



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2nd Session

Day 7

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Pages 437 - 458

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Human Resources

Minister responsible for the

Public Utilities Board

Hon. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister responsible for

Persons with Disabilities

Minister responsible for Seniors

Ms. Wendy Bisaro

(Frame Lake)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Robert Bouchard

(Hay River North)

Mr. Bob Bromley

(Weledeh)

Mr. Daryl Dolynny

(Range Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister responsible for the Workers'

Safety and Compensation

Commission

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

Minister responsible for the

Status of Women

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Municipal and

Community Affairs

Minister responsible for the

NWT Housing Corporation

Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche

(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Government House Leader

Minister of Finance

Minister of Environment and Natural

Resources

Minister responsible for the

NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Hon. David Ramsay

(Kam Lake)

Minister of Industry, Tourism

and Investment

Minister of Transportation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk
of Committees**

Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

**Principal Clerk,
Operations**

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Malinda Kellett

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	437
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	437
18-17(2) – Education Week (Lafferty).....	437
19-17(2) – Support for Small Business (Ramsay).....	437
20-17(2) – Report on Northwest Territories Power Corporation General Rate Application (Miltenberger)...	438
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	439
Hay River Seniors' Society (Groenewegen).....	439
Replacement of Fort Simpson Health Centre (Menicoche).....	440
Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Project (Moses).....	440
Climate Change and Carbon Emissions Policies (Bromley)	440
Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project (Dolynny)	441
Closure of the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik (Blake).....	441
Supplementary Health Benefits Program (Bisaro)	442
Need for Post-secondary Education Facility in the Sahtu (Yakeleya).....	442
Acknowledging the Work of Aviation and Tourism Pioneer Merlyn Carter (Bouchard)	443
Appointment of Mr. Joachim Bonnetrouge as Chair of Deh Cho Land Use Committee (Nadli)	443
Effects from the Use of Road Salt (Hawkins).....	443
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	444
ORAL QUESTIONS	444, 454
NOTICES OF MOTION	455, 456
2-17(2) – Old Age Security (Menicoche).....	455
3-17(2) – Aboriginal Languages Secretariat (Yakeleya)	455
4-17(2) – Improving Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs (Bromley).....	456
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	455
Bill 3 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012	455
Bill 4 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012.....	455
FIRST READING OF BILLS	455
Bill 2 – Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013.....	455
SECOND READING OF BILLS	456
Bill 2 – Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013.....	456

THIRD READING OF BILLS	456
Bill 2 – Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013	456
ORDERS OF THE DAY	456

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 15, 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 Centre. They are tremendous educators and we congratulate them both.

The House met at 1:35 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Members, before we begin today, I'd like to draw your attention to the Canadian flags on your desks. February 15th has been declared National Flag Day of Canada.

It was on this day in 1965 that a flag with the first red and white maple leaf design flew proudly over Parliament Hill.

Our flag, with its distinctive maple leaf, is recognized all over the world as the flag of a people who cherish the ideals of democracy, freedom and respect.

I know we don't see any maple trees in this part of the Canada, but we proudly fly our Canadian flag all across the Northwest Territories as a symbol of our unity with all Canadians.

Please join me, colleagues, in celebrating our flag and the great country we live in. Thank you.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 18-17(2):
EDUCATION WEEK**

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, February 20th to 24th marks Education Week. We are celebrating the academic achievements of students across the Northwest Territories and recognizing educators who support and strengthen our education system.

This year we are recognizing Dr. Curtis Brown and Mr. Allan Karasiuk from the South Slave region. Last fall Dr. Brown received the Canadian Association of School Administrators Award for the best school superintendent in Canada. As well, Mr. Karasiuk received one of forty 2012 awards for Canada's Outstanding Principal from The Learning

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is committed to providing a strong foundation for learning at all levels. There are numerous initiatives focusing on learners at different levels and providing them with the supports and tools they need to succeed. These include the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, endorsed by Aboriginal leaders and all education board chairs through the Education Partnership Declaration; the Early Childhood Development Framework review and renewal; and the Literacy Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the school doors do not regulate the education of a child. Learning does not start, nor stop, when students walk into or out of a school. Learning is a lifelong journey that includes the family and the community. With us all working together, our students will receive a full education. I look forward to working with Members of the House to support the education goals of all students in the NWT. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 19-17(2):
SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, entrepreneurs and small business owners are a crucial part of the Northwest Territories' economy. They are essential to creating an economic environment that is strong and diversified, providing each region with opportunities and choices.

The last few years have been challenging for business and investment in the Northwest Territories. The downturn in the global economy also affected this territory, and it is more important than ever to do what we can to help the NWT economy grow and develop. Today I would like to highlight recent work this government is doing to assist small businesses and improve the NWT business climate.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment works in partnership with entrepreneurs, small business owners and local community organizations to promote and support economic prosperity in the NWT.

In 2010-11, ITI's Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy – referred to as the SEED Policy – contributed over \$3.6 million to entrepreneurs, small business owners and local community organizations in the NWT. This year nearly \$300,000 in additional funding is available to support entrepreneurs and small businesses.

This policy is focused on increasing business activity and employment, particularly in the smaller communities. Since its inception in 2008, the SEED Policy has been extremely popular with NWT entrepreneurs and small businesses.

ITI has also expanded its commitment to different economic sectors. We realize there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to business support. NWT entrepreneurs are a varied group. We have responded by actively engaging with the film industry to find the best ways to provide support, reviving the Prospectors Grubstake Program, and increasing funding for residents engaged in the traditional economy, and arts and crafts. As well, we will continue to eliminate red tape whenever possible to provide better services to our clients.

A goal of this Assembly is reducing poverty in the NWT. A key element in reaching this goal is ensuring support has a significant community-based component. To that end, ITI remains committed to the Community Transfer Initiative and the Community Futures Program. The Community Transfer Initiative places resources directly into the communities through a locally-based economic development officer.

Through the Community Futures Program, support is directed to the community level, where the Community Futures development corporations are operated and managed. Year after year we continue to be impressed with the results of these programs and the economic development they encourage directly in the community.

I am also pleased to announce the launch of the newly-designed investment website, InvestNWT.ca. Developed in partnership with the NWT Chamber of Commerce, the NWT Construction Association, the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines, and the Conseil de développement économique des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, CDETNO, the site highlights the economic potential of the territory and contains a wealth of information for potential investors. ITI is working closely with CDETNO on the French version of the website and we hope to launch that in the spring.

Finally, I would like to highlight that the United Nations has declared 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives. The International Year of Co-operatives is intended to raise public awareness of the invaluable contributions of co-operative enterprises to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. The year will also highlight the strengths of the co-operative business

model as an alternative means of doing business and furthering socio-economic development. Co-operatives represent a tremendous source of economic activity here in the North and their dedication to community is both appreciated and applauded. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Colleagues, before we go on today, I'd like to welcome Mr. Anthony "Tony" Whitford to the House; former Speaker, Minister, Member and Sergeant-at-Arms and recent recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. Welcome back to the House, Tony.

---Applause

The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 20-17(2):
REPORT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
POWER CORPORATION
GENERAL RATE APPLICATION

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, high electricity costs are a fact of life in the North and are a significant component of the cost of living for the people of the Northwest Territories. External factors like global energy prices, our remote location and lack of economies of scale all contribute to high costs in our communities. Some costs of producing and distributing electricity in the NWT can be controlled, however, and the Government of the Northwest Territories remains committed to managing these in order to keep costs for our residents as low as possible.

Last December I updated Members of the Legislative Assembly on the work the Northwest Territories Power Corporation has been doing to make sure its structure and operations support the government's efforts to contain electricity costs, including:

- a flatter corporate structure meant to keep NTPC more effective and efficient in the long run;
- eliminating nine positions in the organization, three of which were senior management positions, including the chief operating officer;
- bringing the bonus pay system into alignment with the GNWT's bonus system;
- creating apprenticeships that will give NWT residents the opportunity to be trained in skilled jobs that contribute to life in the North;
- implementing significant cost reduction initiatives to offset rising inflation and increased diesel costs over the past five years; and
- a strategic plan aimed at excellence in three areas customers look to most: reliable service, price and keeping our commitments.

Other steps the government of the NWT has taken include new rate zones that spread the costs of generating and distributing electricity across more people, so no community is stuck with unfairly high electricity rates. We also made changes to the Territorial Power Subsidy Program – at some cost to the GNWT – to provide residential customers with more relief from the high costs of electricity while still encouraging them to conserve.

Even with these measures, the GNWT cannot prevent global energy trends and inflation from affecting the costs NTPC must incur to provide service to its customers. Costs continue to rise beyond the Power Corporation's control and the rates it charges consumers are no longer enough to make up the difference. Very soon the Power Corporation will have to go forward with a general rate application seeking approval for new electricity rates.

A general rate application is an important part of the process for regulating public utilities. Through the GRA, the Power Corporation will explain to the Public Utilities Board why it needs to charge new, higher rates. Based on the information presented to it, and input from the public, the board will make a decision on whether or not new rates are justified. It has been five years since NTPC's last GRA.

The GNWT is currently undertaking a due diligence review of the Power Corporation's general rate application. We want to make sure we get our homework done and that only those costs that absolutely have to be passed on to the customer are included in the GRA. The review is examining cost pressures on NTPC, opportunities for operational efficiencies, and looking at how costs have risen for other electricity companies in the last five years.

The review will also consider strategies for mitigating rate increases, including the option of financial support from the GNWT to cover some of the shortfall between costs and revenues. Any financial support from the GNWT will have to be considered in terms of its impact on other programs and services in communities. Given the current fiscal situation, it is not likely that we will be able to cover the shortfall entirely, but we are committed to doing what we can to keep electricity rate increases as manageable as possible for our residents.

A final report from the consultants conducting the review is expected by the end of February. NTPC is expected to file its rate application in early March and the first rate adjustments may start as early as this April.

I will be providing regular reports to Members of this Assembly on the progress of NTPC's general rate application and the government's ongoing efforts to minimize the impact on NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER SENIORS' SOCIETY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about the Hay River Seniors' Society. This is a very vibrant and fun-loving group of seniors in Hay River, an association of which I am proud to say I'm a member.

I have a recent newsletter and I'm just going to use it to highlight the very busy schedule seniors keep in Hay River. They do get together often and have a very good time. They have coffee at their facility five times a week. They're having a crib tournament in February. They're having a fun bingo with a Valentines theme. They've produced calendars and cookbooks which are almost sold out. They have decided this year to again undertake the management of the Hay River Tourist Booth. That's something that they did last summer. They set up a schedule so that when people came to Hay River and came to our Tourist Information Booth, they were greeted by seniors. They're going to be involved in helping out with the fishing derby. They have dinners. They have their annual general meeting coming up. They're involved in territory-wide work of abuse of older adults. They also have in their newsletter a little plug for our Seniors Parliament that they will be looking at sending a representative up for Hay River North and Hay River South.

Some stated priorities of this government are strong individuals, families and communities; sustainable, vibrant, safe communities. I want to suggest that the seniors of our communities are a very big part of that vibrant community and I am sorry to say that there is no direct funding for seniors' societies that is provided by this government. Yellowknife is fortunate enough to have a large enough group that they can actually fundraise to hire a full-time staff person, but in a community the size of Hay River, even though there is a fairly good membership, everything is done on a voluntary basis. It would enhance their efforts and some of the activities they would like to participate in greatly if even there were a small amount of money designated through a budget of this government for support for some of those activities. I think we could count on them to put the money to very, very good use.

I know that there is project-specific money for the NWT Seniors Helpline, for example, and there is project-specific money related to other activities and workshops that the seniors have, but I think there should be money for communities that don't have a seniors' society and those who do, because

I think it's extremely important for seniors to get together.

Later today I'll have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on why we don't have that.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REPLACEMENT OF FORT SIMPSON HEALTH CENTRE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to speak about a project that is very important to the residents of Nahendeh, which is a replacement of the Fort Simpson Health Centre.

This item has been bumped from the capital item for another year. I just want to make note of that. I understand that it is tentatively on the books for planning in 2013-2014 with construction beginning in 2014-2015. I want to make sure to keep to that schedule.

There has been a patchwork of renovations and retrofits that have kept it running over the years but these are band-aid solutions, and expensive ones at that. The facility is nearing the end of its useful life and now it needs to be replaced.

There's an essential piece of infrastructure not only for the village of Fort Simpson but for the entire Nahendeh region. The current health centre has a laboratory, X-ray, sterilization equipment, OBS, pharmacy room, two emergency rooms and five clinic rooms. In planning for the new centre, it is critical that we include all these same components so that the level of service is not downgraded in any way.

A few months from now we will be starting the process of reviewing the 2012-2013 Capital Estimates and I want to assure my constituents that I'll be fighting to ensure that the planning dollars for this new Fort Simpson Health Centre are included in that budget so that construction can go ahead in the following year.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES REVITALIZATION PROJECT

MR. MOSES: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we had a Minister's statement regarding Aboriginal languages and revitalization into our Aboriginal languages across the Northwest Territories. I wanted to briefly touch on that today. It really sparked my interest, and being someone who

doesn't speak their language, it's something that I want to see brought forward over the next four years so that by the end of four years I'll be able to stand here and do a Member's statement in Gwich'in, and that some of our colleagues can do the same thing.

Aboriginal languages are the foundation of northern cultures. They define Aboriginal peoples, they describe northern values and beliefs, and they provide the framework through which northern people express their views and their visions. This was an opening address made by the Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of ECE, in a report that was brought out in 2010. He also goes on to state that if nothing is done, we will lose our Aboriginal languages. As stated, I would like to see that this government moves forward into some of the work that the Minister is doing, along with Members on this side, so that these languages can be revitalized. In a briefing that was done earlier in this government, we noticed that languages across the Northwest Territories – it's not just the Gwich'in language, not the Inuvialuktun language – all languages are declining and that needs to be addressed and fixed, as I mentioned.

Not only languages. We're speaking about culture here. We're talking about dance. We're talking about music. We're talking about all things that are associated with culture that can bring our people stronger so that they're proud to be Northerners, proud of their cultures. That's something that I want to see brought forth within the next four years and get stronger each and every year as we move forward.

Later today I will be having some questions for the Minister of ECE in regard to his Minister's statement yesterday, and how we can move forward on this and start addressing some of the priorities in terms of the languages that have really declined and are in an emergency situation. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON EMISSIONS POLICIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the last session while debating how best to act on climate change, discussion was sidetracked as a focus on rules obscured the meat of the debate. Nevertheless, recognition of the need for real action shone through. Public responses sent to Ministers, colleagues and myself showed overwhelming public support for GNWT leadership on a more responsible position to fight climate change.

Here are some sample quotes: "We're in denial about what every major academy of science is telling us." "The imbalance has wreaked havoc on

the environment.” “Our behaviour is folly of the worst type.” “This government ignores the pleas of impacted communities and risks the future of my generation.” Just a few quotes, Mr. Speaker.

Comments restated a main point: that when our descendants judge us on the preservation of the planet and their future, our policies will be seen as irresponsible, inadequate and blind. I grant that to be on the leading edge is demanding, but by subscribing to scientifically sustainable policies, in contrast to carbon intensive development, progressive jurisdictions and businesses position themselves to compete effectively in the non-petroleum-dependent economies being forced upon us.

So back to the point. Clearly recognizing the science as our government does, a policy target of 100 percent increase in our carbon emissions by 2020 from such much earlier level is highly irresponsible and unacceptable, and our public agrees.

So what are some suggestions to help this government correct this? First, let's put in place a policy that reflects the science and aim for a 40 percent reduction in NWT carbon outputs by 2020, with a firm program of proven policies and laws that fully mitigate any large projects proposed. In place of the current void, the GNWT would commit itself to becoming carbon neutral in our and our wholly-owned corporations' operations by 2020. These can be achieved by driving our expansion of renewables through informed policy, support of communities in development of alternative energy systems and early adoption of smart grid technology, and perhaps some purchase of carbon offsets. Besides terrifically enhancing local and territorial economic development, such action will substantially reduce cost of living in our communities.

We must be leaders in averting the environmental suicide current policies condemn our descendants to enduring. Let's get it done. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK
HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sat yesterday eating my cold Valentine's Day supper shortly after a long and grueling debate on approving appropriations for this government to commence its due diligence on the Inuvik-Tuk highway, and it hit me: the Gravina Island Bridge. What does that have to do with the Inuvik-Tuk highway, you may ask. Let me tell you.

The Gravina Island Bridge controversy started in 2006 during the campaigning of Alaskan governor

hopeful, Ms. Sarah Palin. Coined as the bridge to nowhere, this behemoth project clocked at over \$398 million was a proposed bridge to replace the ferry service between the town of Ketchikan, Alaska, and Gravina Island. In the end, the bridge project was cancelled, yet the elected Palin administration forged forward, with federal money that couldn't be returned, to build a highway system which would have connected this proposed bridge.

Interestingly, this is where our similarity lies. This dead-end piece of constructed road was later coined the Road to Nowhere. History has a way of teaching us lessons in life, and although I strongly support the concept of connecting our Tuk neighbours to the rest of Canada, creating jobs, creating infrastructure capacity and much needed hope for the Beaufort-Delta, I am equally torn that this government is not doing a great job selling this concept to the Members on this side of the House or the people of the Northwest Territories, for that matter.

Decisions to move forward on this project are being hampered with emotional feelings or political lobbying rather than rational thinking. The Minister asking for a leap of faith or asking us to put our best foot forward or, heaven forbid, asking the Department of Transportation to trust them after what we have seen with the Deh Cho Bridge is not only unacceptable, it is insulting.

Mr. Speaker, I have complete respect and admiration for the people of Tuktoyaktuk. However, we don't want to see our own version of the Road to Nowhere. It is up to the people of the Beaufort-Delta and the rest of the Northwest Territories to stand up and be heard. Let's get the right answers to our questions and let's put all the cards on the table, because we are heading down a path or, in this case, a highway where the point of no return is just around the corner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has almost been a year since the government closed the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik to elders who cannot live independently. Now there is a line-up of elders waiting to get into the facility in Inuvik which serves the entire Beaufort-Delta region.

I am not convinced that the Inuvik facility can handle all of the elders who need care. I am not convinced that sending the elders to Inuvik and Yellowknife from the communities is the best way to care for our elders. In my riding alone, there are more than 300 elders over the age of 60. In Fort

McPherson and Tsiigehtchic there is only one home care worker in each community.

Mr. Speaker, even if they can't stay at home, the elders themselves would rather live in one of the Delta communities instead of Inuvik or Yellowknife. The reason is family and friends visit regularly and bring their elders traditional food.

The Joe Greenland Centre is part of our social and cultural fabric of the Delta, Mr. Speaker. The community of Aklavik was proud of its role in taking care of our elders.

Members of the 16th Assembly, a year ago, passed a motion to continue providing long-term care for elders at the Joe Greenland Centre. For all of these reasons, I am asking the Health Minister to reverse the department's decision to end long-term care at the Joe Greenland Centre. I believe the current building can be renovated to meet necessary standards, but if that is not possible, a new facility should be built in the Mackenzie Delta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was several years ago now, although it seems like just yesterday that the GNWT decided to implement the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy. The intent of the policy dated September 2007, was to provide consistent health benefit coverage for NWT residents who were not covered. But it also proposed to change the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Program to an income-tested model. Not surprisingly, there was considerable consternation, especially among seniors and residents with medical conditions requiring extensive treatment with expensive prescription drugs. There was great debate here in this House. Residents marched to protest on the sidewalks outside the House. There were numerous public meetings and consultations. Things seemed at an impasse.

A Joint Working Group comprised of Regular Members and Cabinet Ministers was formed in July of 2010. After considerable time spent discussing the policy, reviewing options, considering residents' concerns, the Minister of Health and Social Services of the day tabled the report of the Joint Working Group which contained 11 recommendations.

The 2007 policy was rescinded and work began on some of the Joint Working Group report's recommended actions. On April 1st of last year, several administrative changes took effect. To mention just a couple, one is residents with access to third-party insurance would be asked to use it

first before accessing the Extended Health Benefits Program or the Metis Health Benefits Program. A second one is we now use the same drug list for NWT residents whether they are funded by a federal NIHB Program or the NWT Extended Health Benefits Program.

What is still lacking is coverage for what has become known as the working poor, residents who have no health plan through their employer, who are not a senior over 60, not a Metis, not a status Indian and not on the department's specified conditions list.

It's been almost a year now since the initial changes were put into place. The Joint Working Group recommended provision of coverage for this segment of our population, yet there's been no information to Members since the last update on March 10, 2011. Is the department working to fill this coverage gap, or has that thought quietly slipped away?

We have to provide for all of our residents equally, Mr. Speaker. We're not doing that now and it's time for action. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEED FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FACILITY IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the long deliberation yesterday of the supplementary infrastructure budget, I went home, I didn't have any supper, I sat down on my couch, all alone in the dark.

---Laughter

However, Mr. Speaker, sitting there I thought about the rich resources that we have in the Sahtu region and the need for young people to start getting the proper education and training for the development that possibly could happen in the next four, five, or 10 more years.

We have a high population of young people. A couple of years ago, 45 percent of the entire Sahtu population was under 24 years of age. We need a Sahtu tech, a Sahtu college, a real college, real opportunity to bring the young people into one location. They have campuses in Inuvik, here in Yellowknife and in Fort Smith. We need a college like Keyano College or the college in Whitehorse.

We've had resource development happening since 1921. That's over 90 years. We need to prepare our young people to get into the workforce. They are no longer the trappers and the hunters of my grandfather and the ancestors of my people. We need to properly prepare them to go out into the workforce. We need to get them ready and we need to start talking about partnerships with industry, the

different government agencies and the Sahtu leadership to start talking and planning for a Sahtu tech in our region and to prepare our young people.

It is irresponsible of this government to send our young people out with minimum training from the Aurora College campus. People are telling us the campus is not living up to what it should be. So we need to start preparing our people to do the things that are fair and just, and give our children a fair opportunity to make it in the world, because they can do it.

I'll have questions for the Minister of Education and Culture at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ACKNOWLEDGING THE WORK OF AVIATION
AND TOURISM PIONEER MERLYN CARTER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December 15, 2011, the Hay River Airport was renamed in recognition of Hay River pioneer, long-time Hay River resident Merlyn Carter.

After acquiring his pilot's licence at 17, Merlyn moved from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, to the West Channel in Hay River to assist his parents with their commercial fishery. He later started Carter Air Services Limited, which he operated for 40 years. Merlyn was instrumental in assisting dozens of young men to start as pilots, including Joe McBryan, Perry Linton, Darcy Fleming and others who had successful lifetime aviation careers.

For decades, Carter's floats- and skis-equipped aircraft provided vital air services to communities around the Great Slave Lake and as far north as the Arctic Ocean when many of the settlements had no airports. Merlyn's fondness for the Aboriginal people in the NWT grew, as his many associations with them over the years grew as well.

On April 4, 2005, Merlyn and his wife Jean were recognized as honorary lifetime members of Northern Air Transportation Association for their contribution to aviation in the Canadian North. Sadly, on June 15, 2005, Merlyn was killed by a black bear at Nonacho Lake while preparing his tourism fishing camp for the summer season.

On June 3, 2008, Merlyn and Jean were inducted into the Canadian Tourism Hall of Fame, at a ceremony in Ottawa, for their contribution in the pioneering tourism in Canada's North. His lifelong contribution to aviation and tourism in the Northwest Territories helped to open Canada's North so that others could enjoy its beauty.

He was among the best-natured people we knew. Merlyn is affectionately remembered by all who had the pleasure to know him. On Friday my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen and myself will join the Minister

of Transportation in an official ceremony with the Carter family in Hay River.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
APPOINTMENT OF MR. JOACHIM
BONNETROUGE AS CHAIR OF
DEH CHO LAND USE COMMITTEE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee is pleased to announce that Joachim Bonnetrouge has been appointed as chair. His appointment is effective immediately.

Mr. Joachim Bonnetrouge was born on the land in Fort Providence. He attended 13 years of residential school, graduating with a diploma from high school in Fort Smith. He went on to study at college in Edmonton and Ottawa.

Mr. Bonnetrouge served the community of Fort Providence and the Deh Cho region in many capacities, including community development worker, Dene Zhatie language coordinator and employment workshop facilitator. He has served on numerous boards and committees, including the Native Communications Society, Deh Cho Health and Social Services, Dehcho Economic Corporation and the Youth Justice Circle.

Mr. Bonnetrouge has served in elected office, most recently as chief of the Deh Gah Gotie First Nations for a total of 13 years. Prior to his most recent term as chief, he served as project manager for the Aboriginal Health Foundation Healing Project for the Indian residential school survivors throughout the Deh Cho region.

Mr. Bonnetrouge has a keen interest in culture, traditions and values of his Deh Cho Dene people. He is a Member of the Dehcho Dene Drummers. He currently lives in Fort Providence with his wife, Nancy. They have worked together to raise four children.

Mr. Bonnetrouge replaces outgoing Interim Chair Herb Norwegian, who will resume the position of vice-chair.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EFFECTS FROM THE USE OF ROAD SALT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that road salt is damaging to our vehicles but it's also providing much harm to our natural world. Research in Canada and the United States shows that road salt is affecting drinking water sources and aquatic life. Levels of contamination to water

and sediment near Pickering, Ontario, exceed provincial water quality standards as much as 250 percent due to the amount of salt applied to the roads in winter.

Road salt is increasingly being used here in the North along Ingraham Trail. From the details provided by the Minister of DOT, it shows in the last six years that the increase in salt has gone up 200 percent on our Ingraham Trail road.

The fact is that road salt is not always the best choice for northern road conditions. In order for it to be most effective, temperatures need to stay above minus 10. Some public road authorities have started using liquid salt, but that doesn't solve the problem of refreezing. As more snow falls and melts into slush, the water reduces the amount of salt and ice forms even faster, requiring more road salt before the road becomes rougher, slippery and more dangerous before it hardens up.

Up here the common source we use on the roads is called gravel. That makes a lot more sense. Unlike gravel, road salt dissolves into the spring runoff. That is particularly disturbing on the Ingraham Trail where the road crosses lakes and comes very close to the shorelines. Water runoff on the highway embankments into nesting areas affects aquatic life.

Dr. Nick Eyles says and recognizes that Environment Canada has pointed out that salt has adversely affected wildlife, plants, water, soil, and in 2001 they even considered adding it to the country's list of most toxic substances. Instead, in 2004 the government instituted a voluntary code of practice to encourage municipalities to use other de-icing forms. We all know how voluntary practices and codes of conduct usually work out.

In closing, I want to point out that Northerners are a hardy bunch. We do like our salt on our eggs or fish at the dinner table, but we don't like it in our lakes, rivers and streams. I'll have questions for the Minister of Transportation later today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to join you in welcoming Mr. Anthony "Tony" Whitford. So many accolades, the list is getting longer daily. I'm looking forward to seeing him at the table with the table officers soon.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Mr. Tony Whitford, but for

one more accolade. He's actually a gifted auctioneer and on behalf of the Yellowknife Community Foundation he's raised thousands of dollars this past weekend for a lot of needy people and a lot of needy organizations around Yellowknife and the surrounding area.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize the very special, kind-hearted Anthony W.J. Whitford. He's a kind friend, a mentor of mine, and like Mr. Dolynny pointed out, he set that place on fire once he grabbed that microphone. His community volunteerism and participation is certainly well known, not only in the Northwest Territories, but as legislators, quite often when we travel, the first person they want to know about is: Do you know a guy named Tony? Boy, oh boy, he's made an impact not only in the North but I'd say worldwide. We're glad to have him.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise as well. I'd be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to recognize a Metis boy from Fort Smith who made good, who came to the big city, who has been a colleague and a friend for many years, and no matter how long he lives in Yellowknife, he'll always be a Metis boy from Fort Smith.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not very often I get to recognize people. I would also like to recognize Tony. Some 30-odd years ago I want to say that Tony said some things to me that made a huge difference in my life and I thank Tony for saving my life at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 82-17(2): CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON EMISSIONS POLICIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are directed to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I want to follow up on my earlier Member's statement, a key priority of the 17th Assembly's support of environmentally sustainable development, and obviously the public is on track here. Given our current policies, we're not achieving that and we're

not able to achieve that. There's no potential to achieve that. What is the Minister prepared to do in terms of improved policies and law to counter the threat to our people and environment?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the more important question is, given the Member's acknowledgement or description of, in his mind, the shortcomings of what the government is doing, what does the Member suggest we should be doing differently that we're not currently doing, given that we're on the eve of moving into yet another business planning process?

MR. BROMLEY: Most of my Member's statement was in fact dedicated to that, but I'd be happy to offer a lot of suggestions. We have elected this Minister to lead us and I'm expecting... This was raised in the last session, as you are well aware, having ruled on various points of order and so on. Now we're finally getting back to the debate here. Obviously, months have gone by and there's still no response. I'd like to ask that question again. What is this Minister doing, what is he prepared to do to modify our policies and laws to address the concerns on greenhouse gas emissions?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This is consensus government and we're in this together. The Member brings decades of experience, knowledge and skill on this issue to the table. It would be a shame if it wasn't fully incorporated into our thinking. We do rely on his advice in terms of what he would suggest.

We have laid out a plan. We have the Greenhouse Gas Strategy. We invested tens of millions of dollars into alternative energy, solar energy, building standards, any number of areas, waste reduction, all that have energy components, all that have climate change implications. We've spent millions on adaptation and we're trying to do the same on mitigation. We have a full slate. The Member says it's not enough. What would the Member like us specifically to do?

MR. BROMLEY: I guess we have a new protocol here. The Minister is asking me questions. I'm happy to take some time to answer those questions, as long as the Speaker will allow me. The first thing I would do is I would immediately get rid of the policy that says that we will allow our emissions to increase 100 percent by 2020 from some much earlier level when we were much lower when we know, and the Minister agrees, that the science says we need a 25 to 40 percent reduction in emissions by that time. It's behaviour such as this government...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley, this is time for question period. I'm sorry to cut you off, but if you could just raise your question, the Minister will answer. Continue.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Speaker request the Minister to respond to my questions, to answer my questions?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The current plan has us working to stabilize our emissions at 2005 levels or less. We have laid out - and I could go on at great length but I appreciate your direction on short answers - the things we have underway with the resources we have available. We're going to continue to work on those. We've met with local groups. We're pursuing the work on carbon tax, emission standards, all those types of things in addition to the ongoing work. We're in fiscal restraint so we don't have the same amount of money that we did in the 16th Assembly, so we're trying to be as creative as possible. We would appreciate all the guidance and assistance we can get as we move forward with the resources we have to deal with this issue.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that response from the Minister. I appreciate that. Will the Minister commit to immediately revising the Greenhouse Gas Policy to remove the policy of allowing greenhouse gas emissions to soar to 100 percent above earlier emissions by 2020 and replace it with a more responsible policy in line with the science with which he agrees?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As I've indicated, we've set the target for ourselves at reducing our emissions to 2005 levels or less. If that is through the course of the business planning process not deemed adequate by the Legislature and committees as we come forward, we will look at making whatever adjustments are agreed to. This is the result of the Greenhouse Gas Strategy that was just renewed at the tail end of the last Assembly. Of course, it's subject to ongoing review and we'll be happy to work with Members opposite as we go through the business planning process.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that response from the Minister. There are two main keys to achieving a reduction of greenhouse gas output and both of them also provide many opportunities for economic development reducing cost of living and so on. One is getting this government and our communities off carbon-intensive fuels and onto renewables. Another is requiring all future major industrial development to achieve carbon neutrality as a condition of approval. When will the Minister table a plan for achieving these crucial objectives?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have tabled a Biomass Strategy that speaks to that particular initiative. We're concluding a Solar Strategy. We're doing a Hydro Strategy. We're looking at wind as well. Geothermal. We, as well, are clearly on track. We have a plan that's called devolution. Devolution will give us the authority to control land, water and resource development, and it will allow us to make changes that are appropriate to the North on regulatory regimes to address some of the very issues that the Member talks about. With his full support, we could have that agreement signed by 2014. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 83-17(2):
FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY
SENIORS' SOCIETIES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are in follow-up to my Member's statement about seniors' societies. I talked about the Hay River Seniors' Society and mentioned that recently the Hay River Seniors' Society applied to the Department of Health and Social Services for funding and was turned down.

I wish that all Ministers would ask on this side of the House what we'd like. If Minister Beaulieu wants to ask me what I want, I want a pot of money set aside by this government that seniors' groups can apply for and be granted, for activities such as social activities, sports activities, health-based activities. I'd like to ask the Minister, is that something that we can do. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time the funding from the Department of Health and Social Services for seniors' groups in the Northwest Territories is to the NWT Seniors' Society which, in turn, works with the seniors' societies at the community level.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The funding that goes to the NWT Seniors' Society is project specific. It goes to fund things that are clearly outlined in terms of programming, the NWT Seniors Helpline, and various things like that. There is no money that is given to the NWT Seniors' Society which then is passed on to a local seniors' society such as the one in Hay River.

I would like to know if it would be possible to identify funds that could be applied for directly by local seniors' societies. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Department of Health and Social Services offers a range of programs to all seniors across the territory in all the

communities. They range from home care to long-term care, extended care and other seniors' benefits across the territory. I don't believe there are any monies actually marked for specific seniors' societies in the communities, but there is money given to the community for those very seniors. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I don't think anyone could deny that we, as a government, are mindful of the needs of seniors in the Northwest Territories, and the programming that Mr. Beaulieu articulates is correct. There are very good seniors' programs in place for many different things. However, the seniors themselves like to get together, plan activities, and these kinds of activities give the seniors something to look forward to and there's a lot of well-being in them being able to get together and do things together.

We fund youth in the communities. Why not seniors? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I will work with the NWT Seniors' Society, which is made up of seniors from all the communities – I believe the president of the seniors' societies in the various communities for the NWT Seniors' Society – to see if we could redistribute the money that's going to the seniors. If it's possible to put little pots of money into the communities so they can do those functions, I will make note of and discuss that with the NWT Seniors' president and the society. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Your final, short supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the Minister, if he has time and if his schedule permits, would he commit to meeting with the NWT Seniors' Society on this matter to get the information from them firsthand on whether these representatives of the various seniors' societies believe that specific funding for communities would be appropriate. Would he have time to do that? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will meet the NWT Seniors' Society. I have met with the Seniors' Society once since being appointed the Minister responsible for Seniors, and they know that I'm prepared to meet with them again any time that they wish to meet with me. I think we may actually have a meeting scheduled in a very short time here. I will bring that specific issue up at that time. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 84-17(2):
TRAINING AND EDUCATION
NEEDS IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I talked earlier about the need for a Sahtu tech in our region

here. I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what has this department and Aurora College done to find out what types of employment needs, training needs are needed in the Sahtu, the oil patch and how can they be met.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In the Sahtu region there are four community learning centres: Norman Wells, Deline, Fort Good Hope and Tulita. Each of those community learning centres have their own adult educators as well. There is also a Sahtu Regional Training Committee that deals with the long-term planning for the region. We are part of the process as well as the department. Those are ongoing initiatives and discussions that are happening at the regional level. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: Some of the facilities that Mr. Lafferty spoke about, our people in the communities are saying that we need more than what the campuses are providing right now. They're providing very minimum training for our people, and we need to advance it to a technical college in the region to take advantage of the potential of the oil and gas exploration, mining, construction. I want to ask the Minister if he can move this level of education to a new era that we would actually see a Sahtu tech college being planned for the region.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those types of discussions I believe are happening in the Sahtu region. Part of the committee, the Sahtu Regional Training Committee that deals with the five-year plan, I'm sure those types of discussions have occurred. I will find out from my departmental representatives if there has been discussion in that capacity with respect to the Member's request of a tech in the Sahtu region. Those types of discussions and also a lot of the training needs of the regions are part of the five-year training plan that's been produced by the region. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: The people in the Sahtu will look at opportunities such as the building of the new wellness centre or the long-term care facility in the Sahtu, and we want to prepare for that through that type of programming that could be available. That's one of the things I ask of this Minister: what type of programs that we could start initiating with the training of construction.

There's oil and gas coming in. We've spent up to \$70 million in the Sahtu this winter. There are oil and gas companies coming in for the next four or five years. We need to initiate. Can the Minister tell me if his department is planning to meet with the leadership, the oil and gas industry, any type of construction company and this government, to start looking at a Sahtu tech?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: From the Sahtu perspective, I think we certainly need to take full advantage of the community learning centres at the regional level. Yes, indeed, we need to prepare our people for the opportunities that are coming. At the same time there are talks and we do have a representative from the Sahtu region on the Aurora College Board of Governors, Ms. Ethel Blondin-Andrew. There have been talks about a potential mobile trades unit similar to the Inuvik initiative that's been very successful. Those are some of the discussions that are happening within the training committee. If there is a meeting proposed by leadership, by all means, my departmental staff are more than willing to partake in the discussion as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the recent booming of the oil and gas activity in the Sahtu region, I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what is he doing or his department doing with the Aurora College to prepare our people to work in the oil patch development and have jobs so they can apply for jobs and make a career in that field? What is he doing? We are proposing a Sahtu tech. Will the Minister support that?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I can definitely find out from the Aurora College – they are arm's length from us when it comes to program delivery – and find out exactly what kind of program has been offered in the region pertaining to the Member's request. I can get back to the Members as well. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 85-17(2):
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES
REVITALIZATION PLAN

MR. MOSES: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It is in regards to the Minister's statement that he mentioned yesterday and working to increase the number of Aboriginal language speakers, provide employment opportunities for elders and improve educational opportunities for our Aboriginal students.

Mr. Speaker, with this whole work plan in place, I wanted to ask the Minister, will he give priority to those languages that are being detrimentally declining over the last few years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories recognizes 11 official languages. Nine of them are Aboriginal languages. Yes, indeed, some of the languages, we are losing our language, more specifically, the Gwich'in area and the very reason why we have gone to Fairbanks, Alaska, to find out the best practices. We have initiated that and we brought the information back. We are pursuing rolling out the program.

Yes, all the languages in the Northwest Territories need to be protected, revitalized, and more specifically, those are on the verge of losing their language. We must put more emphasis on program delivery in those areas. That is our goal for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, I know we have to put the programs and services into place for all languages. However, we do have a couple of languages that are close to extinction here, specifically the Gwich'in language. We have some in the South Slave. Will the Minister see those results and put the emphasis and priorities to address those languages and cultures first, before moving on to the ones that are already doing well in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are discussions that we definitely need to have with language experts from the region and communities because I need to hear them out. It won't be coming from the top down to say this is what is good for you. I will be working with the Member and also the language experts at the community level. We did form a committee to deal with the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative that is part of that and also Aboriginal Languages Strategy.

There are certain languages that are almost on the verge of extinction. At the same time, we need to protect all languages. If we need to identify Gwich'in as the first priority and second priority and so forth, we need to have those discussions. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate all of the efforts that Education, Culture and Employment is doing to revitalize our languages and taking our Members down to Alaska to look at best practices that we can incorporate here in the Northwest Territories.

With that said, moving forward in the strategic plan, can the Minister look at possibly creating a curriculum in the Aurora College to address these languages? That is one avenue to do it to get our adults back into the Aurora College system to start learning the language. Will the Minister please respond and let me know if that is one avenue that he is looking at, is having the credited course through the Aurora College system on Aboriginal languages? I believe in Inuvik we have had some Spanish classes. I am looking at Gwich'in. I am

looking at Inuvialuktun. Will the Minister please answer that question? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, we are looking at all opportunities that may be available to us. Will there be the college program delivery in our own language? We have seen that at the University of Fairbanks, and even at the post-secondary level they were teaching in their own language with no English, period. It is our dream to be there. At the same time, we need to work with the college board of governors and the staff if they could deliver those types of programming. At the same time, we are lacking resource people, as well, those qualified Aboriginal-speaking teachers.

I am challenging the leadership around this table and across the Northwest Territories to promote more of those individuals that can pursue the Teacher Education Program that speak the language to come out of the programming with qualified qualifications so they can start teaching our own people in their own language. That is part of the wish and we will pursue that even further. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the revitalization of Aboriginal languages and he has also talked previously about Aboriginal student achievement. Can he combine the two and make languages in elementary schools part of a strong curriculum in the schools and enhance that and put more funding towards that? Will the Minister commit to those funding dollars? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, that is part of the plan to have full-fledged emergent programs in schools. We may not be able to cover all schools at the beginning, but that is part of the long-term plan, part of the ASA and also Aboriginal Languages Strategy. We are going through a business planning cycle. We need to identify those funds. Those two documents that I have highlighted, it is a big document. It is a long-term strategy. We will be rolling out those programs. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 86-17(2):
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF
THE USE OF ROAD SALT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about road salt and certainly I tried to highlight some of the impacts of road salt usage in the Northwest Territories. I want to thank the Minister of Transportation. He has

provided me with some raw data on what is used annually here since 2006-07 on road salt.

As I said in my Member's statement today, in the last six years, it has increased over 200 percent. What type of monitoring of the impacts of road salt usage is happening by his department to ensure that we are not creating problems with the environment such as the rivers, ponds and streams? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Transportation has been using road salt for the de-icing agent in the Northwest Territories for the past 26 years. If the Member would like some detailed information on possible environmental impact of the use of road salt, I would be more than happy to ask the department for that. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, in answering the Minister's question, I will say yes.

Mr. Speaker, Environment Canada, as I am aware, has done a fair bit of research along Highway No. 3 to study the impact of road salt. Is the reason why the Department of Transportation wouldn't typically monitor the amount of road salt considering the amount we use? At the same time, why do we use road salt? Why don't we just go with gravel, which is a product naturally found here so we wouldn't be introducing anything new and doing any harm to our environment? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the application of road salt happens when the temperature is minus 10 and rising in periods of close to freezing. It is considered to be better application than the gravel in those instances. It is not used all the time, all winter, but predominantly in the fall and the spring. Because our climate is changing and we are seeing more days where we are susceptible to freezing rain, the use of salt has increased. If the climate continues to change, that trend is likely to continue. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, and I appreciate the answer from the Minister. Interestingly enough, through my research and, of course, some of the response for the Minister, it highlights minus 10 or warmer is basically the time, I'll say the opportunity to use road salt, because if you use it when it's colder than minus 10 it doesn't work. So would the Minister of Transportation be willing to re-evaluate the Department of Transportation's usage of road salt in the Northwest Territories because of the possible negative effects that are happening? I shouldn't say possible, these are known negative effects that are happening to our environment. Would he be willing to review that policy? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. As I mentioned earlier to the Member, I'd be more than happy to go back to the department to get their understanding of what any potential environmental impact is with the use of road salt. But like I said, we've been applying that to the roads here in the Northwest Territories for the past 26 years. So I will get that information. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to sound combative, but just because we've done it for 20 years this way doesn't mean we couldn't do it better or another way tomorrow. We've all been using the same beaver pelt hats where they use mercury on them in order to be safe. So, I'll take the Minister's point, though, and if he could provide that to the standing committee as well as all Members, that would be very useful for us, especially the companion of the Environment Canada study that has been looking at the lakes along the highways here. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. Yes, we'll do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 87-17(2):
LONG-TERM CARE NEEDS
OF MACKENZIE DELTA ELDERS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Is the Minister willing to 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 Mackenzie Delta? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The long-term care facilities need to be located near larger centres where we have physicians and nursing care and so on. Right now it makes it very difficult to put long-term care in the smaller communities where that service is not available 24/7. That's been the issue in the past. Because physicians are not available 24/7, it's difficult to keep long-term care in the smaller centres like Aklavik. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Is the Minister going to increase the amount of home care workers as an interim measure until we receive a long-term care facility? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we have. In the difference between the year when last year when the Joe Greenland Centre had housed the eight

people that were level 1 and 2 in the facility, we had 139 home care visits into the private home or into the units that are allocated in the Joe Greenland or around the community from the Housing Corporation, to just under 700 visits the year after that portion of the facility was changed to independent living. Thank you.

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

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

QUESTION 88-17(2):
RISK MATRIX FOR LARGE
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the record, I do support the Inuvik-Tuk highway. What I'm going to be questioning here later is the process on how we get there.

Less than a year ago, the Auditor General of Canada brought forward to this House their statements or findings regarding the Department of Transportation and their handling of the Deh Cho Bridge. My question today will be around some of the findings in that study that have to do with the risk matrix. The risk matrix, Mr. Speaker, is what worst-case scenario could happen, and would have happened, and did happen, and quite frankly we know, with all due respect, that the Deh Cho Bridge had a lot of things that went astray.

So my question for the Minister of the Department of Transportation is: What has the Department of Transportation and the Minister of Transportation learned from the Deh Cho Bridge project as it pertains to risk management to the risk matrix? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we move the Inuvik to Tuk Highway Project forward, obviously a risk matrix is going to be an important factor in this construction. We have to learn from lessons in the past, but again, the parallels that some Members like to make between the Deh Cho Bridge and the Inuvik-Tuk highway are unwarranted. We have a willing and able partner in the federal government that's contributing \$150 million to the Inuvik to Tuk Highway Project and we will develop a risk matrix and we will continue to move the project forward. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. I do appreciate the Minister's comment regarding the partnering, but again, risk matrix is more than just a partner. There are a lot of elements behind it and I'm sure the Minister is aware of that. So having said that, do we have any preliminary findings of a risk matrix that can be shared with the people of the Northwest

Territories as it pertains to this new project that is on the floor? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yesterday in the House we approved the \$2.5 million in the supp. That will enable us now to go out and do that work that will, again, push us towards developing a risk matrix for the Tuk-Inuvik highway. So I want to thank the Members that supported that yesterday. Again, we will continue to make sure that the project does move forward. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. Again I thank the Minister for his comments, but at what point can we expect to have a full risk matrix for the Inuvik-Tuk highway and will this critical piece, which is an important piece I think for the Members and the people of the Northwest Territories to have, will we get this information and will it be available before we get past that point of no return when it comes to proper funding?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. We've got to get out, get the geotechnical work done, the environmental work done, ensure that the environmental assessment is complete, get the financing arrangement with the federal government complete and get a better estimate of what the project is going to cost, and I think once all that work is done, we will be able to ascertain what the risks are associated with the construction of the highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. So that, again, that work is going to proceed and we will at some point in time in the very near future develop that risk matrix for all Members to see. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 89-17(2):
STATUS OF SUGGESTED CHANGES TO
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Health and Social Services and I'd like to follow up on my statement. The issue of changes to the Extended Health Benefits Program was extremely contentious and it was a couple of years ago that we went through great upheaval and discussion about the changes. The policy was rescinded, but there were some recommended changes and some of those actions were put in place. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can advise the House and the Members and the public where things are at on the rest of the recommendations that were in the Joint Working Group's report, provide us with an update on what has been implemented since the update that we had last year. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there's been a lot of discussion and that in dealing with the Supplementary Health Program. One of the key areas that the MLAs asked be looked at was addressing the working poor that didn't have coverage, any existing supplementary or any sort of health coverage at all. The department has done the work, is now working on trying to fill that gap, and it seems to be a gap there now of the working poor, and the department is bringing information together to try to fill that gap.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'm pleased to hear the department is doing some work. I guess I'd like to know from the Minister what kind of timeline we're on to do this work and to get the coverage that's required for the people who are not currently covered in terms of our health program. Can he tell me when Members will be advised of the work that the department is doing and what kind of a time frame we can expect to see this coverage in place?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This is a fairly large group of individuals. One of the key aspects of the work will be to cost out this type of benefit, and once the benefit is costed out, then this government would have to come back to the House in the business planning process to get the money together. It's not going to be in this business plan, so I will commit to the Member that we can do the costing for the next business plan.

MS. BISARO: To the Minister, I guess if the Minister is needing costing, I have umpteen documents in my files which I can provide to him. That work was done when the Joint Working Group met over a year and a half, two years ago. One of the recommendations in the report was to look at a pharmaceuticals plan for the NWT and/or to work with Western Canada provinces and territories to try and develop a plan to reduce the costs of our drugs. It's well known that drugs are our most expensive cost. Can the Minister tell me whether or not any work is being done to develop a pharmaceuticals plan either within the territory or within Western Canada?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The department is doing a pharmacy strategy. I'm sure all the costs of medicine, pills, pharmaceuticals are within that strategy.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My usual question to the Minister: If we're developing a strategy, when are we going to see it?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't have the timeline with me here. I will commit to providing that information back to the Member as soon as the department is able to give me the details on when that strategy will be in place.

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

QUESTION 90-17(2):
COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH
POWER DISRUPTION CAUSED BY
MILITARY EXERCISES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation and it's my hope I can get answers beyond finalizing devolution as the answer to all of my questions. The hydro supply for Yellowknife and Behchoko was recently knocked out by the Canadian Military's current exercises for our protection. We face a huge bill for one kilometre of transmission line repairs, elevated fuel costs replacing hydro with diesel power for at least 10 days, and associated expenses. Will the Minister be sending an invoice to the federal Minister of National Defence for a refund of these costs or can we anticipate that NTPC is already beavering a way of revising upward their GRA for higher electricity rates to pay for this?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Devolution clearly is a priority of this government, but clearly in this instance I agree with the Member, it's not germane to the matter at hand. Yes, NTPC is hard at work on their general rate application. As well, we are hard at work in making sure we get power up and running and we get off diesel. We'll be sorting through as they do the debrief of what happened, and look at where the costs and all the things that happened that contributed to this unfortunate circumstance to see where obligations lie. We will follow up once that's done.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that answer. We need to know the total bill resulting from this incident. Will the Minister document these new costs, including replacement of materials, generating fuel, staff time, additional equipment charges, travel, charter, and so on – everything, basically – and report this total cost to the Assembly?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Once all those accrued costs are in and we have a clear understanding of what they are, and we've done all the final analysis and bookkeeping, I will provide that information to committee since it's going to be some time before we gather in this Legislature. So I will commit to provide that information to committee.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. One has to question the care that was taken in the planning of these exercises to ensure

protection of public safety and infrastructure. Has this government contacted the commanders of these exercises and requested assurance and a detailed explanation of measures being taken to prevent further harm to people and vital infrastructure or will we do that contact soon?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, we are fully engaged with DND both in terms of the immediate response, looking at what happened. As well, we have folks looking at what caused this, what needs to be done in the future, the issue of accounting that the Member has talked about. We are engaged and we will be fully engaged with them until this whole matter is put to rest.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that response. There's also the tragic side to this, obviously, as the power outage may have been directly related to a serious workplace incident at the airport. I offer my sympathies to the family of the injured man in hopes of his recovery and I know we all do. There have also been road accidents that could have been more serious. This government needs to strenuously state to the Department of National Defence that safety comes first and exercise objectives come second. Should be obvious but maybe it isn't. Will the Minister take that on?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I know that the Department of National Defence military place the safety of its members above all, even though they often go in harm's way on our behalf. In this instance I think it's premature to assume that there was any dereliction of duty or things weren't done properly or that they sacrificed safety for some other expedient motive. I think we have to be careful, be measured. Let's find out what happened, and there will be plenty of time to ascribe blame once we have all the facts.

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

QUESTION 91-17(2):

EFFECTIVENESS OF POTASH ON ICY ROADS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my colleague Mr. Hawkins' questions about salt on the roads and the potential environmental impact and significance of that. One only has to travel south crossing the NWT border into Alberta and see the difference on the highways to realize that what they are using in the Mackenzie County in northern Alberta does not work on the roads. If you go to the wreckers in High Level and look at how many totalled vehicles there are in that junkyard you will see how many vehicles roll on northern Alberta's Mackenzie County highways in

the winter, because they are using something more environmentally friendly called potash. It's some derivative of potash. What it actually does is polish the ice on the road. It does not interact with the ice at normal temperatures as salt would or calcium chloride would and it's killing people. It is affecting the residents of the Northwest Territories who have to find their way south going over that road. I would ask the Minister of Transportation if he would seek to communicate with his Alberta counterpart who would be responsible for highways, to find out what kind of success they have found in using an alternative to our traditional calcium chloride and salt on their roads.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly look forward to that discussion with my counterpart in Alberta and we'll get back to the Member once that does happen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So although we have some scientific data that would indicate that what we put on the roads may be finding its way into our waterways, I think we need to weigh that against the risk to the travelling public when conditions on the road are ice and a different alternative product is used. Perhaps the Minister could also request the stats for the number of serious motor vehicle accidents that have occurred compared to when they used to use a product like salt or calcium chloride before. I'd like to know the comparison of the statistics for motor vehicle accidents in the jurisdictions that have turned to this more environmentally friendly alternative.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I will get that level of detail for the Member, but last year in the NWT there wasn't anyone that perished on our highways here in the Northwest Territories. I agree with the Member that we need to balance public safety with the environmental concerns. I will get the information for both Members.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That's good, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 92-17(2):
INCOME SUPPORT POLICY
ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sure would like to join the discussion on roads with my colleagues from Hay River South and the Yellowknife MLA here. I'm so hungry for roads I can taste the salt on them.

I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the really important issue. It goes against the culture of the people in my region, specifically in Colville Lake. We have elders that need help. Their family relatives want to look after them, but once the family relatives live with them, the Minister's policy says if you are going to live with them you'll be penalized and we'll cut off your fuel or any other type of subsidies or income support. Can the Minister tell me if this policy can be changed?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The policies are in place for a reason and they can be amended as well. Based on what the discussions are that we've had with income security programming, we've made some drastic changes in 2007 to increase our funding. When the Member speaks to the senior fuel subsidy, I believe he's referring to there are areas that we need to explore. We don't want to have an impact on a senior's pension when it comes to subsidies. There are people living in the household. I understand some people are living there helping out, but some people do take advantage of the elderly people in the community. We have to be mindful of that. It is across the board. It's not only the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We have policy that impacts other areas within other departments, as well, on the household income. We have to be mindful of that.

MR. YAKELEYA: The seniors that I've talked to are poor, they need help. The home care is not there enough. These are seniors that need help with medication or groceries or wood or hauling of the water. They're poor. Quit picking on our seniors. They've done enough for us. We're asking the government to look at a policy to be amended to allow family members to help the seniors in those areas. Seniors are afraid of the government policies and the community is saying that this policy is going against the culture of the people. Would the Minister be willing to look at seeing how we can change this?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This particular policy on the Seniors Home Heating Subsidy Program is intended to assist, as the Member stated, low-income seniors. If there are also other individuals living in the household, as well, that are earning an income, they should be contributing towards the actual cost of fuel or food in the household as well.

We've heard in the past, our ancestors, our grandfathers, that we have to share within our household, share within the community, and that's what should be happening with individuals that are living in that particular household. They need to

share their costs, as well, and that's not happening. We also get calls from seniors, as well, that we need to assess them, and that's what we're doing in those areas. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: There are also seniors who are getting help from their own relatives and support from family members. Has the Minister gone to Colville Lake and seen what the cost of living is there? It's outrageous. There are people there that don't work that are helping the seniors. As soon as the seniors get help, they're being penalized so much that our seniors are afraid, and some of them are scared of living in these small communities.

Can the Minister, if he has heart, look at this policy with his colleagues to see if they can get help? There are some good seniors that are not getting the help in the Northwest Territories because the policies are not fitting with the communities' needs. Can the Minister look at that?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We have explored those areas regarding some of the seniors having individuals living with them. It could be providing more home care to them. Another area that we also explored is the seniors and individuals living under their roof, could they be invoiced as opposed to the senior. We have been exploring those areas. We have a representative at the regional level, as well, and we continuously have those discussions at the community level and at the regional level, and we will continue to do that if we need to make those changes. We need to consult with the communities as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I ask this government to quit picking on our seniors. They've done enough. They've helped us. I ask this government what does it need from this side of the Regular Members to get the job done fairly and quickly. Will he show us where the target is so I think we can hit the bull's eye on this issue here?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: For the record, we're not picking on the elders, the seniors in the community. We have subsidized the elders in the communities. The Seniors Fuel Subsidy is particularly for those individuals that are low-income households. So we do provide subsidies. At the same time, we have increased the threshold of \$10,000 as well. We are making changes to our policy and we will continue to do that. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 93-17(2): MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to ask the

Minister to give us a bit of an update on minimum wage. It was a year ago on April 1st, and it wasn't a joke, but we had our second planned increase to minimum wage. It took effect on that day. A year prior to that, at the time of the first increase in February of 2010, the Minister told us that he was considering ways to implement future minimum wage increases. At the time of the second increase, the Minister advised that there was work that needed to be done. He was going to be doing consultations and evaluations.

I'd like to first off ask the Minister whether or not any of that work, the consultations and the evaluation of the increases to minimum wage, has been done at this point. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. There have been a couple of increases to minimum wage as requested by the Members of the Legislative Assembly. There has been some work done. I don't have that specific detailed information, but I can provide that to the Members once I get my hands on it.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. I guess I would like to know from the Minister, the work that's been done, the information that he's about to provide to us, has that been looking at a method to provide for ongoing, considered and regular increases to minimum wage? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are part of the discussions that my department has been exploring with other jurisdictions as well. Part of the best practices, we analyze other provincial and territorial jurisdictions and how they increase their, I guess, annual wage increase. It has been part of that discussion, yes.

MS. BISARO: I guess I need to ask the Minister my usual question as to timing. I did ask that question a year ago and I was advised that the Minister would check his findings and get back to me. I haven't heard anything in the ensuing 12 months, so I would like to again ask the Minister when I might expect to get some information from the Minister and the department as to how we will have steady, and planned, and regular increases to minimum wages in the future.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated, there has been some research in other parts of the jurisdictions and my department has been discussing that with various counterparts, various parties involved. I can assure the Member that there is work in process. Not only that, I can assure the Member that I will get to the Member before the 12-month period. But this is a particular area that has been of interest to us, as well, since the

Member has been asking. I will definitely get back to all the Members on the timing of the next steps. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions, on the agenda today. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins.

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 94-17(2): ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS RELATED TO ROAD SALT USAGE

MR. HAWKINS: I just want to follow up with some of the issues Member Groenewegen raised, and I don't disagree with some of the concerns she highlighted. My question, of course, evidently will be directed to the Minister of Transportation.

Is it not part of the law to drive with due care and attention to the conditions of the road? I wonder if the Minister could answer that particular question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the very clear and succinct answer from the Minister over there. Of course, in that particular case, just for clarity for the public following the issue, if the posted limit is 90 kilometres an hour and the snow causes you to drive slower due to safety, would it not seem reasonable to be driving to the conditions of the road at that time? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe the Member is asking for my opinion. The question is a bit hypothetical, if you want my opinion. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I guess if that is the way he wants to answer the question, but the obvious question is yet again his earlier answer was yes, you drive to the conditions of the road. Does the Minister of Transportation note that there is a concern about the buffalo licking salt off the highways on our roads? Does that not pose a problem with the Department of Transportation or, at the very least, a concern? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, that certainly would be a concern, but as I have mentioned to Member Groenewegen earlier, we are very proud of the fact that last year we had zero fatalities on the roads here in the Northwest Territories. I think that is a testament to the programs that we have, the Drive Alive program

and other public safety efforts that we put forth. We are happy to have zero fatalities on our roads. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Ms. Danielle Bryan who is a fourth year political science student at the University of Toronto. Ms. Bryan is a student of Professor Graham White, a noted scholar of northern Aboriginal systems of government. She is here to witness our system of government in action. Welcome, Ms. Bryan.

---Applause

Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Menicoche.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 2-17(2): OLD AGE SECURITY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Friday, February 17, 2012, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly opposes any reductions to Canada's Old Age Security benefits;

And further, that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Premier of the Northwest Territories champion this issue to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to ensure that Old Age Security benefits are not reduced for current or future NWT seniors;

And furthermore, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 3-17(2): ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES SECRETARIAT

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Friday, February 17, 2012, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Government of the Northwest Territories re-establish a permanent secretariat for Aboriginal language services;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories consult and develop interim measures to improve the Aboriginal language services, with the full involvement of the existing interpreter-translators in Northwest Territories communities who speak different dialects;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories seek such additional funds as may be required for the secretariat for Aboriginal language services from the federal government, as a matter of urgent necessity and equity;

And furthermore, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 3: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2011-2012

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Friday, February 17, 2012, I will move that Bill 3, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 4: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2011-2012

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 17, 2012, I will move that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 2: INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), 2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 2, Interim Appropriation

Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had first reading. Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 2:
INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 2, Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make interim appropriations for operational expenditures for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had second reading. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 15, notices of motion, on the orders of the day. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley.

Notices of Motion (Reversion)

MOTION 4-17(2):
IMPROVING ALCOHOL AND
DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 17, 2012, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Department of Health and Social Services investigate the potential for successful implementation of similar programming and work with standing committees to test and introduce a similar program in the NWT;

And further, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, Report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 2:
INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 2, Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had third reading. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

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

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 16, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 16, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

