Minister can look at this request to see if the Sahtu can begin to have more autonomy, moving away from the Simpson and Inuvik offices and have something in the Sahtu. Sahtu people have been telling me that they always have to wait for Inuvik or Fort Simpson to give the approval for something that's happening right there, and it just doesn't make sense anymore. That's a strong request I have for the Minister and I will be following it up as we go on with the life of this government here.

My last matter for the Sahtu would be if the department can look at moving some of the personnel. The Minister and I had some private discussions on this and I'm not going to get too far into the details about moving some personnel people into the Sahtu. That makes sense where it can be more efficient, more effective. We have computers, we have a fax system and we have people on the ground that would start looking at our projects in the Sahtu. We are grateful for what we receive under Transportation. I want to ask if we could look at some type of initiative to transfer some of the personnel from headquarters into the Sahtu where it would make more sense to us. It may not make sense to the department, but it makes more sense in the Sahtu.

My last comment would be with the Deh Cho Bridge. I would like the Minister to, in the time that we have, look at some of the explanation of the interest payments that we are setting up and having with the Deh Cho Bridge project there. Those would be my comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the issue of ice roads, at the risk of possibly stating the obvious, there is no money in this interim appropriation for ice roads. The ice road money will come in through the regular main estimates in May/June and it will be targeted for the winter of 2012-13.

In regard to the specific questions about licensing, the DOT operation in the Sahtu becoming a regional centre, the possible move of personnel from Transportation to the Sahtu and possibly the Deh Cho Bridge, I will ask the chair for your indulgence to let the Minister of Transportation answer those. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Mr. Yakeleya on his concerns.

Starting at the beginning, I think what we are seeing in the Sahtu – and I know the Member is aware of this – is when there is resource activity and development in that region, some of the benefits come in improved infrastructure. We saw the capital involvement of industry there and what it has done for an ice road in the Sahtu. We need to be looking at opportunities to work with industry to get more of that happening in the Sahtu. Given the activity that is happening in the Sahtu, not just this year but next year, I think there is a lot of likelihood that improved transportation infrastructure is going to be a very large concern as we go forward.

On the portable ice machine or icing machine, I think again industry may play a role in partnering with us on the availability of that technology and in getting that there. I agree with what the Member was saying about equipment located in a community like Deline not being able to get to the work. That is an issue that goes back to the possibility of even constructing some type of all-weather road from the community of Deline to Bennett Field. That is something, too, I know that is of interest to the community of Deline and something that as we move forward again, given all the activity there, that this could be possible down the road.

The Member also talked about Fort Good Hope and people having some difficulty getting registration and licensing. Maybe I can ask the Member to give me the specifics on that case, and I would be more than happy to get him a response on that and how we can improve service delivery in the communities.

The other question was looking at moving regional operations into the Sahtu. I know we are going to be going through the business planning process here in short order. That is an issue that can be brought up by the Member and the Regular Members as we move through the business planning process. Again, I think we have to look at opportunities to ensure that we are delivering efficient service and program delivery around the territory. That is something that we could potentially look at as we move forward. Again, I think we can examine that further.

As far as moving some personnel into the Sahtu, again I think we would have to see which positions they were. Obviously, that would be of great importance. Again, going through the business planning process we will get to see a little bit more of how things work. The Members will be able to have a good dialogue with myself and the other Ministers. We look forward to those discussions on possible areas where we can enhance the programs and services that we provide out in the

regions. I look forward to the opportunity to work with the Member in doing that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on my list I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have two points I would like to raise with the Department of Transportation. The first one involves an activity of your department that includes destruction of migratory birds and their habitat, which is illegal against the International Migratory Bird Treaty that Canada has signed with the United States. I think that is well known by the department. The Environment Canada I believe has tried working with standards for provinces and territories on when they should do right-of-way clearing to avoid the destruction of migratory birds and their habitat. It is a seasonal habitat so it is not so much they can't do that as much as when they do it.

I have constituents who volunteer their expertise as part of a North American-wide network of breeding birds surveys that have documented the decline, the amazing decline of songbirds in Canada and boreal forest birds included. They do these in the same areas and the same dates year to year to year. Unfortunately, when they were doing last year along the Ingraham Trail, Highway No. 4, they did the surveys, and on their return they watched the very habitat they just surveyed and documented, actual nests and birds being destroyed, mowed and mulched. That was raised with the department. The department said yes, that is a legitimate concern. They would try and do a better job of that.

I see in the proposed budget for this year the Department of Transportation has dollars identified for contract for that work again. This is an interim budget to cover April, May and June, which just happens to be the peak of the migratory birds' breeding season in this area. I am aware of no cost to delay that work until August or September. I would ask the department is there a plan to delay that work. I know some contracts are listed in this quarter-year's budget because they will go further on in the year, but this contract should not be let during the peak of the breeding season. It is illegal. I would ask that I get some assurance that that will not be done.

The second aspect, I had a meeting last night with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation Council and with respect of the Detah road, they are not aware of the current status of funding on that project. I realize it is a capital item, but my understanding is that we are looking for support for that project. In the meantime there is probably a considerable amount of work that could be done under operations, such as clearing and so on, working with the Mine Training Society and so on. Can I expect that has been done in the past two or three years? Can I expect that this budget will include

some support for that type of work during first quarter of 2012-13? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the first point the Member brings up with migratory birds. I will talk to the officials with the department and find out the game plan going forward on when that contract may be let and if it can be put off to later in the year, I would appreciate the Member's concerns and I'll raise those with the department.

On the second question that was related to the access road and any further work that was going to take place there, I believe there is some more work that is going to be required. It's, I believe, about \$7.5 million and we'll have to try to get this funding through the capital planning process to complete the project as we move forward. We can look forward to that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's response. On the migratory bird side of things, I think the hope of Environment Canada is that they would continue with an operating standards approach rather than having to permit things, but apparently there have been enough problems with jurisdictions that they are now contemplating a requirement for permits and so on, so they can have a more hands-on management of that. So I think there is an opportunity here to adhere to this and avoid that sort of more onerous situation.

With the Detah road, I realize it's a capital project and I was really wondering if there was something that could be done under operations such as the clearing of rights-of-way and working with the Mine Training Society. I think we've done that sort of thing the last few years associated with the project, but I just wanted to ask if this budget might contemplate the possibility of following up on that opportunity.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again, we've had to identify some funding to allow that type of activity to be carried out. It's not saying that it couldn't happen. Maybe working with the Yellowknives Dene, Deton'Cho, there could be a possibility over the next season to do something. I don't want to say no. I think if we can identify some dollars, we may be able to do a little more work out there, but... I'll just leave it at that, Madam Chair. Thanks.

MR. BROMLEY: That right-of-way clearing would be after the breeding season for migratory birds, of course. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to follow up on Highway No. 7 here. I know the Minister had indicated in his last response

to me that he would look at expending monies early, but I think I'm looking for a firm commitment that the department be serious about Highway No. 7 and spend the money early in the new year.

I'll probably take the opportunity to comment on the \$1.3 million of capital carry-overs and also I'd like the Minister to confirm that those projects will go ahead early in the new year. Like I said, I'm not happy with commitments anymore. I want this in writing. The Minister has to tell his department to get that work done early. I've got to see it done early. My people have to see it done early. That's the only way we build trust and start believing in the government again. Actions go further than words. That's the kind of thing I would like to see. That's what I'd like to hear from the Minister. That's what I'd like to hear from this government when it comes to Highway No. 7 this year, this spring, because the road collapses every May, it's only around the corner that they will get out there early with their men and equipment and with the capital dollars that we continue to approve. It's got to be spent early; the equipment has to be out there. We shouldn't be waiting until August/September again to be working on those roads. Those roads get shut down for weeks at a time in the springtime.

That's what I'm saying here today. I'll continue to recommend to my colleagues that we not pass this interim appropriation until I get satisfaction and the satisfaction to this House that you pay attention to Highway No. 7. It's equally important as the Inuvik-Tuk road. I know that ended up on our list of priorities, but that doesn't mean we stop working on other areas and other highways in our great territory here. I'd like to look for that commitment and ask the Minister to commit to me in writing that our forces will be out there this spring in preparation of the spring thaw, in preparation of Highway No. 7 collapsing and to make sure that we begin early.

As well, part of our federal engagement strategy is to talk about the Inuvik-Tuk highway, but you've got to talk about Highway No. 7 as well. You've got to talk about our other infrastructure needs in the North and that's the kind of level of interest that I want to see from this government and from the Minister of Transportation as we move forward in this fiscal year. I know we've been red flagged for any future capital projects, but in reality, even if we didn't get any money at the end of this March, we won't be talking about capital expenditures until June/July by the time we get it all sorted out. The tension is today and it's not tomorrow. That's what I want the department to consider, the Minister to consider and our government to consider. We cannot wait until next year to be spending money. We've got to come up with some kind of plan, some kind of action plan that's firm and solid, that gives us a base and a base on that highway as well.

I realize the implications. I know they've done an engineering study that I have yet to see, that's about a million dollars a kilometre, maybe more, to reconstruct Highway No. 7, but we've got to start. We had started already. We've done about 20 kilometres near Fort Liard and we've got some chipsealing that was going to be done last year and that's the chipsealing I was talking about. We approved the budget in November, but they are tendering this thing out in July. What's going on? The department did the wisest thing I've ever seen. They've actually tendered it out, but they didn't do the work. I commend them for that, but I cannot commend them for waiting until July to tender out appropriations we gave them in November.

So I'd like to know where that work is. I'd like the Minister to guarantee that the chipsealing will continue on Highway No. 7. I'd like to see a firm plan to spend this \$1.3 million capital carry-overs in writing to me, as well as a firm commitment that men and equipment will be out there in springtime in anticipation of spring thaw and the annual Highway No. 7 spring collapse. It shouldn't have to be there if we are prepared. We know it's been happening. It's been happening very severely for the last three or four years and having a plan to deal with Highway No. 7 by monitoring conditions is not good enough. I would like to hear a response from the Minister with regard to that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to speak to the broader plan that we do have as a government. The Assembly is fully aware of the fiscal constraints we are operating under, but we will be spending \$1.4 billion. We will be spending, all in, about \$130 million on capital. We recognize that there is a far greater list of needs than resources. The whole focus of our negotiations from the borrowing limit is to be geared specifically to getting the ability and flexibility as a government to build and make strategic investments that will allow us to supplement our very modest capital plan. The intent is when that borrowing limit is agreed to, that that good fortune has to be carefully used. We have to stick to our fiscal plan, but it has to be able to raise all boats, not just one boat in one region, but it has to raise all boats. We recognize that. We commit to that and we will lay out that plan.

In regards to the very specific questions about committing to spend the \$1.3 million early, I will turn that question to the Minister of Transportation, Madam Chair, with your permission.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I do appreciate the Member's concerns in regard to Highway No. 7. On the \$1.3 million that

we do have for this coming season, as I mentioned earlier, that money undoubtedly will be spent early in the season and if the Member wants a commitment that that will happen, I would be more than happy to get the department to get a letter together indicating that the \$1.3 million earmarked for Highway No. 7 will indeed go into work on that highway as soon as possible in the season and not in July and August. So that's something I believe that the department and I can make a commitment to the Member on.

What we can't obviously commit to is future capital dollars that we just don't have today. I wish I could make a commitment like that to the Member. All I can say is should more capital dollars free up, Highway No. 7 should be given priority for a number of reasons, and that's something, again, I look forward to working with the Member on. It has far-reaching effects if we're shutting that road down for extended periods of time and it's unsafe and has to be closed down. Those are things we take seriously.

Again, we need to come up with a long-term plan, a reconstruction of that highway and it's going to require a substantial amount of capital dollars that today we just do not have. Again, we need to work towards that. I agree with the Member.

We do have eight highways here in the Northwest Territories. We're in the process of looking at the construction of a new highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk and I don't want the Member or any other Members of this House thinking that just because we're pursuing that means we're taking our eye off other highways around the territory. I think we need to have balance and we need to have fairness. We do have a capital planning process that as we move forward, the needs and the priorities will be addressed in due course. That's the reality that we're living in today. But as far as a commitment on the \$1.3 million, we can get that in writing to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Menicoche, anything further?

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm glad that the Minister wants to rise to the challenge and provide a written commitment. I'd like to see that, and with that I would recommend to my colleagues that with their support that I defer consideration of the Department of Transportation for another day until I get that written commitment from the department so I can continue to make the case once again that I get lots of money for Highway No. 7, but they never spend it. They're always waiting until the end of the season, and that's all I'm doing here today. I'm tired of hearing that yes, you'll commit to spend it and you'll do it early in the season. I've heard that eight years and I refuse to do it anymore on behalf of my

constituents. I want to see that money spent early and I want to see it in writing.

I'm glad that the Minister will provide that and I've got no further comments on this other than a motion to defer continued consideration of this. I don't know if the Members have any further comments on Transportation, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Menicoche, did you wish to make a motion?

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Yes, I did, but I didn't know if my colleagues had any more comments on the Department of Transportation, but I do have a motion to defer consideration.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I have a few comments here before we get to your motion. I wanted to raise the point with the Minister of Transportation. He alluded to the amount of oil and gas exploration that's going to happen in the Sahtu, because of the land sales and the exploration that's going to be happening up there for the next five to six years or longer depending on some decisions that will be made in this government or within the Sahtu region on oil and gas. It makes more sense to have a push for a permanent, established regional office of Transportation in the Sahtu. Speaking to the ITI people, we are going to see up to \$70 million spent in the Sahtu this winter for one oil company to drill two wells and explore gas and do seismic. We are still talking about other companies coming up there.

This is supposed to be happening in the next five years or longer, with over half a billion dollars; close to \$600 million is going to be spent in the Sahtu because of oil and gas. So I strongly urge the Minister if he would look within his department, talk to his colleagues and see if it makes sense to start establishing a permanent regional office in the Sahtu for Transportation.

I do appreciate the contractors on the winter road. They do a damn good job building the road and maintaining it with the support of the companies to make it a lot smoother. You will notice in our region where there is no oil and gas activity the roads are not quite as good as the ones the companies are using. People rely on those roads, they now are taking it for granted that it's part of the government's greater responsibility for safety and making a good road.

So I ask the Minister again, I urge strongly that this Cabinet look at steps to move it to another level while we have the economy in the Sahtu. I'm making a plea here to the department on this issue.

The Deline ice crossing at Bear Lake is an O and M issue. I know the infrastructure is coming later on,

but again I'm making the plea that the Minister will look at this so people in Deline can have the opportunity to participate in the oil and gas development in the Sahtu area. Specifically the Tulita area because of the wait and the weather, we just aren't able to do that to get heavy equipment over to areas possibly where they could be put to work. It's a short time frame; three months. I've seen your work this winter, I've driven on the winter roads from Wrigley to the Wells and Tulita, I've driven on the Bear Lake road towards Deline and we've got to commend those contractors for doing good jobs on the road. So I want to say that.

The other issue I wanted to ask the Minister through the O and M budget here for 2012-13 is if he would look at the area up in the Mackenzie Mountains on the Canol Road between the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The site is called Mile 222. That's a site that has been used a lot by the Department of ENR for reporting of hunters and outfitters, but we also have Selwyn Resources now in that area and they have proposed to use that land for extracting large amounts of lead and zinc, but they also need to take that material out. They're looking at a road in that area. So I want to ask the Minister if you ask this department if they have any type of old equipment that's surplus, if they could somehow get that equipment to Mile 222 to maintain that road. It doesn't take very much. I've talked to some of the people in Norman Wells. They say if we had equipment at 222 we could maintain that little stretch of road, which is still under the Northwest Territories highway system. It would help with the outfitters coming in. It won't take much and it's a good opportunity for tourism.

Maybe the Minister can talk to the ITI Minister and see if they can work together on this issue. More importantly, we have a huge opportunity with Selwyn Resources. They're in the stages they want to come into production. When I read their report, they want to put a road on the Northwest Territories side to bring out the lead and zinc. That's a lot of trucks a day they're going to use to haul down to Watson Lake and then further south. It's billions, Madam Chair. So I want to ask the Minister through his planning with his colleagues and the department here is looking at seeing if we could take some of this old equipment that's in surplus and use it at Mile 222.

I want to bring those two points up to the Minister. We have a lot of activity right now in the Sahtu. The Minister is going to come and tour with me sometime. I've asked some other Ministers. One already came and the other one is planning to come shortly and look at it. Hopefully, we will see some of the activity. It's booming, and people are happy and they're working. People are doing their best to keep the roads in a safe manner. I've seen some work there, so I ask the Minister if he could

look at that more closely and put some emphasis to the operations and maintenance of transportation.

I'd like to hear from the Minister on my previous comment on the interest payments on the Deh Cho Bridge. That's it.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I certainly share the Member's enthusiasm that's taking place in the Sahtu and in his riding. It is very nice to see equipment moving, people working and people happy. I think that's a direct result of the investment there by the companies across the river from Norman Wells that will continue for the foreseeable future.

When you have that type and level of activity in a region, I think it only stands to reason that you see the benefits, not just the jobs and the employment but in the transportation infrastructure. If projections are correct and there is a substantial amount of oil across the river from Norman Wells, the Sahtu region is going to be an economic powerhouse in this territory and we will need to start to look at the importance of all-weather roads again, the Mackenzie Valley Highway, bridges, a bridge across the Bear River. These are key pieces to the puzzle and I think as we move forward we can certainly anticipate much more in the area of transportation infrastructure in the Sahtu, given the level of activity there and the potential of that reason. It's immense. I certainly look forward to working with the Member.

I have got some preliminary plans to get up to the Sahtu probably in about 2 weeks' time to visit a well site, and I extended an invitation to the Member and look forward to getting up there and seeing for myself the activity that's taking place there. I know I've seen the trucks moving. I've been to Norman Wells a couple of times. But I look forward to actually getting out to a well site and doing that, and if the Member can accompany me, that would be great.

On the Canol Mile 222, I can make the inquiry with the department about old surplus equipment. For the most, I believe, that's sold at auction, and I'd have to get back to the Member on a response to that question.

The other question was the interest on the Deh Cho Bridge. That is something that, because of the delay in the project, something that we have to obviously pay for. It's a cost of the delay, and hopefully the bridge will be complete this fall and we'll have traffic moving across it this fall. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly look forward to working with the Minister on seeing what type of arrangements can be made and when we can look

at a date we can set down and visit one of the well sites.

I'm happy to see further discussions with the Minister on improving the transportation system in the Sahtu. Certainly, they come up usually from BC on Highway No. 7 to bring in their rigs and equipment from Fort St. John or from the Alberta border. They bring the heavy equipment up to the Sahtu. They also use that system; they use the water system and the marine system there. I look forward to further discussions with the Minister on what type of support we can give to people in the North and the people in the Sahtu for continuing the oil and gas exploration that's been happening there for the last couple of months now.

I do hope that the Minister can look at the equipment that the department has that they can certainly use at Mile 222 and support some of the activities over there at that specific place there. I am done, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is once again in regard to the access to some of our surrounding communities in the Beaufort-Delta region.

As most of you are aware, a lot of our schools were shut down and even some of our communities were shut down during a big blizzard that we had just most recently. Just wondering if there was any special assistance outside of the ice roads and the transportation to the communities, which do rely I wouldn't say heavily, but do rely on some of the services that are provided by Inuvik. When our contractors run over their budget, if there's some kind of special budget that is put in place for not only the contractors on the highways and the ice roads but even for our municipal contractors when a town gets shut down because of high snowdrifts. That does cause emergency situations where if somebody needs to go to the hospital or if there is an RCMP emergency, something's going on that does need to be addressed, and when we have high snowdrifts and lack of ground transportation to get to these communities or even into some of the places in our community, how those are addressed. Last year we had a blizzard that was very similar that pretty well shut down the whole community. This time it lasted for a whole week rather than just a couple of days.

Looking into that and looking at our patterns for the last few years, if you can call it a pattern, this is something that we might be looking at again in the future, and we want to see if we can address this in the budget for next year, even to the end of this fiscal year, making sure that there is money available should something like this happen again. We don't want to be stuck in the cold when our contractors and our departments have no further

money to reach some of the people in the communities or even get services to them.

Even on the ice roads there was some single-lane traffic, which does become very dangerous, especially with some of the big trucks that are commuting on the highways there. Just a comment on what we've seen up in the Beaufort-Delta the last couple of years and making sure that we do have access to our surrounding communities, specifically Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the question. There are a number of contracts and I'd have to see what provisions are in those contracts to address acts of God or Mother Nature when blizzards come and communities are cut off for an extended period of time. I could certainly look into that and get some further detail for the Member on how that works.

I know our contractors did yeoman's work in trying to clear the roads and get communities connected again during the recent blizzard up in the Beaufort-Delta, and they are to be commended for all the hard work. I know they put in a number of extra hours to ensure the roads were clear not just in the Beaufort-Delta but also in the Sahtu. I appreciate all their hard work.

But specific to the contracts, I would have to get that information for the Member on what provisions are in there in the event that contractors do run over because of a blizzard. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: I do agree; the contractors did a great job of opening up the highways again. I do look forward to looking at those provisions for any of our contractors, regardless of whether it's snow removal or even airport services that do exhaust their budgets, how this government can support those contractors to keep the roads open and the ground transportation feasible for when people need to travel them, especially in emergency situations.

Just a second question, for municipalities that have their own budget for road clearance within our boundaries that the government doesn't really put a budget into, is there a specific type of budget that can help in an emergency situation such as Inuvik when a lot of our roads were not usable for the whole week pretty well? Thank you, Madam Chair.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again I appreciate the Member's concerns. Specific to municipalities, I will consult with my colleague, the Minister of MACA, to see how exactly communities are dealt with when it does come to a situation where communities are faced with the need for extraordinary funding because of a blizzard or costs that they didn't anticipate. I will get that response back to the

Member once I consult with my colleague, the Minister of MACA. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Anything further, Mr. Moses?

MR. MOSES: I appreciate the comments. No further comments or questions, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mr. Menicoche, did you have a motion?

COMMITTEE MOTION 3-17(2):
DEFER CONSIDERATION OF ITEM NO. 11,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
INTERIM APPROPRIATION 2012-2013,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer consideration of item number 11, Department of Transportation, contained in Tabled Document 1-17(2), Interim Appropriation 2012-2013. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. It's just being distributed. We will wait a moment until people can see it.

Members, everybody has the motion, I believe. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Question is being called.

---Carried

So, item number 11, Transportation, \$29.848 million, is deferred. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that committee reports progress.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): I will now rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort our witnesses from the Chamber? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have report of Committee of the Whole, please? Ms. Bisaro.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 1-17(2), Interim Appropriation 2012-2013, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is in order. To the motion. Is there a seconder for the motion? Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning at adjournment.

Orders of the day for Friday, February 10, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 1-17(2), Interim Appropriation 2012-2013
 - Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012
 - Tabled Document 3-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012
 - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 10, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.

The House adjourned at 4:59 p.m.