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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, October 29, 2012****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, 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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I totally support the role and authority of the Speaker in this House, that's yourself. If any of my remarks last week brought that into question, I apologize. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 74-17(3):
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
BEGINS NORTH SLAVE
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, this is a significant day for the Northwest Territories. Today, for the first time at any northern correctional facility, Commissioner Marie Wilson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is at the North Slave Correctional Centre to acknowledge residential school experiences, impacts and consequences.

Over the next several days, inmates can give individual statements to contribute to the historical records the commission is gathering on the legacy of residential schools.

People who have been through residential school, or have suffered from the devastating effects on their family, far too frequently have also been in front of our community justice committees, our courtrooms, or have been sentenced to our correctional facilities. Today many of these inmates will take another step in their journeys to heal.

As I mentioned to the Assembly in June, we have worked closely with Health Canada to ensure our inmates have the support they need through their healing process. This support has also been provided for the staff to ensure they have the right skills to help inmates and can address their own self-care.

Each inmate will have a plan in place for continuing care from our staff at North Slave Correctional Centre, the residential school care specialists working with Health Canada, and our partners in Health and Social Services. Support is essential for success in healing. We started providing this support before the statement-taking process, and will continue when inmates return to their home communities.

The people who are in North Slave Correctional Centre may have had a more difficult route than most.

To those who are adding their stories to the official record this week, we applaud your courage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 75-17(3):
NEW EGG GRADING FACILITY IN HAY RIVER

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, on Friday the town of Hay River celebrated the opening of a new, federally certified egg-grading station for the Northwest Territories.

The event marked a new era for egg production in the NWT. The new state-of-the-art facility is the final piece of the puzzle that the NWT needed to get back into the regulated egg marketing industry.

The ability to complete grading will allow us to put NWT eggs in NWT stores, but more importantly, from an economic point of view, sell NWT eggs into the full wholesale, retail and food service sectors in the South.

Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge the work of my predecessor, and now Premier, Honourable Bob McLeod on this initiative.

His early vision and leadership, the commitment and partnership of the NWT Egg Marketing Board and our government's own work and financial investment have come together to reposition our territory and the town of Hay River to benefit from the National Regulated Egg Marketing Program and the opportunities it opens for us.

Much has been said about regulated egg marketing over the years, but the one consistent message heard throughout Canada's agriculture sector is

that the program provides for a reliable and sustainable economic base to build our agriculture industry on.

Selling our own eggs diversifies the economy, enhances employment opportunities, attracts new capital investment in the territory, and generates new markets for made-in-the-NWT products. We knew this when we started this process in 2009, and our work is paying off. In 2009 the NWT's egg quota was going unused. Today almost the entire quota is placed into production. That is almost three million dozen eggs serving the table market in the NWT and the South.

The new egg grading station represents new capital investment in Hay River, 20 new jobs for local residents, and the launch of a nearly \$7 million industry in our agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the NWT Egg Marketing Board. Under Jackie Milne's capable leadership, they have successfully guided and revitalized the egg marketing industry in Hay River.

I would like to recognize, also, the support of Hay River MLAs Mrs. Jane Groenewegen and Mr. Robert Bouchard, and MLA for Deh Cho Mr. Michael Nadli in this initiative.

Finally, I would like to congratulate John Penner, Bruce Ramage and the Wallingtons – Glen, Mike and Kevin. They took an idea and transformed it into solid business plans. They identified and supplied market demand. Above all, they were prepared to take risks.

Their energy embodies the resilient entrepreneurial spirit that is the driving force behind our northern economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Premier McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 76-17(3):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Glen Abernethy will be leaving the House later today and will be absent from the House until Friday to attend the federal/provincial/territorial meeting of Justice Ministers in Regina, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WSCC EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT RATES AND GNWT SAFE ADVANTAGE PENALTIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I spoke several times in support of our small businesses. We know that our small businesses are facing many costs, but what are they faced with today? This government has professed its commitment to supporting our small businesses and residents by helping with the cost of living and dealing with the basic costs for business. And what are those? Those are things like heating fuel, electricity, red tape, and WSCC employee issues and assessment costs. What are they experiencing in these areas that we have professed to be helping our businesses in, Mr. Speaker?

Let's look at electricity. Electricity we are subsidizing over the next three years to the tune of over \$65 million, and has gone up, according to the cost of living report we just heard, 8.7 percent this year. We are predicting almost a 30 percent increase in costs over the next three years.

Let's look at heating fuel. Those costs have been soaring, as we all know, around the world due to global factors.

Let's look at employee assessment rates. I have a constituent who talked to me recently, who got a letter saying her Class 7 employee assessment rates are going up, the government claims, 6 percent. Now it's gone up from 48 cents to 58 cents per \$100. That, to my Grade 3 mathematics, is a total of 23 percent. I don't know where the government gets 6 percent, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to cut my remarks short because I see the clock is not working and I'm not sure exactly what time I have, but it's clear that this government is failing on its professed commitments and, again, repeated commitments that we will come through and support our businesses and residents.

Costs are going up massively and I think a newsletter from WSCC said a 15.9 percent increase on average for employee assessment rates. Mr. Speaker, how can we possibly wonder why businesses are either throwing in the towel or choosing not to come to the Northwest Territories?

I will be asking questions in the House today on both of these related issues, and asking how we can really provide support for our businesses and keep them here as the engines of our economy in all of our communities. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
WSCC EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT RATES
AND GNWT SAFE ADVANTAGE PENALTIES

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT Safe Advantage penalties for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission have been tabled in this House and have risen from zero dollars in 2009-2010 programming, to \$243,583 in 2010-2011 and a whopping \$508,625 in 2011-2012.

In the Department of Human Resources' own words, it claims to "have taken significant steps in the development of health and safety programs in the last few years. Current results demonstrate that there is work to be done across the GNWT to ensure the safety of all our employees and reduce claims cost experience."

The Regular Members sure hope that the Minister and his department will clearly address this indicator of shortcomings from its own safety performance and lead by example, as we expect all our contractors to do the same.

However, I am not here today to shine a light on this huge cost to taxpayers. I am more interested in sharing my findings on how our poor performance in claims growth, as WSCC's largest employer, has had on the whole industry. Moreover, the question that I think needs to be asked is: Is NWT business subsidizing our government's poor ratings and costs to WSCC?

Let me explain. Most businesses would have received lately a WSCC notice of their 2013 employer assessments on their rates. In this notice it explains the doom and gloom of rising health care costs, the depressed markets, and the need to sustain the fund to protect employers and injured workers; all noble causes. It further explains that in July this year, WSCC advised employers of a 28 cent increase in the 2013 provisional target assessment rate, from \$1.77 to \$2.05 per \$100 of assessable payroll. This, according to WSCC's own numbers, works out to a whopping 13.7 percent increase this year on average.

Payroll premiums such as this are a significant expense for any employer, yet to most people this is a complex topic. The business community knows the level of premium an employer pays is directly related on the claims experience of such industry and class. Furthermore, depending on your previous year's performance, it can have a significant impact on your assessment.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: In the case of the GNWT, the short-term recent poor performance over the last two years is concerning and very problematic. It is clear that while the government will enjoy a new

rate of 79 cents per \$100, it had only a slight increase from its original 66 cents per \$100 in the wake of these huge penalties in claims growth. In essence, is the GNWT being treated more favourably or being capped in response to this recent poor performance and is business subsidizing the remaining balance sheet for the WSCC?

I will have more questions for the Minister of Human Resources on why the GNWT Safe Advantage penalties are so high and growing yearly, which departments are causing such claims growth, and why are WSCC payroll premiums not broken down by department to reflect a more realistic comparison in the industry rate classes and premiums.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LONG-TERM FLOOD PLAN
FOR NAHANNI BUTTE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The people of Nahanni Butte have been trying to get back to normal after last spring's flood and community evacuation. There are still many needs to be met and I again call on the community members to be patient.

However, as I mentioned last week, we also need a long-term plan for Nahanni Butte, which may include relocating the community out of the current flood plain it sits in.

The flood level on the Liard River in June was at a 50-year high. Elders have never seen or experienced such high waters as during the time of that flood. We also hope and pray that this type of flood will not be repeated in our lifetime. The people of Nahanni Butte do live in fear of it happening again. I also do not want to see us replacing the community gymnasium floor for a fourth time.

Climate change is increasing the risk of more frequent and more severe floods in our region. The community is suggesting a move of about 10 kilometres to the east side of the Liard River where the access road from the highway is.

Community leaders are suggesting that it does make sense to relocate there on higher ground. Relocation could be a long-term solution, with community support, and this is a good time to re-evaluate this community. I also believe that our government should consider this option seriously with due attention to the wishes of the people.

I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs on this subject later on today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
POLAR EGGS EGG GRADING FACILITY
IN HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use my Member's statement today to thank the Minister of ITI for coming down to Hay River on Friday and opening up the new federally certified egg grading plant. I'd also like to congratulate John and Janet Penner and Bruce Ramage on their investment in this facility in the egg industry. I'd like to also extend congratulations to the Wallington family for their hard work, and our local operators of the facility: Glen, Mike and Kevin. Thank you very much.

It's a great news story for a northern business to be able to put northern products on northern tables. It's a good luck story. It's one of the first opportunities I've had to do a grand opening as an MLA. We need to produce more of this stuff. We are putting eggs on northern tables. We're making ourselves more sustainable. We're not depending on other provinces or other producers.

I'd also like to encourage... And I will have questions for the Minister about strengthening other areas.

I think we need to use northern products that are being produced and putting them on northern tables, such as I've brought to this House before in the fishing industry area where we have a great opportunity on the Great Slave Lake. This is a renewable resource that they've assessed and they know we have a sustainable product there. We need to get this product out on the tables in the North. We need to do more production in the North, selling in the North, selling to our northern facilities.

Again, I'd like to congratulate those people that have been involved in the Polar Eggs, and we look forward to seeing those eggs, hopefully, out on the tables, they tell me, as early as December.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TOURISM INDUSTRY CONFERENCE IN INUVIK

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week in the community of Inuvik, over 20 different stakeholders including businesses, tour operators and local governments from the Beaufort-Delta region came together to discuss possibilities and opportunities for increased and diversified tourism products and experiences for the region as a way to supplement the challenging economy in the area.

The group was very pleased with the support from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment as well as Northwest Territories Tourism, who partnered to provide an all-day interactive training workshop for participants. The group is also very grateful for their ongoing support

of this important sector of the NWT territorial economy.

With attendees from Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk, the group spent the day learning about tourism trends, marketing, pricing and packaging of tourism-related products and experiences. The goal of the meeting was to come together to create a market-ready package tourism experience that would incorporate tourism experiences such as dog sledding excursions, snowmobile adventures and ice show tours with varied accommodation options such as bed and breakfasts, cabins and hotels.

Attendees agreed that the session was worthwhile and was an important step to bringing more tourism dollars into the communities, especially during the winter months and the shouldering seasons when there's less tourism economy in the area. All stakeholders are very pleased and ready to showcase the great many opportunities for culture, touring and adventure opportunities in Inuvik and the Western Arctic region. A follow-up meeting is planned to solidify the market-ready tourism packages initiated during this very important event.

As we know, the tourism industry has a return investment in the Northwest Territories of over \$100 million, when this government itself does not put a whole lot of dollars into the tourism industry and the work that a lot of these groups do.

Later on today I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to see how we can invest not only in Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta region and all the great work that they're doing, but in other regions across the Northwest Territories to help give a little boom to the economy that the regions do need, and some ideas that might arise from that.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
OPENING OF TIME CAPSULE AT
DEH GAH SCHOOL IN FORT PROVIDENCE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saturday, October 27th, marked an historic occasion in Fort Providence. A time capsule sealed on October 7, 1992, was opened and items sealed in the capsule for 20 years were returned to the people in the community.

The sealing of the time capsule 20 years ago marked the end of an era as Elizabeth Ward School became Deh Gah Elementary School. On Saturday the occasion was marked by Jane Arychuk, former school principal, returning to the school, and Margaret Vandell and her son Wayne cutting the chain and locks on the large Rubbermaid tub.

Once opened, large envelopes and letters were revealed, bringing tears to many eyes: letters to

children from parents, from grandparents, letters written to themselves, and letters from teachers to students. Sam Gargan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly at the time, shared a picture of his young family and sent best wishes to the community in 2012.

The hamlet council, band council and district education authority had placed packages of materials in envelopes, with strict instructions to be opened by the same councils in 2012. The students of the community learning centre in 1992 sealed a package of materials which will be opened by the 2012 Aurora College learning students next week.

A fishnet woven by Kari Hergott and the dog harness made by Louie Mackenzie Jr. reminded the community of its commitment to culture-based education in Fort Providence.

Price lists from three local stores and issues of News/North and Native Press got everyone's attention as they compared food prices, real estate prices and wages in the job ads.

Community members spent a great afternoon reading letters, looking at pictures and reminiscing about their lives 20 years ago. Some families left with envelopes of letters and items to share with the whole family when the whole family is together at Christmas.

One wrapped mystery gift labelled for the oldest female student in the school in 2012 will be opened today. A final decision has not been made, but there is a good chance Deh Gah School will plan an event in the near future to refill a time capsule for the next 20 years.

I applaud the staff of Elizabeth Ward School and now Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School, who brought personal histories to life on Saturday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up today on the statement made by my colleague from Hay River North last week about a much needed Midwifery Program. At the urging of residents and Members of the 16th Assembly, in late 2011 the Department of Health and Social Services studied the very small existing midwifery program and produced a report that was made public in spring of this year. That report was referenced by the Minister last week in his replies to Mr. Bouchard's questions. It was gratifying to hear him say that the expansion of our Midwifery Program is included in the department's planning. But much more than a vague reference to planning is needed.

We have actually seen a reduction in our Midwifery Program in the last two years, because about a year and a half ago Yellowknife lost its Midwifery Program. Yellowknife residents have been and continue to be vocal about the loss of that program and the need to have a comprehensive Midwifery Program throughout the NWT.

All women in the NWT deserve to access midwifery care if they so choose. Midwifery programs do far more than just birth babies. An integral component of any midwifery program is prenatal and postnatal education and care. There is no doubt that an expansion of the program is needed.

The report calls for it, the Minister admits it has been a part of the Health and Social Services strategic plan since 2008. The benefits for in-community births mentioned in the report include a decrease in domestic violence, a decrease in sexual assault, an increase in self-esteem, greater feelings of dignity, less stress and more male involvement in the newborn and partner care. Keeping soon-to-be moms in the community improves family relationships and leads to improved health outcomes for all members of the family.

There is also the reduced cost to government as the results of less medical travel. But there is little evidence of any concrete planning for an expansion of the Midwifery Program.

In response to Mr. Bouchard last week, the Minister mentioned planning in 2013-14 and stated the department will expand the program to Hay River, but not until 2014-15 when the new hospital there is completed. What if the new hospital isn't completed on time?

The Minister's plan is not good enough. The department should be planning in this budget for implementation in 2013-14.

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

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FILING OF WSCC ACCIDENT REPORTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently wrote a request to all departments regarding a WSCC matter. In short, it was an information request based on monthly incidents and accident reports. I'm grateful that Human Resources was to coordinate the paperwork for the various departments, because without their assistance – that is the people in Human Resources – the various departments may have actually sent me the unedited information.

Now, the reason I say unedited is based on the concerns that some of the summary documents – the 195 pages I've poured over that were supplied

to both me and Mr. Dolynny – had some technical errors in it. Now, were these errors devastating? I don't think so, but it also begs the question: What other information was summarized incorrectly? What information was missed or even overlooked? Even worse, what was ignored?

The Minister said to me in the context of a minor and, I stress, reasonable delay that he sent the information back because he wanted to make sure that all the detailed information was in there. I respect that and I appreciate the once over he provided, but the point is, is not knowing what he sent it back for to find out what the final version was from the version they supplied. Who knows what the gaps were that were missing? So we must be really grateful for his intervention.

However, the issue at hand, what's interesting is there looks to be a number of penalties, and certainly the trends that it's pointing to are a concern that we should all be starting to look at and ask ourselves what is this revealing. All the costs by themselves seem very low and perhaps not crippling to the wheels of government. I would say that this, regrettably, points towards a trend by various departments, where you see a trend of non-compliance of accident reports where they're not filing on a timely basis.

Now, one or two late filing reports may be considered reasonable, because we don't always know the circumstances and we can't predict the circumstances of why these incidents have happened, but moreover, the greater concern is that there are dozens upon dozens upon dozens of late fees being charged because people aren't filing their reports in a timely way.

What's clear here is the amount of penalties this government is being fined for, an administrative process we could certainly easily hire someone to do. Also what's being revealed is not only the first, the second or third offense, it should be an alarming trend that the Department of Human Resources should be on.

We must be relentless in our commitment for a safe working environment and we must not shirk our duties, responsibilities that we have prescribed in legislation and regulation in laws in this House. We should be complying.

I will have questions for the Minister of Human Resources later today on that fact. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Bisaro.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize a constituent from Frame

Lake, Jeff Corradetti. Welcome to the House to Jeff and to everybody else up there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I'd like to welcome all visitors in the public gallery here today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings here today. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 244-17(3): WSCC EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT RATES AND GNWT SAFE ADVANTAGE PENALTIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission in follow-up to my statement. MLAs were informed in August of an average 15 percent-plus increase in employee assessment rates. Meanwhile we have a Safe Advantage Program, which is supposed to improve rates of safety performance, yet the rates are skyrocketing. Why are the rates going up? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I did meet with the board chair and the president and I did share some of the concerns that were brought to my attention. Part of the reason why this rate is going up is due to the fact that their investment at the national stage has had a downturn in investment in the environment, and also the rising cost of health care across Canada. Given that there have been subsidies given to these businesses across the Northwest Territories for the last 10 years, it has basically taken back the subsidy and put that into an increase in assessment rates. So, swapping that. That was my understanding from the WSCC when I met with them. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: I have to say thanks to the Minister, but there is something faulty with the reasoning there, because there's not much activity in our health care costs that we're going to repress our businesses even more. I've mentioned the burden our businesses already have. I have a constituent, as I mentioned, with employees in Class 7, whose rates have leapt from 48 cents to 58 cents per \$100 of payroll. The government claims this is a 6 percent, whereas my Grade 3 arithmetic says this is a 22 percent increase. What is the truth here? Obviously, this is a massive increase, but how can the government claim it's 6 percent here? Mahsi.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I got the facts here from WSCC and it is in between. It's not 6 percent or what the Member is alluding to; it is

an increase in 2013 of 16 percent. That's the number I have from WSCC, in replacement of the subsidy that's been provided over the last 10 years.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I guess I would ask the Minister to commit to investigating that because, obviously, if the rate has gone from 48 to 58 cents, that is not a 6 percent increase and neither is it a 15 percent increase. So I hope the Minister will seek the truth on that.

The Safe Advantage program is meant to be self-funded and independent from the claims budget. It's a separate budget. However, my understanding is that penalties income is less than rewards paid out. There's also rewards paid out, not just penalties in the Safe Advantage program. That's resulting in a deficit. We're paying out more in rewards than we're taking in penalties.

I have to assume the deficit is being made up from the claims budget, which is supposed to be independent. If this is true and we have safer practices today, which we should with Safe Advantage, to what degree is this the cause of the steep increases in rates that businesses are being asked to pay?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The information that I did receive – and I will be going back to WSCC for another follow-up meeting, because whenever a concern has been addressed by the Members and the general public, I usually meet with the chair and the president.

With respect to this increase in assessment rates for 2013 of 16 percent, this has been in the subsidy area. A subsidy has been provided for the last 10 years and now WSCC has taken that back. In return is an increase in assessment rates. That information was brought to my attention. It is the subsidy that has been provided is now taken back by WSCC due to the investment economy throughout the national stage.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. That goes somewhat to explain some of the increases, although it does not excuse them. Obviously, in these days of soaring electricity rates and other basic costs, we can't keep adding to the burdens of our small businesses, the economic engine of our communities. How can we wonder, again, while they're throwing in the towel and not coming north? What is the Minister doing to keep rates low and what steps will he promise to correct the imbalance of increased payments being required while safety performance is supposedly increasing?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When this was first introduced for 2013, the increase of 16 percent, I did indicate to the president and the chair that they need to work closely with even the smallest

contractor on what the implications would be. What kind of subsidy are we providing? Is it in replacement of a subsidy to increase the assessment rates? It was assured to me that it was in replacement. I told them that we need to have a long-term mechanism to highlight the implications and potential impacts. I will be sharing that information with the Members once it is available to me by WSCC.

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

QUESTION 245-17(3):
LONG-TERM FLOOD PLANS
FOR NAHANNI BUTTE

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I pointed out the need for a long-term plan to mitigate the impact of flooding in the community of Nahanni Butte in view of the risks. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Will the Minister commit to developing a long-term plan for the community of Nahanni Butte that addresses future flooding?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'd be glad to work with the community of Nahanni Butte to work on their long-term plan as far as the flooding goes. We do know that the federal government has come forward with a Disaster Mitigation Policy. We're not sure of the details yet, but it's for exactly the type of situation like this where they can mitigate potential floods in the future.

MR. MENICOCHE: I think I spoke with the Minister in the House last week about coming to the community of Nahanni Butte, and while we're there we will be discussing the option of relocating the community to the east side of the Liard River. If there's enough community support, will the Minister and his department seriously consider that option?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Support from the community is the key word here. We would like to see the community committed to this through a formal motion or possible plebiscite, because moving a community will have an effect, especially on the elders who are used to living there and have lived there their entire lives. We would have to have community support to consider it.

MR. MENICOCHE: When the idea was first brought up in the aftermath of the flood, initial reaction from government officials was that it's going to cost millions to relocate a community. It's also costing millions to repair the community and we don't want to keep doing that. It has to be considered seriously.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs if, with the community's support, he is willing to dedicate resources in the 2013-2014 budget to address the needs of this community for planning such a move?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I look forward to my trip to Nahanni Butte and meeting with the leadership there. If it is the will of the community, then I will commit to the Member that we will work closely with the community to see what resources might be needed to work on a long-term plan as far as relocating the community goes. I will commit to the Member that I will work with him and the community.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It will take financial resources to do planning studies for planning a whole new town, et cetera. I just wanted to ask the Minister, if the community is willing, if the Minister will be prepared to put some small resources to beginning such a planning study. A planning for planning study, as it were. If the community asks for it, will the Minister do it during his visit to Nahanni Butte?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Again, it's the will of the community. If the community is serious about potential relocation, then we would have to look at identifying some resources to start the planning and working with the community on a possible relocation.

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

QUESTION 246-17(3):
MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I want to follow up on my Member's statement and ask some questions on the Midwifery Program report and potential actions coming from that report. In the Minister's responses to Mr. Bouchard last week there were some references to planning, though they were fairly vague references to planning and some references to expansion of the program. There were recommendations in the report to expand the program.

I'd like to know from the Minister if there is something happening now at the department. I would like to know from the Minister when a plan for expansion will be fully formulated, when it will be available to committee for comment.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department recognizes the value of the Midwifery Program. We're interested in bringing the Midwifery Program back to more than just Fort Smith; across the Territories, actually. With that, we have allocated \$75,000 of the Territorial Health System Sustainability Fund from the federal government in 2013-2014 to start the process.

MS. BISARO: I appreciate the Minister's response that there's some money being allocated. It has been allocated, as he's said though, in 2013-2014. In my mind, that's a problem. I don't understand why, with the report that came out some four or five months ago now, we couldn't start some planning in this budget year, 2012-2013, to do some implementation in 2013-2014. I'd ask the Minister to tell me why we can't do planning this year for implementation in the next budget year.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I was referring to the money that we're putting in for it. In 2012-2013 we're doing community consultations. We're going to review and update the NWT Midwifery Practice Framework and Midwife Regulations. In 2012-2013 we're also going to do the preliminary health human resources planning for midwife recruitment and training options.

MS. BISARO: I'm a little confused by that response. So we are doing planning now, but we're not going to be able to implement until 2014-2015. I think that's what I heard the Minister say, and it confuses me.

I would like to ask the Minister, as well, about the money. He mentioned \$75,000 and I understand that's coming from the sustainability funding, which is federal funding which is not core funding, but it's money that we get whenever the federal government decides we should get it.

I would like to ask the Minister whether or not any expansion to the Midwifery Program is going to be dependent on non-core funding, or is this going to be funding which will be ongoing and which will maintain the program from year to year.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Midwifery Program is not going to be contingent on THSSI funding. THSSI funding will just be put in, the \$75,000 for 2013-2014. However, the rest of the funding, which is planned for Hay River for \$472,000 and Beaufort-Delta for \$952,000 and expansion of the territorial Midwifery Program of \$1.8 million, will be going through the House.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm a little confused. From what the Minister just told me, it sounds as though there is a plan, although I don't think that I necessarily agree with it. If, as the Minister says, we're going to go to Hay River and then we're going to go to the Beaufort-Delta – and

you mentioned another number of \$1.8 million that I don't know for what – if we know that already, why can we not get that before committee now? Why can we not take what we know and plan for implementation in 2013-2014?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Again, we recognize the importance of the Midwifery Program, however, there are a lot of competing priorities in the Department of Health and Social Services. This is how we're planning on rolling it out. We have paid for a consultant to do a review of the Midwifery Program for the Northwest Territories and these numbers are what we're looking at out of that plan. We're going to be reviewing that, of course, but for now we have paid for the consultant. This is how the report indicates we should roll out the Midwifery Program. The expansion in Hay River will be contingent upon the completion of the health centre over there.

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

QUESTION 247-17(3):
GNWT SAFE ADVANTAGE PENALTIES

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last three years, WSCC claims cost experience for the GNWT has more than doubled. Let me repeat that word: doubled. In my Member's statement today we talked about the GNWT's Safe Advantage penalties, which is the second part of these claims costs and penalties. Those have risen from zero dollars in 2009-2010 to over \$508,000 in 2011-2012. It's for this reason we just talked about, hearing about no money for midwifery, I'd like to say it's very difficult to look at the whites of the eyes of midwives across the Territories and give them 508,000 reasons why there are competing priorities.

My questions are for the Minister of the Department of Human Resources in relationship to the Safe Advantage penalties as to why they are so high and why are they growing yearly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the record, the Safe Advantage program is a program administered by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. The program is actually a fairly new program. It's only been in place for, I think, five years.

The first couple of years were assessment years where they actually monitored what organizations were doing in order to set up the standards for the averaging to see who was above their average and below their average. The first couple of years there were no costs or penalties to anybody.

The GNWT has received some significant penalties in this area under the Safe Advantage program.

The Department of Human Resources is working with the departments to make sure that they are continuing to put in occupational health and safety programs to ensure that people who work for the GNWT are safe and not getting injured.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thanks to the Minister for that reply. As I indicated in my opening first question that claims experience has more than doubled for the GNWT, I guess the question I have for the Minister of HR is: Can he indicate which three departments are causing some of that claims growth that we're seeing, especially in the last year?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are certainly areas that have higher claims experience than others. In the GNWT the three areas that are experiencing high claims costs are the Department of Justice and the health and social services authorities.

MR. DOLYUNNY: I think the Minister mentioned three, but I think only two were given. That said, did the two departments that were given, in terms of Justice and Health, if one was to look at realistic comparison in these so-called rate sheets that are provided by WSCC, those areas, in terms of claims or what premiums are being paid by those related private sector industries are in the order of probably about, and in the case of health, about \$1.61 per \$100 of payroll, and in the issue of corrections, somewhere around the \$2.58 mark per \$100.

As I indicated earlier in my Member's statement, the GNWT is paying about 79 cents per \$100, much lower than a lot of these claims growths. My question to the Minister is: Why aren't WSCC payroll premiums not broken down by department to reflect a more realistic comparison to industry rate classes and premiums that are being paid in the private sector?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I mentioned health authorities. The two highest claims areas in the Government of the Northwest Territories are the Stanton Territorial Health Authority and the Fort Smith Health Authority, followed closely by Justice. I indicated authorities and I should have said both.

With respect to claims, the claims change regularly. Every department is different. Some departments are higher; some departments are lower. By way of example, in 2011, HR had \$3,400 in claims. So far, third quarter of this calendar year, 2012, they have \$86. We do have a wide range of different fees per employment area.

With respect to the fee that we're paying, the two of them don't necessarily correlate the way I think the Member thinks they do. Rates are determined by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission by the Board of Governors, as per the terms of the act. I don't have the 2012 Rate Guide, but looking at the 2011 guide, there are eight

classes, 83 subclasses, and they range anywhere from 48 cents per \$100 all the way up to \$4.98 per \$100. The GNWT is Class 81, and in the old rate guide it's 60 cents per \$100.

The Safe Advantage program is actually assessed based on the total number of claims, not the fees that we pay under the rates. Last year the GNWT paid \$2.3 million in rates, \$1.1 million in claims were paid out, and then on top of that, under the Safe Advantage program, which is separate and apart, the GNWT received \$600,000 in fines under the Safe Advantage. In total, the GNWT paid about \$2.9 million and received about \$1.1 million back in claims.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you to the Minister for more detailed numbers.

I believe the Minister indicated that the rate class for the GNWT was 60 cents, but I believe it was 66 cents in last year's rate guide.

My last question, really, has to do with a barometer reading. Where are we sitting at right now with the GNWT currently in 2012? Are we seeing our claims costs still on a continued rise? Could we be subject to higher penalties or double penalties with respect to the Safe Advantage program? Can the Minister give us an idea as to where we're sitting right now for the remainder of 2012?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated previously, every department is different. We are seeing a significant number of ranges within the departments. I know, for a fact, some departments look like they're going down, some departments are staying the same, and there are some departments that have moved up slightly. I can share that information with the Member, what we've got up to the third quarter in comparison to 2009, 2010, 2011. I'll share that with the Member and with committee.

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

QUESTION 248-17(3):
SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE
FOOD BUSINESSES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, I'm glad to see the egg grading plant facility in Hay River open up on Friday. I have questions for the Minister of ITI concerning what the department is doing to encourage this kind of sustainable developing for putting northern products on northern tables.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of ITI certainly was happy to be a part of the success in Hay River with the opening of the egg grading facility. We have a long way to go.

Just last month we signed a new agreement with the federal government on the Growing Forward II money that will bring \$6 million more to the Northwest Territories in the area of agricultural development. We're hoping to continue the successes that we've seen there. That money will be put to good use in trying to get more products onto people's tables around the Northwest Territories.

MR. BOUCHARD: As the Minister knows well in the House, probably, that I'm strongly concerned about the fishing industry and the lack of the fact that we're using this great resource we have, especially in the Great Slave Lake where we have a sustainable quota and that we're not even using a good part of that quota. What is the department doing to help this industry to develop?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The domestic commercial fish market has the potential here in the Northwest Territories to be between half a million and 750,000 pounds of fish on an annual basis. Recently I met with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation here in Yellowknife. They were here. I share the Member's concern. I think this is an area where, as a government, we have to be following it closely. There's a great resource there and I think it's underutilized.

To get to the Member's question, we have a Fish Harvesters Support Program, Commercial Fish Harvesters Support Program, a Fish Harvesters Expansion Program, a Fish Harvesters New Entrance Support Program and some core funding to help offset administrative costs to the Fishermen's Federation.

MR. BOUCHARD: I know the fishers are appreciative of this type of funding. I have a question for the Minister.

I know that the fishers on the Great Slave Lake are busy doing their job of catching fish and don't have time to look at the innovative ways that maybe are being done on the Great Lakes, being done in other areas, other countries.

What is the department doing to assist this industry in looking at new and innovative ways to put more northern product on northern tables?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As part of the Growing Forward money, we've had a commercial harvesting processing and marketing of fish and meat in the Northwest Territories, and I think that program has gone a long way to helping. We've got a new fish holding and processing facility in Kakisa for pickerel. We've also provided money for renovations to the building at Wool Bay that will provide for the processing of fish. We intend to get

together with fishermen in the near term here in the fall and over the winter to discuss ways in which the government can help the fishing industry here in the Northwest Territories be successful. We want to see it be successful. We want to be a partner in seeing it be the success that we know it can be. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is about the budget to this type of innovation and looking at different... Does the government and ITI have anything in their current budget to look at any of their innovative ways to increase the productivity of the Great Slave Lake for fishing? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we currently have \$225,000 available under the initiatives that I spoke of earlier. Certainly, as we move forward, I am committed to seeing us work with the fishermen on Great Slave Lake to realize the potential of that resource for our territory. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 249-17(3):
TOURISM MARKETING BUDGET

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to follow up to my Member's statement earlier, talking about tourism. In the NWT, the NWT has the second lowest tourism marketing budget of all regions throughout Canada, with a return of investment of over \$100 million into the territory.

I would like to ask the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment what is his department doing to compete with these other jurisdictions so that we remain competitive in the marketplace in terms of tourism. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we work with what we have. I believe between the Northwest Territories Tourism and the staff at ITI, we do the best job we can with the money we have. We have some great staff up in the Member's region working in tourism. Certainly, we could always use more money when it comes to marketing. That is something that perhaps, over the next few years, we will be able to realize some additional dollars to go into tourism marketing here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, my next question is in regard to the communities and regions that do provide some very unique and innovative tourism packaging or excursions that we don't get to see

throughout other parts of the NWT. If we don't increase the budget in our tourism, if that should fail, what is the commitment of the Minister to get more funding out to these regions and communities so that when we have workshops, like we did in the community of Hay River and Inuvik, those projects get the funding in the budgets that they need to run a successful tourism project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we do have some funding. We have the Tourism 2015 plan that focuses on six investment components, marketing and Aboriginal tourism and community industry engagement. Certainly, we need to be working with entrepreneurs in the regions and the communities.

As I mentioned numerous times in the House, tourism provides the greatest opportunity in all of our communities to bring some real economic benefit to the communities. We have to find folks in the communities that are willing to take those risks and get involved in business. Certainly, if they are willing to do that, we have programs and services that will help them get to where they need to be. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, with great projects like we just had in Inuvik here with the working group meeting for a full day and coming up with a nice, detailed plan and looking at following up in terms of getting this project off the ground and providing some kind of economic base up in an area that's really needing that economic boom, the department did support that day-long workshop.

What is the department willing to commit to in terms of funding to the Beaufort-Delta region should they move forward on this project and meeting the resources that they need? What is the department willing to do and commit to? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Tourism is hosting its AGM next week, and gala. I would certainly like to hear more about the opportunities the Member talks about in the Beaufort-Delta. Certainly, we have supported other initiatives in the Beaufort-Delta, most recently \$50,000 to the Inuvik Golf Association to help with the golf course up there. We are looking for opportunities to get funding into the Beaufort-Delta, so I would be more than happy to discuss opportunities with the Member to see how ITI could help. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the high cost of living in the North with all three regions – Yukon, Nunavut and here in the Northwest Territories – and the downturn in the economy not only in the Northwest Territories but throughout Canada and the world, what is the department

doing to look at a pan-territorial plan forward to work with other neighbouring jurisdictions to get more tourism up in the Arctic and across the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we've had success in the past working with both Nunavut and the Yukon Territory in advancing marketing initiatives, and I look back to Northern House in the Vancouver Olympics. Through our involvement in the Pacific Northwest Economic Region with PNWER, we are exploring ways that we can work with the State of Alaska and the Yukon government to pursue some joint marketing initiatives under that banner. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 250-17(3):

LATE FILING OF WSCC ACCIDENT REPORTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I was trying to highlight some concerns regarding some of the penalties and the reporting under our WSCC requirements. It's my belief that the GNWT should be considered a gold standard when we consider reporting on this particular legislation, regulations and guidelines which are, in essence, the ones we drafted up. So being late is certainly no excuse. Late fees should be filed without being late. In other words, late fees shouldn't be the disturbing trend as they are. We have dozens and dozens of incidences and, as I have highlighted, thousands of dollars are going out the door needlessly.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources. What is he doing with this particular information that we put together that draws out the disturbing trend of late fees and the penalties associated with it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The data that was provided actually came from the WSCC. They are the ones who actually track all the clients' costs and claims incidences.

With respect to late fees for late filing of incidents, I share the Member's concerns completely. When I saw that data, the first thing I did was direct the department to start digging in to find out why we are late, because it seems to me that we should never be late. That information hasn't been fully compiled. Once I have that information, I will share that with the Member and committee. I would like an opportunity to sit down and brief committee on some of the data that has been provided and I will be following up in that as well.

With respect to the late fees, one thing that has already come in so far is that many of our

employees who work shiftwork may be injured on a weekend or after regular hours. If somebody happens to be injured on a Friday and they don't submit until Monday, we the government, would be assessed a late fee. We need to find ways to streamline our applications or notifications of injuries straight into the WSCC so we don't get any more of these late fines.

I agree with the Member completely; this is something that we need to address. We should never be in a situation where we have to pay late fines for late notification. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, with the alarming trends that point towards many claim costs, one particular envelope seems to be – I wouldn't describe them as the shining example – the one we should be asking ourselves tough questions on what they are doing. The area I am speaking about is the health envelope. They represent 50 percent of the claims, 45 percent of the late filing penalty claims, as well as the overall cost to the claims under the WSCC.

With the trend of the health envelope being the worst offender on all three accounts, what is the Minister for Human Resources doing to help pull up the socks of the GNWT so we comply with these regulations that are our own? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the health and social services system represents approximately one-third of the GNWT public service. So it's not that surprising that we have a proportionately high number of claims in that area. Front-line workers are in high-risk business, operating 24/7, and front-line staff may incur physical injury when they are lifting or moving patients.

The Department of Human Resources is a shared service provider and we provide support, guidance and advice to assist departments in improving their health and safety practices within all departments, boards and agencies. However, individual departments are responsible for ensuring that their workplaces comply with health and safety standards.

The Department of Human Resources is leading the development and implementation of a GNWT Occupational Health and Safety Program that will cover all the key elements of a successful Occupational Health and Safety Program, including training, incident management, preparing for emergencies and managing hazards. So we are working with the departments to help them strengthen their own programs and services in the area of occupational health and safety. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Again, one of the clear results that are being demonstrated by the trends, now I emphasize if you look at one department by itself, it may not stand out, but when you put them all

together, it shows significant frequency of behaviour.

What is the Minister of Human Resources going to do on our leadership perspective to sew the departments together to ensure we are complying with, a) the filing requirements, and b) we're working for a safer work environment, because that fight needs to be relentless? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. We obviously want a safe work environment. The last thing we want to do is see workers get injured.

With respect to health and social services, the three health and social services authorities with the large number of claims, Stanton, Beaufort-Delta and Fort Smith, have acute care facilities that have successfully passed an accreditation review by Accreditation Canada. So those require them to have certain practices in place to assist, avoid injury.

But there are a couple of other things. Although we see significant value in the intent of the Safe Advantage program, we do have some concerns. One of the concerns that we have is based on the Q1 performance update for the 2012 balanced scorecard of the WSCC's website, their target for a loss of time claims per 100 is at 2.42 claims per 100 losses. The GNWT right now, with respect to time lost, is at 1.8. So although we exceed what the WSCC is suggesting that all employers are at, we continue to get some fines under the Safe Advantage program.

We agree with the intent, we know that we need to continue to do work, we want no claims, but we do have some concerns about the Safe Advantage program. But with respect to our workers, we continue to work with them. We will put programs in place and we will reduce claims over time. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When reviewing the WSCC claims cost summary, it's become more than evident that the claim costs from 2009 tend to increase into 2010. They further increase in 2011 and they're even at the same numbers as of September for basically on average for 2012, and 2012 is not finished.

With thousands upon hundreds of thousands of dollars going out the door because of compensation for medical, rehabilitation, pension and overall compensation, what brakes and alarms are being sounded on this particular issue? Are brakes being pulled? Are alarms going off? How is the government stopping this disturbing trend that puts workers' lives at significant risk? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Just for clarity, the vast portion of claims where there are

claims cost or salary, the Government of the Northwest Territories from 2009 to 2012 has had about a 6 percent increase in salary. So even if our claims stayed the number, our costs would go up.

We are working with individual departments. The Department of HR, as I indicated, is working on Occupational Health and Safety programming that can be implemented by the departments. The individual departments have some responsibility in that area and we continue to work with them.

By way of example, the Department of Justice is one of the other departments I happen to be responsible for. It's also a department with significantly high claims. We have identified specific staff within that department to actually dig deep into why these types of things are happening in the Department of Justice in our correctional facilities and come up with some recommendations and ways that we can actually reduce the number of claims within the Department of Justice. So other departments are doing the same types of things. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 251-17(3): IMPACT OF RISING ENERGY COSTS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of the Environment and again in follow-up to my Member's statement earlier today. I noted the impact of increasing energy costs on the cost of living and our vulnerability to these costs is increasing, an anticipated jump in the cost of living as electricity rates soar almost 30 percent in the next few years, despite the injection of \$65 million.

Why does the government, that claims a commitment to fiscal prudence, not spend money for renewables now to stop the hemorrhage of tax money and save our citizens from rocketing energy costs? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reality is we have to and we are doing both. Yet, as we laid out for the people and for the Members that there is a rate cliff because there's been no increase in power rates for the last five years, the fuel prices have continued to escalate and rather than put the burden fully on the ratepayers that buy power, we put that subsidy in. At the same time, we are making significant, and have made significant, investments: \$50 million or so in the last Assembly towards solar, biomass, wind, improving our energy standards, rebates for people to help them convert to more energy-efficient appliances to upgrade their houses. We

have work underway with solar being put into Simpson. We're looking at wind. We're going to go to Diavik and see the tremendous work that they've done there, to see how that may apply to Inuvik. Biomass is being put in in a lot of our own facilities. We're working on a biomass industry. So we have to do both. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I heard the remarks from the Minister and yet the WSCC report issued a couple months ago says 8.7 percent increase in electricity costs this year alone, and I am aware of no new community electricity systems in the life of my time as an MLA. We're into our sixth year here. So that defies what the Minister is saying. Public consultation is about to get underway on a new Energy Plan, I believe yet to be seen, that will chart the future for energy development in the coming years. The Finance Minister set the rules of its fiscal strategy: no new expenses, deferred infrastructure, paying down debt before going to public consultations.

In the same way, will the Minister establish that, given that our new Energy Plan will be based on renewables and bringing an end to the fossil fuel dependency of our communities, will he establish those same criteria? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. Just concluding, in fact we'll be having operational the rebuilt Bluefish site, which is about a \$37 million investment in hydro. There is a tremendous amount of work that's been done on the Taltson expansion, for example, and now we just have to have the debate on the transmission line and how do we proceed to link those two systems so that in fact we can become more energy efficient.

Everything we do as a government is looking towards the long-term of minimizing our costs and reliance on fossil fuels. Our Greenhouse Gas Strategy is predicated on trying to limit emissions and that's all tied with minimizing our reliance of fossil fuels. So that is built in as a fundamental premise of the work that this Assembly has done and of Assemblies before them. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. There are electricity generating systems based on biomass and renewables all over Europe. We're learning now the Maritimes are doing it through wood gasification. The possibility in Fort Liard for geothermal, thanks to the private industry there in the community pushing it really hard. There's even electricity generation from biomass in Senegal, but where is the priority listed in the Biomass Strategy? I think it's item number 12 or the item for 2012, this generation of mine heat and power in a community in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I agree with the Member that the whole area of wood gasification is of great potential and of great interest

to us. Combined heat and power as it now exists, as far as I understand it, is for every megawatt of power electricity that you generate, you have to be prepared to somehow capture and put to use four megawatts of heat, four to five megawatts of heat. So it is an area with challenges. We are looking to the day when, as we watch the technology expand, of something that would be applicable in the communities that are in the Boreal Forest and maybe those outside where we could transport biomass to them. It is an area with potential. We have a lot of initiatives on the go but the issue of using biomass to generate electricity has not been put into practical reality yet.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. That was, indeed, my point, is that it hasn't been put into practicality yet here in the Northwest Territories.

Given that we are choosing to spend \$100 million in subsidies for electricity rates, what actions will the Minister take to replace the community electricity systems that we know are really expensive, based on fossil fuels, and make the changes required?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The solar strategy that's going to be coming out is going to have ambitious targets in there to try to displace up to 20 percent of the diesel in communities that are currently being used for generation of electricity. We are looking very closely at the work that's been done by Diavik as they have invested about \$30 million into wind turbines, which we think has great applicability to helping deal with the energy circumstances and challenges that are currently facing the community of Inuvik. In fact, the community of Tuk could also benefit from that type of installation, for example. The biomass, we're going to look at that in terms of combined heat and power, as we're going to look at expansions of the grid to make sure we can become as efficient as possible. If we hook the Snare and Taltson bridges together and came up the west side down the highway, we would be able to pick up communities that are not currently on the grid. We're looking at expansion of the grid into Whati. We can pick up Providence. There is plenty of opportunity here before us. There is the question of resources and time. All those types of initiatives are being seriously considered and we want to have that discussion in the coming weeks with committee and with the people of the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 252-17(3):
REGULATORY CHANGES IMPACTING
TRUCKING INDUSTRY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest or most important industries is the trucking industry in the Northwest Territories, to get those products to people in the Northwest Territories, getting food on their table. I have several questions for the Minister of Transportation.

As I was discussing earlier about innovation, this industry has been innovative and created new tri-drive, triple-axle trucks. They are not currently recognized in the Northwest Territories. Is the Department of Transportation looking to recognize this innovative new part of the trucking industry?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for bringing this to our attention this last fall here. Certainly the department recognizes the importance. The regulations would require amendments, and we have them into Justice for formatting and translation. That's a process that typically takes three to four months, but that work is in progress.

MR. BOUCHARD: That's good to hear. I have another question for the Minister in the area of these regulations. I'm wondering if, while we're making these changes to the regulations, we have looked at other jurisdictions, our neighbours to the south and west of us, such as Alberta, BC and Yukon. Are we paralleling our regulations? Currently, I understand there's a difference in regulations whether we have licence plates on the back or the front. Is the department looking at having a common or similar to the jurisdictions' regulations to the Northwest Territories, ones that we're making changes to?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We're always looking to other jurisdictions. We always are paying attention to what other jurisdictions do, and through organizations like Westec and working with other Transportation Ministers, especially in Western Canada. That's certainly an area where we can bring our concerns to the table and have them addressed. We certainly look forward to continuing to build relationships with other jurisdictions, especially here in Western Canada when it comes to regulations in the trucking industry.

MR. BOUCHARD: Another concern that the trucking industry has indicated to me is the new bridge and the tolls. Has the department begun its discussion with this industry on how the tolls will be assessed and how it will be operated once the bridge is completed and ready to roll?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The answer to that is yes. We have had those discussions. I know I was

helping the Member with a concern that one of his constituents had. I'd be happy to lead anybody in the right direction with the Department of Transportation to get the answers that people need in the advance of the bridge opening and tolls being collected at that bridge.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the winter season progresses, the trucking industry is trying to get all the product up North here. I'm just wondering if the department has actually set a date on that opening of the Deh Cho Bridge.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We haven't got a firm date but it should be, the expectation is by the end of November. If it can happen before that, we'll be advising the House of such.

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

QUESTION 253-17(3):
WSCC SAFE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to pick up where some of our Members have been going today. Grave concern about WSCC claims costs. We have talked about penalties. These are pretty large numbers here that I think most people need to get some clarity on.

I want to hone in on what was said earlier today or bring up a part of the response here from the Minister of Human Resources where he had a concern about the WSCC Safe Advantage program. Did he have a concern with the fairness for the GNWT? Was there a concern with the framework of the plan? What is the Minister's concern?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The intent of the program is to encourage safe workplaces, which we stand by completely and support wholeheartedly. Our concern is about the actual administration of the program.

As I indicated before, based on the Q1 performance update 2012 balanced scorecard on WSCC's website the 2012 target for time loss claims per 100 workers is 2.42. The GNWT currently rates at 1.8. We already exceed what their targets are, yet we continue to get some significant claims.

Our other concern is the fact that we are assessed as one GNWT as a whole, our whole payroll, and it wasn't until recently that we were able to get them to provide it to us with breakdown. The breakdown is incredibly important to us, having the information by department, because then we can provide it to the different departments so they can assess where

their challenges are and address those challenges specifically.

If we were assessed by individual departments, the claim on, the fine on the GNWT would be very, very small by comparison, because most of our departments don't have claims records that are high enough to justify or warrant a fine. We have brought these concerns to the WSCC about the Safe Advantage program, once again, fully standing behind the intent of the program.

Our concerns are about administration. We have shared those concerns with the WSCC. When the program came forward, the WSCC indicated that they would be reviewing this program after five years. That five years is now. They have indicated that they are going to be doing an analysis of the WSCC Safe Advantage program to make sure that it still meets its mandate, that the administration is fair and reasonable, and we've asked for an opportunity to provide our input and provide our concerns to them so that they can be addressed, and they've said that they would.

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

QUESTION 254-17(3):
DEH CHO BRIDGE TOLLS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to follow up on some of the questions raised by Mr. Bouchard. I was thinking about this recently, and I think the timing couldn't have been better. He brought up the concern about the Deh Cho Bridge and, certainly, the tolls. As far as the tolls are concerned, a number of people in the Yellowknife and surrounding area are concerned about how the tolls are transferred to the general public. In essence, they're afraid that there could be an opportunity for a cash grab.

In the context that a toll may run anywhere from \$250 to even \$300, what type of public consultation, if any, or what type of public information is being transmitted to the general public to demonstrate what the actual tolls are and how they may be seen on the everyday goods that people buy?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have that information on our website. We have had numerous discussions with transportation companies here in the Northwest Territories and in the South, in advance of the tolls being charged on the Deh Cho Bridge. For a breakdown of those meetings and discussions, I would be more than happy to get the Member and committee some

detailed meeting times and organizations that we've met with.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd certainly take the information, but I think, in essence, it's the public that's more concerned. Not everyone has the time or energy or even interest to go to the GNWT website, let alone Transportation's website. That's not meant to be an insult; people are busy. The reality is that people are concerned about these tolls that are going to be coming forward and are they going to be excessively carrying the costs of the tolls. In other words, are the everyday moms and pops carrying the cost of paying for the bridge in an unfair manner? The one example provided is if it's \$250 per truckload going across that bridge, the reality is it's only a couple of cents per item. People are afraid that it's going to be several dollars per item every time they go to the store. How is the GNWT communicating the actual costs that will go down to the consumer?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Our belief as a government and department is that the cost will be offset because companies will have to stockpile goods. They will not have to store goods. There will not be the need for refrigerated units. There will be no need to fly things over during freeze-up and breakup. Those costs in warehousing that will be saved, the feeling is it will be a wash. Certainly, the toll that transportation companies are going to have to pay, it will be up to the companies whether or not and how they pass that onto businesses that they do business with.

MR. HAWKINS: There are endless examples and I won't go through them here, but the point is that the average consumer doesn't believe it's going to be a wash. I appreciate the Minister feeling very confident in his belief that many of these trucking companies and businesses will eat these costs. I haven't heard anybody who actually believes that.

What type of public consultation can the Minister of Transportation do to show people where there will be savings and where there will be potential costs on the individual consumer? That's ultimately the issue.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: This is a question that's come up numerous times in this House over the past nine years. I'd be more than happy to get the Member and committee the information that the department has gathered over the years. It is our belief that over the course of the bridge and the collection of the tolls, that businesses will not be disadvantaged in the long-term because of paying the tolls.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear the Minister and I'm not disagreeing with him, but I don't think he's hearing me. The issue is it's not

about what I believe, it's what the public believes and perceives. The public is willing to pay their fair share. I've never heard any argument against that. The fear is that those costs will be unfairly passed on and unfairly distributed to the everyday consumer. All I'm asking is: What type of public consultation can the Minister provide some information in a form that makes sense to the general public so we can see and understand this?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Deh Cho Bridge Project has been a project underway for the past several years. There have been a number of questions asked in the House related directly to the line of questioning the Member has. I would certainly be more than happy to get the Member and committee the dates and times where public consultation has taken place on this.

The bridge is set to open here in a few weeks. The tolling has been in place. The tolling system has been in place and the tolls have been well known now for a number of years, and we intend to open the bridge here in the next few weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. 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. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 83-17(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2012-2013

TABLED DOCUMENT 84-17(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2012-2013

TABLED DOCUMENT 85-17(3):
CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITIES SPECIES AT RISK
ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

TABLED DOCUMENT 86-17(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
SPECIES AT RISK COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents, entitled Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-13, and Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013.

As well, I wish to table the following two documents, entitled the Conference Management Authorities Species at Risk Annual Report 2011-2012, and the Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee Annual Report 2011-2012.

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

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 14:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2013-2014

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, October 31, 2012, I will move that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2013-2014, be read for the first time.

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

First Reading of Bills

BILL 12:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, NO. 2

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, No. 2, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 12 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Abernethy.

BILL 13:
AN ACT TO REPEAL THE
CREDIT UNION ACT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 13, An Act to Repeal the Credit Union Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 13 has had first reading.

---Carried

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, No. 2.

---Consent granted

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 12: AN ACT TO AMEND THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, NO. 2

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, No. 2, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the Human Rights Act to add as a prohibitive ground of discrimination a conviction that is subject to a records suspension.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 12 has had second reading and is referred to committee.

---Carried

Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 13, An Act to Repeal the Credit Union Act.

---Consent granted

BILL 13: AN ACT TO REPEAL THE CREDIT UNION ACT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 13, An Act to Repeal the Credit Union Act, be read for the second time.

This bill repeals the Credit Union Act and makes consequential amendments to the Co-operative Associations Act and the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 13 has had second reading and is referred to committee.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012; and Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act, with Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Good afternoon, committee. I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have on the order sheet here, Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012; and Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The committee wishes to consider Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012, as well as Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Great. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Committee, we will come back to order. We have agreed to consider Bill 2. The Minister responsible for Bill 2, Minister Abernethy, Minister of Justice, would you please introduce the bill?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here today to talk to you about Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012.

The purpose of Bill 2 is to amend various statutes of the Northwest Territories for which minor changes are proposed, or errors or inconsistencies have been identified.

Each amendment included in the bill had to meet the following criteria:

- a) It must not be controversial;
- b) It must not involve the spending of public funds;
- c) It must not prejudicially affect rights;
- d) It must not create a new offence or subject a new class of persons to an existing offence.

Departments responsible for the various statutes being amended have reviewed and approved the changes.

Most amendments proposed in Bill 2 are minor in nature and many consist of technical corrections to a statute. Other changes have the effect of repealing certain enactments or statutory provisions that have expired or have otherwise ceased to have effect. The amendments are of such a nature that the preparation and legislative consideration of individual bills to correct each statute would be time consuming for the government and for the Legislative Assembly.

I am prepared to answer any questions the committee may have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. I would now like to go to the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, the committee which reviewed this bill, to make comments. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted its public review of Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, on August 23, 2012. The committee thanks the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill. The bill provides minor, uncontroversial amendments to several acts, most simply corrected translations and clarify wording in the acts. Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012, to the

Assembly as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 2. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Abernethy, do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the House?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Does committee agree to bring witnesses into the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses into the Chamber?

Minister Abernethy, would you introduce your witness for the record, please?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today is Mark Aitken, the acting assistant deputy minister with the Department of Justice.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. I will now open the floor for general comments on Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act. Any opening comments, committee? Does committee agree to go to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Okay, committee. We are dealing with Bill 2. We will defer the title of the bill until after we have done clause by clause. We are on page 1, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 19 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Committee, we will return to page 1, Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012. Bill as a whole, committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012, is now ready for third reading?

---Bill 2 as a whole approved for third reading

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Bill 2 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Minister. Thank you to your witness. I think we could probably have the witness stay for the next bill.

Committee, we will go onto Bill 8. Bill 8 is An Act to Amend the Securities Act. We will defer the title of the act until we have gone through clause by clause. Minister, do you have opening comments?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm here today to speak about Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act.

The purpose of securities legislation is to facilitate the raising of capital while providing appropriate protections and remedies for investors. As cross-border trading in securities becomes more common, securities legislation that is not harmonized with other jurisdictions leads to inefficiencies in the raising of capital, and inconsistent and unequal protection for investors.

In 2004 an interprovincial memorandum of understanding was developed and included the establishment of the Council of Ministers responsible for Securities Regulation. Key objectives were developed by the council; in particular the harmonization of legislation to improve enforcement, investor protection and inter-jurisdictional cooperation. In 2008 the new Securities Act, consistent with legislation in other jurisdictions, came into force in the Northwest Territories.

This bill deals with three areas in which further regulatory and legislative improvements have been agreed to by all provinces and territories. Amendments in these areas have been or are being enacted in the other jurisdictions. They include:

1. filling the gap in regulatory tools and protections for bodies overseeing the performance of auditors of publicly traded companies;
2. adding a framework for the regulation of credit rating organizations; and
3. providing the same investor rights for plain language, short form summary documents as are given to the longer – and often unread – full prospectus documents.

I am prepared to answer questions that committee members may have regarding Bill 8. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. I'll now go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, who reviewed Bill 8, to the chair, Mr. Moses, for his opening comments. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted its public review of Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act, on August 23, 2012. The committee thanks the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill. The bill modernizes the Securities Act and provides for a stronger regulatory system, protecting NWT investors from improper or fraudulent practices. Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act, to the Assembly as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 8. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Abernethy, do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the House?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Is committee agreed to bring witnesses into the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Abernethy, could you please introduce your witnesses to the House?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today are Gary MacDougall, the director of legal registries; and Kelly McLaughlin. What is your title?

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Acting director of legislation.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Acting director of legislation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Committee, are there any general comments in regard to Bill 8? Is committee agreed we go to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. We will move to detail. We will defer the title of the bill until we have done the clause by clause. Bill 8, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 to 22 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Okay, committee, we'll return to page 1, Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act. Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Does committee agree that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act, is now ready for third reading?

---Bill 8 as a whole approved for third reading

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Bill 8 is now deemed ready for third reading. Thank you to the Minister, thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, committee.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012, and Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Securities Act, and would like to report progress and that Bills 2 and 8 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Do we have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, October 30, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 83-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013

- Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012
- Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act

23. Orders of the Day

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

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

