



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**5<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Day 5**

**17<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2014**

Pages 3449 – 3474

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

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(Great Slave)

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*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Hon. Tom Beaulieu**

(Tu Nedhe)

*Minister of Human Resources*

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*Minister of Public Works and Services*

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(Frame Lake)

**Mr. Frederick Blake**

(Mackenzie Delta)

**Mr. Robert Bouchard**

(Hay River North)

**Mr. Bob Bromley**

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**Mr. Daryl Dolynny**

(Range Lake)

**Mrs. Jane Groenewegen**

(Hay River South)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**

(Yellowknife Centre)

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*Intergovernmental Relations*

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(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

*Minister of Municipal and*

*Community Affairs*

*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Housing Corporation*

*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Mr. Kevin Menicoche**

(Nahendeh)

**Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger**

(Thebacha)

*Government House Leader*

*Minister of Finance*

*Minister of Environment and Natural*

*Resources*

*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Alfred Moses**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

**Mr. Michael Nadli**

(Deh Cho)

**Hon. David Ramsay**

(Kam Lake)

*Minister of Justice*

*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

*and Investment*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 5, 2014****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. As this is the first time in 2014 that we have met in this Chamber, I would like to offer my belated but most sincere wishes to you and to all the residents of the Northwest Territories for a happy and healthy New Year.

Two thousand fourteen is a special year in many ways for our Assembly. Last August the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission approved a joint submission from the Legislative Assemblies of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, requesting mandatory distribution of Assembly proceedings. Today marks the first time that our proceedings will be carried through direct-to-home satellite providers, Bell Express Vu and Shaw Direct, giving Northerners and Canadians another option to view the proceedings of our Legislature. Our Assembly will share these dedicated channels with the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. I look forward to broadcasting not only the formal proceedings of the House but rebroadcasts in our Aboriginal languages, public meetings of our committees, special Assembly events, such as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, and archival materials.

One advantage of a six-week sitting, colleagues, is that we will have the opportunity to meet young people from 11 of our communities who are participating in our Page Program. We will have Pages from Yellowknife, Tuktoyaktuk, Behchoko, Fort Good Hope, Fort Smith, Inuvik, Hay River Reserve, Aklavik, Hay River, Wrigley and Fort Resolution. I look forward to meeting these young people, and I extend the thanks of the House to the parents, the chaperones, the schools, and our Assembly staff who organize this excellent program.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and cheer on our Northwest Territories Olympians, Michael Gilday, Brendan Green and Jesse Cockney, as they head to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. Your accomplishments have already made this territory

proud. Travel safely with the very best wishes of this House to accompany you.

Members, I would also like to warmly welcome Mr. Michael Ball, our new Principal Clerk of Committees and Public Affairs. Mr. Ball joined the Clerk's staff in December, and today he is with his colleagues at the table for the first time. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Ball.

---Applause

On a much sadder note, colleagues, our condolences go out to those families and communities who have lost loved ones in recent weeks. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of Fritz Fiechtinger and Doug McLeod, a good friend I grew up with in Tuktoyaktuk.

As the date for the implementation of the Devolution Agreement with the Government of Canada approaches, I know there is a great deal of work to be done and it will be a busy sitting. I remind Members that we work for the benefit of all Northerners. May I also remind you that our work here must be carried out with dignity and respect, the cornerstone of consensus government. My duty, as always, is to assist you in your important work and to safeguard the dignity and decorum of the Chamber, and I pledge to continue to do that.

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

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

- Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2014-2015;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2012-2013;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2014-2015

during the Fifth Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Yours truly, George, L. Tuccaro,  
Commissioner."

Thank you, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

### Ministers' Statements

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 6-17(5): SESSIONAL STATEMENT

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome Members back to the continuation of the Fifth Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

This is our final sitting before the transfer of responsibility for public land, water and resources from the Government of Canada on April 1, 2014. The next time we meet, the Legislative Assembly and its Members will have substantial new powers to make decisions on behalf of the people who elected us.

During this sitting, Members will be asked to consider and pass the 2014-15 budget. The budget will position the Government of the Northwest Territories to smoothly take on new responsibilities being transferred through devolution, while continuing our commitment to fiscal discipline and strategic infrastructure investments to grow our economy.

You will also hear during this sitting how the government will implement and pay for many of the plans and strategies that we have developed in response to the priorities of the Legislative Assembly.

These include plans for supporting our people by addressing poverty and mental health challenges, including addictions. We will invest in the long-term health and success of our children through a focus on early childhood development and education reform. We will support sustainable communities by continuing with decentralization and new recruitment initiatives. We will invest in the health of our environment by continuing to develop alternatives to diesel, implement the Water Stewardship Strategy and manage wildlife. You will also hear how we will continue our efforts to grow a strong, diversified economy and create a prosperous future for all our residents.

Passing the legislation required for devolution will be a significant achievement for this House. Devolution legislation makes up the bulk of our legislative agenda at this sitting and may be the most ambitious legislative project this government has undertaken since division. I would like to thank Members for their continued commitment and

cooperation in moving this legislation forward in a timely manner.

Devolution is a goal we have pursued for many years now. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, NWT residents will have a greater voice in decisions about how land, water and resources are managed, how the economy is developed and the environment protected. It will be the first transfer of federal programs to the Government of the Northwest Territories that will generate substantial revenue for the territory.

Devolution will provide for more coordinated land stewardship in the Northwest Territories in partnership with Aboriginal governments. It will provide for more responsive resource management from a smaller, more efficient government closer to the people affected by its decisions. It will create new jobs and business opportunities as the Northwest Territories economy grows under the management of our government.

Supported by an efficient, effective and integrated regulatory regime, devolution will give Northerners the necessary tools and authorities to responsibly develop the territory's significant natural resource potential, promote investment and economic development, and manage the land and environment sustainably.

We could not have reached this point without the support of this Assembly and our Aboriginal government partners, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank Members for that support and thank our partners – the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Northwest Territories Metis Nation, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated and Tlicho Government – for their commitment and dedication to this goal. Their assistance in negotiating a deal that is in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories has been invaluable, and their ongoing participation will be critical to the successful implementation of devolution.

Devolution is about creating a strong Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, and we are stronger when we join together. I am pleased that so many Aboriginal governments have decided to join their strength with ours. We have been in discussions with the Acho Dene Koe First Nation for some time and they have been waiting patiently to sign on to devolution. Last week our partnership grew with the announcement that the Deninu Kue First Nation had voted in favour of signing on to devolution.

We continue our discussions with the Dehcho First Nations and the Akaitcho Territory Dene First Nations. There is a seat for each of them waiting at the table, and I remain hopeful that we will see all regional Aboriginal governments agreeing to participate in and enjoying the benefits of devolution.

Devolution will complete a process that began in 1967 and saw the people of this territory and their

elected government take on responsibility for many former federal programs, including health, education, social services, airports, and forestry management.

Come April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Government of the Northwest Territories will assume responsibility for 26 federal acts and regulations governing the management of land, water and resources in our territory. The Legislative Assembly and its elected Members will gain new powers to make legislation that was formerly reserved for the Parliament of Canada. For the first time ever, Members will be debating their own legislation governing oil and gas operations, petroleum resources, water management, and regulation of activities on Commissioner's land during this sitting.

New powers and responsibilities for environmental management and regulation will be delegated to our government under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. These will be added to the responsibilities we have already been exercising under the MVRMA for years.

The MVRMA will continue to be federal legislation for the time being, but this reflects its unique nature. The MVRMA is required by the land claims and provides for integrated environmental regulation on all lands in the Mackenzie Valley, including federal and territorial lands, settlement lands and private lands. Its continuation as federal law for the next five years reflects that, and we are satisfied with the provisions in the Devolution Agreement to review the status and potential transfer of these delegated powers to our government within five years. I'd also like to note that there is nothing to prevent us from initiating those discussions earlier.

We have been working closely with the Government of Canada and our Aboriginal partners to ensure that there will be a seamless transition on April 1, 2014. We have worked out our organizational design, identifying exactly which new responsibilities and programs our departments – including a new Department of Lands under Minister Robert C. McLeod – will be assuming on the effective date. We have made decisions about how we will manage project approvals, including a single-window approach to help support responsible and coordinated development in our territory.

We are putting our senior management teams into place and have already filled key positions. One hundred thirty-two job offers have been accepted by federal employees currently delivering the transferring programs in the Northwest Territories. That represents almost 100 percent acceptance, and I look forward to welcoming them to the Government of the Northwest Territories. With this level of continuity and experience, we will be more than ready to hit the ground running come April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Most critically, we have been working hard to clarify our thinking about our new authorities and what they mean in terms of our plans and priorities. Clear rules and expectations around environmental protection and resource management are critical for responsible resource development. Industry needs to know what the rules are, and our people need to know that their government is committed to managing and protecting the environment according to northern priorities and values.

Shortly, our government will be releasing its Land Use and Sustainability Framework. This framework will be a critical policy piece for us, establishing the foundation for all our departments as they take on new responsibilities for land use, resource development and environmental management. It will outline the principles and approach we will follow as we engage in decision-making around land in the Northwest Territories. Having a clear, consistent approach to how we make land use decisions will help ensure there are no surprises when it comes to dealing with our government and ensure we make sound decisions that are in the public interest as we begin to exercise our new authorities for land resources and water.

The Land Use and Sustainability Framework has been in development for several years and is grounded in our ongoing work and discussions with Aboriginal governments and other stakeholders. We have also benefited from the participation of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning and its development, and I thank Members for their involvement. Like much of the work this government has been doing, the framework will both position us to succeed after devolution and respond to the priorities of this Assembly.

The vision and priorities we established at the beginning of this term have helped us to be strategic and focus our efforts on those areas most important to us and the people of the Northwest Territories. That kind of focus and discipline will be necessary for the remainder of our term as we implement the plans we have worked so hard to develop in the first half of our term.

We are continuing this Assembly's focus on building a strong, prosperous territory with a diversified economy, aided by new responsibilities acquired through devolution. We have a new Mineral Development Strategy that will guide our government as it works to support the responsible development of our mineral resources. We have an Economic Opportunities Strategy which takes a broader view to strategically growing a strong, diversified economy for our territory. We'll continue to support and prepare for the responsible development of the Northwest Territories' oil and gas potential. This potential is significant in both the Beaufort-Delta and in the Sahtu where we are seeing a world-class oil and gas play. Work has

already begun with the federal government and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to commence negotiations for a management agreement, respective oil and gas resources and the offshore portion of our territory.

We continue to address the high cost of energy by investing in alternatives to expensive diesel fuel, supporting sustainable communities and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We have a new Northwest Territories Power System Plan released late last year. We know that access to affordable, reliable energy is a significant factor affecting resource and economic development. This plan looks at how we can make best use of the Northwest Territories' hydro resources and expand and extend the hydro transmission network to better serve consumers and industry. The companion Energy Plan, also released last December, will guide our government's long-term approach to energy in the territory.

We continue to focus on strategic infrastructure investments that will help us support economic growth and development in the Northwest Territories. That includes projects like the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway, the first step towards completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I was pleased to join Prime Minister Harper in Inuvik last month, along with most of Cabinet and the Member for Yellowknife Centre, for a groundbreaking ceremony. Prime Minister Harper continues to make the North a priority for his government, and I thank him for his commitment and leadership.

We know that people need to be healthy and educated if they are to benefit from and participate in a strong, diversified economy. We have plans for investing in our people, including the Early Childhood Development Plan, Anti-Poverty Strategy and Mental Health and Addictions Plan so our people have the support they need to take advantage of current and future opportunities.

Focusing on decentralization and a representative workforce will continue to be a priority for us. This reflects our commitment to Aboriginal people and small communities, while ensuring that all residents of the territory have an opportunity to share in the benefits of a strong, thriving economy.

We will continue to build our relationships and foster the partnerships we need to achieve our full potential as a territory, including with Canada, business and industry and Aboriginal governments. I am proud of the intergovernmental agreements we have signed with the Gwich'in, Tlicho, Northwest Territory Metis Nation and Akaitcho Territory Dene First Nation. With the establishment of the Intergovernmental Council called for by the Devolution Agreement, we will be more directly linked to Aboriginal governments, providing new opportunities for us to work together more closely to

achieve the shared interests of all the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago few would have imagined a Northwest Territories with a fully-elected Legislative Assembly exercising province-like powers. Our resources and potential were largely unknown and mostly inaccessible. Today we are increasingly being recognized across Canada and around the world as a potential engine of economic growth and prosperity. We now stand poised to take the most significant step in our political evolution in decades. We have made great advances in little more than a single generation.

I have said before that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century belongs to the North, and we can make that a reality here. This is the session where all our preparations come together. We have laid the groundwork, developed the plans and secured the political and legislative authority we need. Now is the time to join together and create the strong, prosperous, environmentally sustainable territory we outlined in our vision. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 7-17(5): NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Thursday, February 6, 2014. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SESSIONAL AGENDA

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is great to be back here, and I welcome all my colleagues back to the Legislative Assembly. We have a long six weeks ahead of us, and going into this type of thing there is anticipation, there is excitement, but there is also concern. It is just like getting together with your family. We know that we are going to have a long session together, and we know sometimes with that type of length we are going to get into some arguments and some debates, so I apologize for anything I say to them over the next six weeks.

I would also like to mention that you opened up this session talking about the fact that we're going to be on national TV, Bell channel 513 and Shaw channel 289 or 489, depending on the type of system you have. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff who worked over the last couple of years to get us on this national platform, so it's great for our Legislative Assembly.



In the next six weeks, devolution will definitely be a big factor in our discussions. We have a lot of work to do. There is a big question of how we are going to go forward and how the new budget is going to be affected by this session, by this devolution, what we are going to do with our Heritage Fund with those revenue resources that we have. I would also mention the fact that we're going to be discussing electoral boundaries, the future of the Northwest Territories and how those electoral boundaries will be divided up and what the future of the Northwest Territories will look like.

I look forward over the next six weeks to looking at and getting updates on the Tuk to Inuvik highway, education renewal, decentralization in the GNWT and our regions, mining strategy, the Energy Plan and how that will save the people of the Northwest Territories money and make the cost of living reduced here in the Northwest Territories.

This is an exciting time for the Northwest Territories, and I look forward to the next six weeks. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
MACKENZIE DELTA  
CONSTITUENCY CONCERNS

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Colleagues, staff, I'd like to welcome you all back to the Fifth Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. I want to begin at this time by saying that moving forward in 2014, I look forward to making significant changes for the Mackenzie Delta. I have relayed this message to my constituents that in order for the Mackenzie Delta to gain a brighter future, we must make positive changes.

My mandate is to work with all local organizations, companies and community governments in my riding to explore possible solutions and come up with ideas to better our communities.

At this time I want to send my condolences to the families in the Mackenzie Delta and throughout the North who have recently lost loved ones. Far too many times our people suffer with the tragic loss of friends and relatives, either through accidents or illness, and we are there to help them. We continue to offer support in various ways. Mr. Speaker, please send your prayers to those who are grieving at this time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ADDRESSING THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
POPULATION DECLINE

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it is good to be back in this House and we have a good long stretch ahead of us here where we will get a chance to air all of our concerns and all of our issues. We have been away for a while, so I have a few of them that have built up, I guess, over the time that we have been away and I have a lot of things that I want to talk about in the next six weeks.

The Premier has delivered his address today for the opening of session, and it paints a very promising picture of our future here in the North, and I want to be the first one to applaud the efforts of this government on all that they have accomplished and where we are.

But it's our job here in this House, and as Members too, to sometimes report not just the good news but some of the concerns. One concern I have, very seriously, is that no matter how bright our future is, we have to address the issue of our declining population.

If we do all of these wonderful things that we are talking about doing, who's benefit are we doing them for if not for our own people who have built the North, who reside in the North? The fact is that the population of the Northwest Territories is declining. This affects us in many ways. It affects our capacity. It affects our transfer payment from the federal government. I think it's up to now about \$25,000 per person. So, over the next several days – I can't squeeze it into two and a half minutes – I want to talk about some ideas I have for how we can stop the hole in the bucket, so to speak, of the loss of people, of resources, of capacity, of talent that seems to be going southward, which is not very good.

Just to touch on a few things that may be affecting people's desire to stay in the North, I'm just going to list off a few of them: the cost of living, how we treat our seniors and keep them here in the Northwest Territories when they retire, the employment of our own people. We try and we have lots of policies, but there are lots of gaps, and I could tell many stories of how we have failed to employ our own people. We also do need to reach out to newcomers, and I know the government has had job fairs and Make Your Mark and so on.

We do have to knock on the doors of people we don't know, but we need to pay attention to those who could be working in this territory at this time. Maybe we need to get creative, like we expect our diamond mines and large industry to offer inducements, incentives to bring people to live in the North. We need to bring a lot of people home. We've had people born, raised, educated – we've even contributed to their education – and they are

currently not here because there have been gaps in the system. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF TED GRANT  
TO DEH CHO TOURISM

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to provide this statement regarding Mr. Ted Grant's contribution to NWT Tourism. Mr. Grant is a Fort Simpson businessman and bush pilot. He has spent 30 years promoting and developing the NWT tourism industry.

During my tenure as MLA for Nahendeh, I've had the pleasure of travelling with him and marvelled at his love for the Northwest Territories while marketing our vast potential in our territory. He has received many rewards to recognize his work, most recently the Mike Stilwell Lifetime Achievement Award from NWT Tourism. Other notable awards are the Northwest Territories Tourism Operator of the Year in 2006 and the prestigious Tourism Industry Association of Canada's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.

He is well travelled and spends much of his own time and efforts at trade shows throughout Canada and internationally. He specifically notes that he has been to China several times, championing the Northwest Territories.

While promoting the NWT, his prime focus is the Nahanni National Park Reserve in Fort Simpson's own backyard.

Recently, the National Geographic – a famous scientific and educational magazine – listed the Nahanni National Park Reserve as one of the top 10 parks to see in Canada. I would credit Mr. Grant's countless hours in promoting the park that has led to their interest in the park. "I think he sort of singlehandedly has been the biggest promoter of the Nahanni National Park," said His Worship Sean Whelly of Fort Simpson. As MLA, I too am proud to have this gem in my constituency.

Mr. Grant has sponsored and worked with George Fischer, a well-known photographer, on projects that showcase the Nahanni National Park Reserve and the Northwest Territories. He has asked me to present to our Premier, Mr. Bob McLeod, and the Minister of ITI, Mr. Dave Ramsay, with copies of Mr. Fischer's recent book "Canada in Colour," which I will do later. This book contains many beautiful pictures of the Northwest Territories.

In closing, I must add that Mr. Ted Grant is a very strong advocate of Highway No. 7.

---Laughter

In fact, he encourages the chipsealing of the whole of Highway No. 7. He has raised this issue with Prime Minister Harper on a couple of occasions. Like the Inuvik-Tuk road project, the Prime Minister is well aware of Highway No. 7 and the integral part it plays in tourism in the NWT as it is a gateway to the North.

We have a great champion and ambassador for NWT tourism with Mr. Ted Grant. Well done, Ted Grant. Keep up the great work. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FEDERAL BILL C-15: DEVOLUTION  
IMPLEMENTATION LEGISLATION

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity last week to witness another step in the evolution of devolution. I am referring to the hearings held here in Yellowknife by the Parliament of Canada Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Northern Affairs on Bill C-15, a federal bill amending the NWT Act and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, MVRMA. It was a long but most interesting day. In general, the presentations were thoughtful, well presented, and the passion and commitment of the organizations behind the words was evident.

It is well known that there is no unanimity here in the NWT about Bill C-15. At the hearings several organizations spoke against devolution, but the amendments to the NWT Act, which will enable devolution, are largely accepted and supported. Most presenters have no quarrel with the section of Bill C-15 that amends the NWT Act to allow devolution to occur on April 1<sup>st</sup>, not many weeks from today.

The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is the federal legislation which sets out the regulatory regime for our territory. The parts of Bill C-15 which refer to and make amendments to the MVRMA are almost universally detested. Just this week the Tlicho Government indicated they will take the federal government to court over these amendments.

Some of the proposed MVRMA changes have merit, Mr. Speaker, but they are few. The most contentious is the proposal in Bill C-15 to do away with our well-established regional land and water boards to develop one large territorial board. I support those who oppose the one-board proposal. The NWT regional boards have been proven to be working well. They have been proven to have a good working relationship with industry. Why are we changing a system that is not broken?

Bill C-15 has combined two very different issues, two issues which should not be considered together. It's a very divisive bill. You only had to

listen to committee testimony last week to know that.

Bill C-15 needs to be split. The amendments to the NWT Act must be considered and debated separate from amendments to the MVRMA. The MVRMA changes require time to be fully considered, time for a workable solution acceptable to all parties to be found, and that will not happen if the Government of Canada continues on its current course.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** Even though the Government of Canada has refused to take this action to split Bill C-15 once already, I urge the government and its Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to reconsider and to take action to divide Bill C-15. As I often say, it's the right thing to do. Let's do the right thing. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INUVIK EMERGENCY WET SHELTER PROJECT

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome everybody back into the House as well as welcome any NWT residents who may be viewing, especially through our new satellite option.

In our past O and M budget process, committee worked with government on committing funding for mental health prevention and promotion programs through the Department of Health and Social Services. Some of these funds were provided to the communities of Yellowknife and Inuvik and were to be allocated for day shelters.

In the community of Inuvik, however, the health authority had a meeting and worked with the local interagency committee to come up with a proposal for an emergency wet shelter that would operate in the evenings during the winter months. This shelter is now in operation and is being utilized on a daily basis. From what I hear, there are anywhere from 10 to 15 residents accessing the services nightly. Other informal discussions have also shown that there have been less alcohol-related disturbances in the community and less visits to the emergency room.

Although there are some good outcomes being presented, addictions continue to be an issue. More stable programming, more resources and more funding need to be provided to these organizations that do work on behalf of government. The initial success of this project can lay the framework for future emergency shelters, wet or dry, by utilizing

and supporting the resources that are available even in our smallest communities.

I'd like to thank and recognize the hard work, compassion and dedication of all the partners on making this project happen at such a fast pace – the Town of Inuvik, the RCMP, the Anglican Church, the Inuvik Interagency Committee – and all of the numerous volunteers that provide their time to keep this shelter open during the nights.

This emergency shelter is not only providing cost savings in health authority and through the RCMP but it's saving lives.

I will have questions later on for the Minister of Health and Social Services on how we can build on this project in Inuvik but also build these types of projects in communities across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE DEHCHO PROCESS

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Mahsi. I'm glad to talk to you. I'm also glad to speak on behalf of the Dehcho Process, and they have been working with the federal and territorial governments. Eventually there will be some political resolve to the Dehcho Process. [Translation ends]

It formally began in 1999 and the people of the Dehcho First Nations. It is really the continuation of a long process that started when Europeans first made contact with indigenous Aboriginal people. Once it is concluded, the final agreement will clearly set out the Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Dehcho First Nations, including the ownership and the title of the Dehcho lands and resources, harvesting rights, cash compensation and royalties from resource development.

The final agreement would provide an elected public Dehcho government with the power to make and enforce Dehcho laws, design and deliver programs and services for all residents living in the Deh Cho region and establish processes regarding the use, management and the conservation of land, water and resources in the Deh Cho.

In 2001 the parties, including the GNWT and federal government, along with the Dehcho First Nations, signed an interim measures agreement and a framework agreement. The IMA addresses how the conservation, development and use of Dehcho lands, waters and resources will be handled, pending the completion of the final agreement. The framework agreement sets out the subject areas to be negotiated in order to achieve an agreement-in-principle and conclude a final agreement. Right now the parties are in the process

of negotiating an AIP and completing the Dehcho Land Use Plan.

While a great deal of work has been accomplished, a lot remains to be done. Main table negotiations are entrenched and proceeding very slowly on difficult issues relating to the size of the land quantum and no agreement on a legislative basis for a land and resource management regime. The lack of a federal representative at the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee also appears to be hurting the progress.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NADLI:** On the other hand, progress is being made in bilateral discussions between the GNWT and the Dehcho First Nations on issues related to devolution, and I'm told the finish line is practically in sight. As the MLA for Deh Cho, I want to reiterate my support for the successful conclusion of the Dehcho Process.

The negotiations are complex and difficult. Negotiators must deal with challenging subjects and times when the positions of the parties seem very far apart. I want to stress to the parties the importance of taking an interest-based versus a positional approach to negotiations.

When the negotiations are at their most difficult, I want to encourage all of the parties at the table not to lose sight of the main goal for why these negotiations are happening, so that the Dehcho First Nations people can finally be in control of their own destiny and govern themselves on their own lands. This, I believe, is in the best interests of all Northerners and Canadians. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECEMBER 2013 YELLOWKNIFE POWER OUTAGE PROPERTY DAMAGES

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to be back in the House.

I want to bring everyone back to Sunday, December 29, 2013, when the lights went out in Yellowknife, Behchoko and Detah at approximately 3:40 p.m. Like many, I scrambled to light my fireplace, my gas stove, my kerosene emergency heaters, and light my candles while my thermometer outside showed minus 40 Celsius.

While social media was abuzz with emergency tips and suggestions and updates from stakeholders – but not from NTPC, I must add – many, including myself, could only wait patiently hoping for the power to be restored. For over three hours and in extreme cold temperatures, over 9,000 Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northland

Utilities clients waited for that flicker of light to be restored.

As of today, our communities are still dealing with the aftermath of frozen waterlines, damaged pipes and busted sprinklers. Many residents and businesses are angry and frustrated as to why it took so long to get power restored when we have a perfectly good diesel generator backup system. Why did it take over three hours to fire up generators when we are told that the process is no more than 30 minutes? Why is this at least a third occurrence in the past couple years at such extreme cold temperatures where NTPC power equipment failed? These are very real and valid questions that have not been answered.

In the aftermath of this incident, my office undertook to investigate the extent of damage caused by this recent power outage. Now, I know this exercise received wavering degrees of skepticism and motive to opinions of permitted reimbursements of regulated electric companies, but I can assure you my motives were purely analytical to truly evaluate the financial impact that this incident had on the taxpayer.

Here is what I was able to conservatively calculate. There were 231 residential and commercial clients that came forward. The average wait time for repair was between three to seven days. The total amount of repair bills was approximately \$350,000, and the average repair cost was about \$1,500 per client.

My office did reach out to collect as much data as possible, and I want to thank the many residents and Members of this House who shared their stories, but we all know there are many more costs out there, plus with the recent Yellowknifer article reporting that we may have burst pipes expecting to cost the City of Yellowknife upwards of \$1.5 million makes us one of the first key issues of 2014.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I leave you with this: When does the act of God cease and when does faulty equipment start?

With that, I will have further questions today for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, a few short weeks ago, a number of MLAs went to the Yellowknife Aurora College campus, and we were there to hear from the students. As we expected, we heard a number of various concerns, and if I might rightly

put them in different categories, I would call some of them city issues, ECE issues, and certainly Aurora College-specific issues.

While listening to these concerns it came to me: Has the college ever undertaken an opportunity to listen and certainly meet these students? So I posed the question, has anyone met their board of governors to talk about their concerns? Not surprisingly, but disappointingly I must admit, there was a resounding no. I was informed that they only have one student as student rep on the board of governors who yet has to still be appointed, and this one student rep to the board of governors represents all three campuses. An impossible task, if I may add.

I undertook to write a letter to the board of governors suggesting that they should meet with these students, they should talk to them and hear their concerns. As promised, I wrote the letter. So, what do you do with the letter? You try to send it. So I go to the Aurora college website and I looked for the e-mail of the board of governors. Impossible to find. I called the president's office. What do you think they say? They say, well, there are no e-mail addresses for the board of governors, but if you have a letter to send us, send it to the president of Aurora College.

This is failing the public and certainly failing the students. When you have to send a letter of inquiry to the board of governors and it has to be vetted through the president's office, the first question that came to mind to me was: What level of accountability is this? Are they screening letters? Who knows? Their intentions may be good, but they do look terrible up front.

If you're a student at this college, if you're a person of the public and you want to reach out to your board of governors, it's impossible. As the stewards of this institution, an important institution to our territory, we must be able to endow these governors with an e-mail. There must be some level of accountability to these students. There must be some level of accessibility to these students to hear their concerns.

So, I would tell Cabinet and I would certainly tell the Minister of ECE, let's start by appointing a student rep who is only appointed for one year, and let's get these governors' e-mails so they can communicate with these students, because right now they're anonymous. This style of business may be everyday business in Ottawa, but I can tell you it doesn't hold water here in the Northwest Territories. Stop failing our public and help our students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF RESPECTED SAHTU ELDERS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some time ago I sat down with an elder in Fort Good Hope and listened to the elder. One of the phrases I got from the elder, after listening to the elder, was "our land is holy." I was trying to figure out what the elder was meaning.

Some time ago over the past several months, the Sahtu people have lost three dearly loved elders and a young mother and a young grandmother. These elders passed away some time ago, one last week and certainly the young mother from Deline, and they returned back to the land.

I recall when I was a young man in Tulita when the elder was talking to me, he knelt down and took the dirt from his hand and he said, "This is our blood." I couldn't understand what he was talking about, but now I can understand a little bit, I think, that our elders return back to the land. When our elders go back to the land, our land is holy.

In our small communities, especially in the Sahtu and other communities, we're a family and family grieves together. So, back in our communities, I want to say to the families and all the volunteers, to help out the loved ones on the passing of their elders or their mother, grandmother. We need to support each other. The traditions that we had at one time were very strong, so now we need to remind ourselves and pray for each other.

Sometimes in this life we need to sit back and say, this is important, this can wait until tomorrow. I have a lot of issues for the Sahtu that I want to raise. That will happen tomorrow.

Today I want to pay respect to the elders, to the young mother and grandmother in Deline, Tulita and Fort Good Hope and say what they have done for us to be here, standing and talking freely is truly appreciated and I thank everybody in the Sahtu for helping these families through their hard times. I ask everybody to send prayers to the people in the Northwest Territories who also lost family members or friends since our last coming to this session. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you Mr. Yakeleya. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Moses.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. Joining us today is my constituency assistant, Weronica Murray from Inuvik. She's going to be here for the first week understanding our consensus government style and participating in some of the work. Welcome, Weronica.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize all of the deputy ministers of the Government of the Northwest Territories that are here today. These are the people who help make all of our directions come into effect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery here today. Thank you for taking the time to take in our proceedings. Thank you.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Ms. Bisaro.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 34-17(5):

#### INUUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY PROJECT FINANCIAL OVERSIGHTS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address my questions today to the Minister of Transportation. I understand that we finally have a signed contract for the construction of the Inuvik-Tuk highway. Apparently it is a guaranteed price. I am very glad to hear that, but I am extremely skeptical that this project will be completed in the allotted budget.

I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation, first of all, knowing that any project endures changes to its original project description, what exists in this contract to protect the GNWT from cost overruns due to change orders as the project moves ahead? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have, as the Member indicated, a contract with the Joint Venture group up in the Beaufort-Delta. No one has ever run a project of this type before with this type of material on this type of terrain, so this is absolutely a new thing for this North and for anywhere in the world actually. We brought in the experts that we think can work with that type of material. As the material is put on the road and embankments are built, it comes down. We recognize that we're working with a budget that is limited and we have a small contingency. It's that small contingency that we would rely on to keep this entire highway on budget. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that response. The Minister mentions a small contingency, but I didn't hear him reference basically what would happen if we get a number of change orders and we have used up that small contingency. What then occurs if we have more

change orders or we have more cost overruns that are required? What exists in the contract that can guarantee to me, as a Member overseeing this project and looking after the finances of the government, what exists in that contract that will make me feel better about the fact that we are not going to have cost overruns? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We do recognize that a project of this magnitude does have some risks associated with it. The only guarantee that we do have is that we've negotiated with the Joint Venture group, we've negotiated with a group of contractors, big contractors actually, that we felt were in the best position to build this highway with the amount of money that we were putting into the highway. That is the thing that we have to back us up. We can't provide a solid guarantee that this is going to come right in on budget, but at this point this is how all contracts start. We come up with a price, we negotiate a price, the contractors tell us they can do it within that price and we're confident that they can, so we proceed. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I guess I have to say to the Minister that that doesn't give me much comfort. What is the purpose of negotiating a price? What is the purpose of having a guaranteed contract if there is no guarantee that we won't go over cost?

I understand that there are still a number of financial elements that are being negotiated that haven't yet been finalized. I would like to ask the Minister what elements of the project are still under negotiation and have yet to be finalized. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We do have a cost for all components. The one risk is that the material that would go on the very last application and the very top granular material is a little further away from the actual road than we would like. There could be some risks associated there, but generally we have our numbers and we are proceeding with the budget in every area at this point. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that there are risks. My concern is that these risks are out there. Once bitten, twice shy. I went through the bridge project, as did the Minister of Transportation, so I think he knows why I am a little circumspect.

I would like to ask the Minister, knowing that this is a big project, knowing it's going on for a number of years, if he will be providing updates to Members and to the general public as the project progresses. Will he let us know not only how many kilometres have been completed, but an accounting of how much has been spent and whether the project is on budget? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We have an oversight committee with Cabinet to ensure that our level,

that we are continuing to communicate with each other, staying on top of the project. The project is cash-flowed, so the work that is scheduled is cash-flowed and we anticipate that we will be following the cash flow and the construction simultaneously, and at the end of the day, I am anticipating that the project will finish. If the project, in any way, shape or form, is starting to exceed the cash flow, we are going to know immediately. We also committed to continue to provide updates to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 35-17(5):  
INUVIK EMERGENCY  
WET SHELTER PROJECT

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a follow up to my Member's statement and I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. With the emergency wet shelter happening in Inuvik and some of the research that's been done in Alaska such as in Nome and Juno, how is the Minister staying on top of this pilot project that has already shown some great success in just over the two months in terms of services being provided as well as a number of residents and a number of things happening in the community such as less call-outs and disturbances, those kinds of things? How is the Minister keeping in contact with the health authority and other partners to ensure that the project is continuing to move in a positive manner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. CEOs regularly communicate with the Department of Health and Social Services in all sorts of initiatives that are going on within their jurisdiction. This happens to be one of them. I do know that the community was very eager to have this shelter and was a proponent for doing it. We continue to have dialogue with the community organizations who have put this together and we are hearing positive feedback on a regular basis. I look forward to further discussions, or the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority having further discussions with those organizations about future opportunities as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MOSES:** We've said in this House time and time again, I guess you could say we've criticized the government and the Department of Health with regard to a lack of programs and services in areas of mental health and addictions, specifically detox facilities. That is something we really tried to get to

the point here. This project itself serves a great purpose in terms of detox under a supervised setting and also doesn't exhaust resources of the RCMP or the medical staff at the hospital.

With such a great project in place where people can go if they are intoxicated – a wet shelter – and be supervised during the night, would the Minister be willing to commit further funding in future budgets to such a project, specifically the one in Inuvik which is already over the two months due to heating costs and other expenses, have already gone over budget with the money that was provided to them from the initial start-up costs from the health authority? Is the Minister willing to commit future funds to this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** During this fiscal year that we're currently in, we allocated \$75,000 in the Beaufort-Delta for a day shelter in Inuvik, and the community approached us and indicated that they would prefer to actually have the damp shelter that the MLA is talking about. These dollars that were allocated in 2013-14 are ongoing funds, so when the budget is approved for '14-15, we will have the same dollars carrying forward. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you. As I mentioned in my previous question, the budget that this organization is already working with is already over budget with the initial start-up costs, and although we are going to continue to have this money allocated on a yearly basis, there are still some costs that need to be covered to ensure that the service is provided only during the winter months, but the heating costs in Inuvik, as we all know with the Inuvik gas situation, are pretty high. So, I was wanting to get a commitment on whether or not we will see extra funding going into this with this project moving forward. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. As I indicated, there's \$75,000, and should the budget be approved for '14-15, there would be \$75,000 for that fiscal year as well. As far as additional costs and additional start-up costs, I'm certainly willing to have a conversation with them, but we don't currently have anything in the budget for additional costs above and beyond the \$75,000 allocated. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I mentioned how this can be the layout or the blueprint to lay out the framework for future shelters throughout the Northwest Territories and not just Inuvik.

Is the Minister willing to work with the health authority and develop a strong evaluation plan on the emergency wet shelter to move forward in looking at that as a possible blueprint to create

other emergency shelters throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Just to the Member's previous question, in addition to Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority, I'd encourage the organizations who are interested in providing these shelters to apply to the NWT Housing Corporation's Small Community Homelessness Fund to see if there are any opportunities there given that the individuals who are often attending these facilities are homeless.

As far as this being a template, I just want to remind the Member that as a government we don't operate shelters. The authorities fund organizations who operate shelters to meet the needs of their communities, but as the Member has clearly articulated, this shelter is working and it's getting some really positive results, and obviously we're interested in learning from successes of ours as well as our partners and sharing that information as much as possible.

So, it is early days. We need to really see how this plays out over the long term. Today it looks good and we will continue to monitor and share information as it comes in. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 36-17(5):  
PROPERTY DAMAGE RESULTING FROM  
POWER OUTAGE IN  
YELLOWKNIFE AND DETAH

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I raised the issue of unresolved property damages in Yellowknife, Behchoko and Detah in the wake of an extended power outage on December 29, 2013. As indicated conservatively, 231 residents did come forward with approximately \$350,000 in damages directly related to this outage. Now, I realize that regulated public utilities in Canada are not permitted to reimburse customers for property damage caused by weather-related incidents or acts of God. However, I believe in Inuvik some years ago a power surge caused significant damage to which NTPC took ownership and compensated all customers with damages.

So with this precedent in mind, when does the act of God cease and equipment failure begin? Can the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation please explain to the House why it took over three hours to fire up the diesel-powered generators at Jackfish plant on the evening of December 29, 2013?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a triggering event out on

the line caused by some of the heavy icing events that occurred prior to the cold snap, causing one of the cross members to collapse. It had a line on it which triggered a series of cascading events. We were not alone in the country as we experienced all of these significant severe weather events. Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, and on a comparative basis when you look at the three hours it took here to get things back and running compared to the, in many cases, weeks that it took in other jurisdictions, while it was unfortunate and long, given the cold snap, on a comparative basis I think we were very fortunate that everything was up and running in the time that it did take. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I thank the Minister for elaborating on the triggering event and we've heard about cascading events, which lead me to believe that we did have faulty equipment that caused an extended outage for no reason. Again, to compare other outages across Canada, minus 30 or minus 40 to minus 3 is not comparable.

Can the Minister indicate whether his office or NTPC has performed a full cost accounting of this recent power outage to evaluate the extent of current and future damage caused either to residents or to business, and if not, why? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you. I would suggest that when the power goes out in the wintertime, while the temperature is a variable, when you have no power in some cases for weeks, it is a crisis event. Up in the Northwest Territories, here in Yellowknife and Behchoko, we had the power on in a range of three hours, and we have watched with interest as the Member has solicited his feedback and input from the public about costs. We have some direct contact with folks that have raised concerns, but we did find the letter by the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce that was sent to all MLAs, including the public, that set the framework for what acts of God and how all costs would be put onto the ratepayers helped clarify that issue and was very helpful. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I'm unaware that we get our directions from the Chamber of Commerce when it comes to our business. But that letter was good, indeed enlightening to read here.

Can the Minister indicate if the concept of an income-tested or a contingency fund disaster relief directly associated with such things as an extended power outage at extreme cold temperatures has ever been discussed with this government? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.



**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I thought. Given that the reported damages of almost \$2 million, and given the fact that we heard today that faulty equipment is to blame for NTPC's diesel generators not working properly, and given that this government has not performed any cost accounting with this recent disaster, how can the Minister sit here in this House and indicate very little to satisfy public outcry for financial help? What is this Minister prepared to do to mitigate the situation? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you. The NTPC takes its responsibility as it does very, very seriously about keeping the power on. There was an enormous amount of effort and time put into place to make sure that the power was put on in what I see on a comparative basis a very timely way. The issue of acts of God versus man are a debate we can have separate from this issue and we are learning from this exercise, as well, this unfortunate incident, in terms of adding improvements and more investments into the system. We're going to continue to provide a high quality of service. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 37-17(5):  
TROUT LAKE AIRPORT PROJECT

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions on the construction of the Trout Lake Airport project. As the MLA, I was very proud of the work that I'd done with my colleagues to get the airport project on the books in 2008. Construction started in 2009 and here we are five years later, it's not scheduled for completion until next year. That's a six-year project. Yellowknife gets a new bypass road that's completed within the year. The government wants to build the Inuvik-Tuk highway, almost \$300 million, in four years. Why is my airport taking six years?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The work on the embankment of the Trout Lake Airport is now about 95 percent complete, but we did run into some issues with the material. The material that was being used when the construction originally started on the Trout Lake Airport was not of the quality and quantity that was acceptable to the department, so we had to deal with that issue. Now that we've had some delays because Trout Lake is not on an all-season road, there are certain times when we can get certain equipment into the community. But the delays are there. We've had weather issues, as well, but the bottom line is that that project will be finished in the fall of this year.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** That's kind of a weak answer. The people, we want a win-win situation where we've got a nice capital project, the community wins, the government wins, but building for five years... That is just completely unacceptable. Working with the community and the community meetings, there's a management team in the Department of Transportation that continually delays these.

I'd like to ask the Minister, can he do an assessment of the management team and see why this project is taking so long? Colville Lake doesn't have an all-season road. Their airport was built in two years, so was Deline. I'd like some answers from this Minister. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** If the material to construct the airport is good material then the issue of them being off an all-season road is not an issue. However, if the material was not proper material then that becomes an issue, and that's all I was trying to indicate.

I will go back to the department and look at the management team. We recognize that the Department of Transportation continues to work with the Samba K'e Development Corporation and also the contractor. Our organization, the contractor and the local development are working together to try to get this job done as quickly as possible, and the intention is to finish that airport this year.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I look forward to the Minister's internal assessment, because that's what the community is telling me, that there's a bottleneck there every time they want to do something. In fact, this gravel haul should have been done two years ago, but it was the department that kept stalling and putting it off and then finally the weather got too warm that they couldn't do it. I'd like to ask the Minister, can he assess the whole project and why is it taking so long?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I will commit to reviewing the entire project, review that entire project with our senior management team from Yellowknife, and we will report back to the Member in detail as to where the delays occurred in the construction of the Trout Lake Airport.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister had said it was going to be completed this year, I would like him to meet with the community and myself and say that's what is going to happen, because the reports I saw, it won't be completely completed until next year.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, the indication I have from the department is it would be completed in 2014. I would be pleased to meet with the community to advise them of that as well.

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

QUESTION 38-17(5):

ADDRESSING NWT POPULATION DECLINE

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I briefly alluded to in my Member's statement, the population of the Northwest Territories is declining. This presents problems on many fronts for us as a government. I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance and ask him if he has, and I'm sure he has... I mean, I have my theories about why the population is going down, but I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if his department has done some extensive analysis of this situation and what kinds of reasons are emerging for this decrease in population.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of areas that have been a source of persistent concern in regard to the issue that the Member raises. Things like the fly-in/fly-out population, things like our own vacancy rate, things like the amount of students that we pay to go to school, as the Member indicated in her opening comments, that we don't recruit back here. We need to do a better job. We've put in place an immigrant Nominee Program, as well, that we believe needs to be improved and beefed up so that it can, in fact, help address some of the many jobs across government, not only across government but across the Northwest Territories, including industries that are currently going begging. Those are sort of four major areas.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** The Minister of Finance cites many of the obvious reasons why our population is going down. I was just wondering: within the government, in order to come up with some creative ways to address this problem, who will be taking the lead role in addressing this? Like I said in my Member's statement, we can be very optimistic and excited about the future of the Northwest Territories, but the fact is we are going to be challenged in many ways if our population continues to decline.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Premier has given me the responsibility of being the chair of the Economic and Employment Development Committee of Cabinet, and this issue falls under the mandate of that committee, so I will be chairing that committee, and the deputy minister of Finance will be chairing the committee of deputies. If the Member would be patient for one day, in the budget address I would provide greater clarity as to the intent, how to proceed on this particular issue.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I've been here 19 years. I guess I can wait one day to hear what the Minister

has to say. I think there are some very good ideas out there, definitely from this side of the House, probably from some people in the public who could participate with us in an exercise to look at how we can address the situation.

The Minister mentioned the vacancy in our public service. Just in our employ, or within our purview there are approximately 800 vacant positions that are not filled, so there are many, many fronts on which we can work.

I'd like to ask the Minister, how far will he cast his net of acquiring assistance in helping to come up with initiatives that will address this situation?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We see this as a territory-wide issue, and once again, tomorrow as I present the budget, in the budget we articulate what our thinking is and our intent to involve Northerners across the board, and of course, in this House we'll commit to full engagement of the committees and the Members opposite as we look at ways to address this issue in a constructive way.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have quite a few ideas of my own on this. I look forward to hearing the Minister's budget address tomorrow, and I look forward to working with him on this.

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

QUESTION 39-17(5):

ADDRESSING COSTS OF CONVERSION  
FROM NATURAL GAS FOR  
NORMAN WELLS RESIDENTS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Finance, the money man, on the question with the residents of Norman Wells. They are going to be shutting off their natural gas by Imperial Oil and converting their utilities, and there are quite a few families in Norman Wells that just are doing their best; they don't have the extra 15 or 12 thousand dollars to make a full conversion for their residence.

Is the Minister of Finance working with his colleagues or the Town of Norman Wells to look at the number of families that are going to require the additional 10, 12, 15 thousand dollars to make that conversion? Right now it's causing a lot of stress for the families and I want to ask the Minister, is there a plan within this government to help the residents in Norman Wells with the conversion for this important thing they have to do with their house?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been involved, as a government, with Norman Wells now for a number of years as we have worked towards this reality that is coming with natural gas. We have built into the budgets of Arctic Energy Alliance and Environment and Natural Resources a number of fairly significant rebate programs, assistance programs for conversions and those types of things that are there to assist in these circumstances. I will also go back to the Department of ENR, based on the Member's concern, and ask and check to see what type of concerns and discussions we've had specifically of late with any residents of Norman Wells about the particular issue that the Member has raised, to see what the circumstances are. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I would ask the Minister also if this could be done as quickly as possible, because there are families, people in Norman Wells who are looking at the conversion. Right now they are saying, who is helping us? Which government is there? Imperial Oil is giving a little bit of a hand, but yet they are left with the bulk of the cost of the conversion.

Can the Minister come up with some solutions as soon as possible? For example, maybe setting up some loans through the Housing Corporation office. We have to come up with some solutions, so I want to ask the Minister, can this be done within this session? Then we can give the people in Norman Wells some hope and some support. They need our help.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Given the wonders of our communications system, as we speak in this House the Member can rest assured that staff are making notes, tracking the discussion here, and I'll commit to the Member to report back to him before the end of this month, definitely before the end of session, so that we can have a discussion about what are the particulars and what is currently in place and what gaps there may be. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I certainly look forward to the speed of light communication that we have with today's modern technology.

I want to ask the Minister, once we have looked and identified the gaps, we look at the residents and the people of Norman Wells. They say they are short \$10,000 or \$12,000. Will we have the means? Can the Minister put together a funding project, a budget somewhere saying that will help them so that they will not be hurt so much financially? That's what I'm looking for, is somewhat of a commitment so the residents of Norman Wells can know that the government here is looking to help them on the conversion issue.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, as a government we have invested a significant amount of resources to start addressing this issue

and we will continue to provide that support. I've made a commitment to the Member and I will honour that commitment. We will share that information and we will have a further more informed discussion. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the commitment the Minister is making in this House for the residents of Norman Wells. I also ask the Minister if he would be willing, when some sort of a plan is in place, that he come to the town of Norman Wells and present this plan on how we are going to help the residents of Norman Wells with the conversion as to what requirements they need and what programs are available to them, or what type of loans we will give them as a government. Also, I will ask the Minister if he can inform his federal counterpart. Where is the federal government on this issue, in terms of helping the people of Norman Wells?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Of course, we will commit as a government, as a department to ensure that the people of Norman Wells are fully informed and conversant as to what is happening. In fact, they are key players that need to be involved and consulted, as well, on an ongoing basis as they have been to date. We want to continue that relationship.

In regards to the federal government, I will double check with the department once again, but my recollection is, if I look around the landscape, I see Norman Wells, I see the territorial government and I don't see a lot of presence from the federal government on this particular issue. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 40-17(5):

##### AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions, of course, will be directed to the Minister of Education.

Noting the fact that letters and e-mails are vetted through the Aurora College president's office, which should be a concern just in itself, with also noting that the student rep on the board of governors is still waiting Cabinet approval, from my understanding, and furthermore that the student rep's appointment only lasts a single year and by the time that the Cabinet gets to this perennial appointment it's half over anyway, this makes it challenging for them to participate in the board of governors.

My question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is: How do these Cabinet appointed board of governors demonstrate that they are accessible and accountable to the

students of Aurora College and certainly to the public of the Northwest Territories?

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for meeting with the students and also Members as well. We are here as elected MLAs, elected officials. We represent the students as well. We have a board of governors, one from each region, that are responsible for their committee, for their regions and they represent the students. So it is not only the students that represents at the board of governors level, but all the board members.

This is an area that we are closely monitoring, and having the student representatives has been grateful for the board of governors. We will continue to push that forward for those students and I will continue to drive that forward. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Clearly, the question was missed, so I will reword it.

I did not hear one element that demonstrates how these board of governors are representing the students in an accessible and certainly in a transparent, accountable way.

In the same vein, will the Minister use his authority under Section 7 of the Aurora College Act, and instruct the college to get these board of governors' e-mail addresses so the students can contact them, and furthermore, would he instruct the board of governors to meet with these students as a board to hear their concerns?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I heard three questions in there, so I will answer one of them. My department is listening carefully and taking notes as well.

We have a board of governors representing the students. We have a student representative on there as well. Most of the organizations do not provide personal e-mails, but I will be addressing that with the president and board of governors' chair. If we can allow board members to have their e-mail address and phone number on the website, then we can make that accessible for the general public of the Northwest Territories. I am making a commitment to address that with the board chair. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** There is no student rep on this board of governors. I've gone to other websites of other universities and other colleges, and they all have an accessible porthole on how to get a hold of the board of governors. It may not be a direct e-mail but it's one that goes to them. Why in this day and age, don't we have this?

I will ask this question: How does the Minister define accountability and accessibility to their students, because I have yet to hear it today.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We have a board of governors that have their meetings in our colleges, in our communities. They are accessible to the students, to the general public. We have an open forum, we have an open dialogue when there is a board of governors meeting. There is one coming up in Inuvik in June. It is opened up to Inuvik to residents and students at Inuvik campus. There are meetings in Fort Smith; there are meetings in Yellowknife. Those are accessible to students and the general public. We will continue to open doors to those students.

We've been having a very successful student representative on our board, so we are continuing to push that forward. We may not have one at the present time, but we will be appointing one. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, defining accessibility by bumping into your board of governors representative at the Northern in Inuvik is not accountability. Going to the Co-op in Yellowknife and bumping into your board of governors rep is not accountability, and certainly going to the hardware store in Fort Smith is not defined as accountability.

Will the Minister, under Section 7 of the Aurora College Act, use his authority and direct the college to meet with these students at least once a term so people can hear directly their issues and they can understand them, because right now I've heard zero today about accountability and certainly accessibility. So, Mr. Speaker, that's what the Minister could do and he could show he's in charge. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I laid out plenty of accountability that we deal with as the board of governors and with my Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We continue to strengthen that into the communities and into the regions. Under accountability of the board of governors, again, we have representatives from each region that represents these students, that represents the general public, the regions, the communities. As a department, I work closely with the board chair to make them accountable to the general public and to the students. I have laid out what I have committed already. I will be addressing with the board chair how we can resolve some of the areas of communication with the students. We have had student representatives there for the last several years and we will continue to do that. I will be committing to meet with the board chairs. Mahsi.

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

## QUESTION 41-17(5):

## DEHCHO PROCESS NEGOTIATIONS

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently it was reported, much to the delight of Cabinet, that the community of Akaitcho, the Deninu Ku'e, is going to be signing on to the Devolution Agreement. My question is in regard to the progress of those bilateral discussions that this Cabinet has undertaken, more specifically for the Deh Cho. I wanted to ask the Premier if he could update this House in terms of the progress of those talks. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report that the Senior Officials Working Group that we set up with the Dehcho First Nations that have been meeting for almost a year now have been working very well to resolve outstanding land issues between the Dehcho First Nations and the Government of the Northwest Territories. I think we've reached a point now where both the Dehcho First Nations and the Government of the Northwest Territories have taken what has been worked with to their respective authorities to seek approval. The Dehcho First Nations have indicated that they will be going on the road to their communities to consult with their leadership in various communities.

Our government have been running it through our process. We have not run into what we call showstoppers, and I expect that very soon it will come forward so that we can make a decision on whether there's enough progress. The grand chief has said if we make progress in this area, they'll sign on to devolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** It's very encouraging and I applaud the Premier for his leadership in ensuring that the outstanding regions that haven't signed on to devolution are at a possible precipice to sign on to the Devolution Agreement.

My question is: In advancing these talks, the Premier is leading those discussions and working with the First Nations governments. How is the Premier ensuring that trust is maintained at the same time progress is made? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** At the outset, the grand chief and myself signed an agreed upon terms of reference for the Senior Officials Working Group. We provide oversight and we meet on a regular basis, whether it's by a telephone call or by a meeting for lunch or a meeting, and we've been able to ensure we keep making progress. When we hit bumps in the road, we get together and we work things out so that we can keep working in the right direction. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** It's been indicated, of course, the deadline for devolution is April 1<sup>st</sup>. So I want to ask

the Premier, is it possible that within that time frame that outstanding regions, including the Deh Cho, would come to the table and sign off? Yes or no. Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think our objective has been clear from day one that we want 100 percent of the Aboriginal governments to sign on to devolution. We have also pushed the federal government to get the federal representatives appointed to the Land Use Committee and other committees because we feel that will help advance the process.

The time frame that once devolution comes into effect is one year for the federal liabilities, as they call it. They don't want to continue to carry on federal liabilities for more than a year. So those resources that the federal government has made to other Aboriginal governments, there's a one-year period to sign on and if they don't sign on before the one-year period, then those financial resources disappear. But in our view, we want 100 percent Aboriginal governments signing on. So, even if it takes more than a year, we'd be prepared to welcome them when they do decide to sign on. Thank you.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These discussions that have been taking place, it seems that perhaps the next logical step that the Premier is more likely to develop or advance towards is the first inaugural meeting of the governance council. Is this the purpose of those talks, ensuring that at least the foundation, the rudimentary structure of the governance council has been laid and that a first meeting could happen perhaps within a year of April 1, 2014? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. As a function of devolution, we will be required to have a sign-off on the Intergovernmental Council probably within this month. I think all of the Aboriginal governments that have signed on have agreed to sign off on the Intergovernmental Council and that will be put into legislation. As part of that aspect there will be a process for other Aboriginal governments that can sign on after this first instance. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

## QUESTION 42-17(5):

## POWER OUTAGE PROPERTY DAMAGE

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to return to some of my questions earlier today regarding the power outage that we had on December 29<sup>th</sup> of 2013. Unfortunately, I didn't have the purview of looking at Hansard, so I'll get those tomorrow. I find that earlier today I was rather at the Minister's mercy and convenience to some of the

quasi attempts and answers that we didn't get, but I wanted to further some questioning regarding the initial incident when the initial power failure occurred.

Was there any failure of equipment, automatic failure of equipment for generators to start us? Was there any feeder failure that caused a cascade of events as the Minister alluded to earlier? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Okay, so now we're getting somewhere. We did have some feeder problems. If we agree that we did have some issues regarding the system failures, can the Minister elaborate how many other system failures occurred during the three-hour outage? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I know the rules of the House are clear in terms of me reading a long, detailed response chronology that lays out all the events, so in order to respect those rules of the House, I will take the question as notice.

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

#### QUESTION 43-17(5):

##### MINISTERIAL TRAVEL AND BENEFITS REPORT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be directed to the Premier, Bob McLeod. I have a question regarding some of the tabled documents that have not been tabled. What I'll do is rather than asking two separate questions, I will put them together, because basically it's the same issue, they haven't been tabled.

The first question I'd like to point out is the fact that the ministerial travel reports have only been updated as of January to March 2013, and they were tabled in the House. Of course, they haven't been tabled for three consecutive sessions after that and there's supposed to be a three month tabling.

Furthermore, asking the questions all at once here, the report respecting benefits paid to Ministers under the Ministerial Benefits Policy has not been tabled in this House since March 31, 2011, and that, of course, officially was tabled in May 2011. In other words, there hasn't been the tabling of these two particular reports, and in large part they are not fully being accounted for. I would ask the Premier, when can we expect the tabling of these reports in this House to show accountability on our issues with our Cabinet?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ministerial travel, I did not realize there was a three-month requirement to table them, but if the Member indicates it is three months then I'm sure that's correct. I will just find out where it's at in the process. I don't expect there is any reason for the delay, and I'm sure we'll make sure it's posted as soon as possible after the three months.

The ministerial benefits, that responsibility has been taken over by the Board of Management, so I will have to check with the board to see why that hasn't been filed yet if there's a requirement for it to be filed.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate the quick response from the Premier and his willingness to address this. I would certainly hope that I'd get a response back and that he'd have this tabled within we'll say 10 days. That seems reasonable, because I've had people inquire about this at my office.

My last question would be is that under the report respecting benefits paid to Ministers under the Ministerial Benefits Policy, reviewing old tablings, which goes up to March 31, 2011, not all information is there. For some reason there's information highlighted out, and what I may point out are things like hospitality where Ministers, I believe, are paid \$1,000 cash in order to, well, whatever hospitality equals.

I would ask the Premier to ensure that all things are fully accounted for in the tabling, and even if it is a Board of Management issue, I would ask him to show the leadership on this particular issue and table it anyway to demonstrate the transparency and accountability we all strive for.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think it's on the public record how much hospitality is provided to the Members and there is no requirement for accountability in that regard. I will take your request and I will discuss it with the Board of Management.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Dolyunny.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 5-17(5): DETAIL OF CONTRACTS AWARDED IN FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance. In relation to Tabled Document 110-17(3), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2013, please provide the following information reported in aggregate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013:

1. the percentage and dollar amount of those contracts that were negotiated versus total government contracts;

2. the percentage and dollar amount of those contracts that were sole-sourced versus total government contracts;
3. the percentage and dollar amount of those contracts that were awarded by request for proposal versus total government contracts; and
4. in relation to each of the above inquiries, please indicate the percentage and dollar amount of change orders.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 9, returns to written questions. Ms. Langlois.

### Returns to Written Questions

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in receipt of the following returns to written questions: Written Question 1-17(5), Written Question 2-17(5), Written Question 3-17(5), and Written Question 4-17(5).

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 1-17(5): CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR INCOME SUPPORT

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Bromley on November 6, 2013, regarding calculating eligibility for income support.

1. When assessing a client's need for income support, what are the main factors (rent, income from various sources, number of children, et cetera) that are considered? In other words, how is the amount of income support determined?

The Income Assistance program helps people when they do not have enough money each month to meet their cost of living. The amount of financial support is determined by assessing an individual's needs and their monthly income. Basic benefits include:

- the food allowance that varies depending on the number of people in a given household and the community where they reside;
- shelter benefits whereby single clients receive a maximum of \$900 per month and families receive market rent; and
- utilities benefits that assist with the actual cost of fuel, power, water and sewage services.

The Income Assistance program also provides enhanced benefits for longer-term supports such as:

- the clothing allowance that varies depending on the number of people in a household and the community where they reside;
- the disabled allowance of \$300 per month for each adult with a disability;

- the aged allowance of \$300 per month for each client over the age of 60;
  - the incidental allowance that assists with the personal care costs of clients who are in receipt of the disabled or aged allowance. The amount varies dependent on the community where they reside;
  - the child care allowance that assists with the cost of child care for clients who are in school or working. The amount varies depending on the age of the child and whether the facility is licensed;
  - the furnishings allowance, an annual benefit that varies depending on the number of people in a household and the community where they reside;
  - expenses for primary, secondary and post-secondary education, which assists with the actual costs of transportation, textbooks and supplies, annual school fees and tuition;
  - record suspension application fees that helps clients pay for criminal record suspensions;
  - security deposits to assist with the actual cost of utility and damage deposits; and
  - an emergency allowance of up to \$500 for a single client and \$1,000 for a family to assist with emergency expenses such as the loss of a home.
2. When assessing a client's need for income support, what is the level of monthly income below which a client is considered in need of income support for:
    - a) an 18-year-old living on their own in Yellowknife?

Only persons who have attained 19 years of age are eligible to apply for income assistance. Persons aged 16 to 18 years are not eligible to receive income assistance; however, they are directed to the Department of Health and Social Services, which may provide benefits under a social services program.

- b) a single parent with three children in Yellowknife?
- c) an unemployed couple with two children in Yellowknife?
- d) a senior living on their own in Yellowknife?

The Income Assistance program does not have an income threshold for determining the amount of assistance a client is eligible to receive. Eligibility for income assistance is determined based on a financial needs test that is calculated by adding together total needs for food, shelter and utilities, and deducting a client's monthly household income. Amounts for basic benefits such as food, shelter and utilities are based on a client's home

community and family size as determined by the Income Assistance Regulations. Additional enhanced needs may be included in the assessment based on unique circumstances such as for incidentals, clothing, child care, educational expenses, furniture, security deposits, emergency allowance, and record suspension fees as well as the disability or aged allowances.

Each household has unique circumstances and expenses that dictate their need independent of total monthly income. Additionally, monthly household income is adjusted using earned or unearned income exemptions based on the type of income declared.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table "Standard Income Assistance Benefits by Household Composition," which details the standard benefits that a 19-year-old, rather than an 18-year-old, living on their own, a single parent with three children, an unemployed couple with three children and a single senior would receive in Yellowknife.

3. Are income support needs calculated differently in each NWT community? If so, for the same four examples listed above, what is the level of monthly income below which a client is considered in need of income support in each NWT community?

Yes, the amount of income assistance benefits vary based on the client's community of residence, family size and financial need. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table "Standard Income Assistance Benefits by Household Composition," which details the standard benefits that a 19-year-old, rather than an 18-year old, living on their own, a single parent with three children, an unemployed couple with three children and a single senior would receive in all NWT communities.

4. In the most recent year that has complete data, how many individuals received income support in each individual NWT community?

Statistical information collected on the number of Northerners who receive income assistance is grouped by a distinct case, which counts a family as one unit. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table "Income Assistance Distinct Cases and Payments in 2012-13," which provides information on how many distinct cases received income assistance by NWT community.

5. For that same period of time, what was the total income support payments made in the NWT community?

The "Income Assistance Distinct Cases and Payments in 2012-13" document also provides information on total income assistance payments by NWT community in 2012-13.

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 2-17(5): CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDIES

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Bromley on November 6, 2013, regarding calculating eligibility for public housing rental subsidies.

1. When assessing a client's rental payment, what are the main factors (income from various sources, number of children, et cetera) that are considered? In other words, how is the amount of rent determined?

The objective of the Public Housing Program is to provide suitable, adequate and affordable housing to low and modest income residents. The program is based on a rent geared to income approach.

The unit allocation is based on the required size to ensure tenants are suitably accommodated, while rent is assessed on the total monthly income of all residents of the household. All sources of income are included in calculating monthly rent. Seniors who live alone or with other seniors receive a \$1,000 monthly income exemption for their rent calculation.

Rent for public housing tenants ranges from approximately 19 percent of income for tenants earning \$100,000 or more annually to approximately 4.5 percent of income for tenants earning \$20,000 or less annually. The national standard for affordability is shelter costs exceeding 30 percent of income.

2. When assessing a client's need for public housing, what is the level of monthly income below which a client is considered in need of subsidized rent for:
  - a) an 18-year-old living on their own in Yellowknife?
  - b) a single parent with three children in Yellowknife?
  - c) an unemployed couple with two children in Yellowknife?
  - d) a senior living on their own in Yellowknife?

There are a number of factors that are considered in relation to someone applying for the Public Housing Program.

In terms of income eligibility, in Yellowknife it would range from income less than \$50,500 total income for a tenant that could be suitably accommodated in a bachelor suite up to \$103,000 for a family that would require a four-bedroom unit.

3. Are rent subsidy needs calculated differently in each NWT community? If so, for the same four examples listed above, what is the level of monthly income below which a client is



considered in need of rental subsidies in each NWT community?

These are two quite distinct questions.

As noted, the amount of rent charged each tenant is related to their total income. The new scale classifies communities into three zones that are based on Statistic Canada's Living Cost Differentials. For example, public housing rents range from \$70 per month in a small community such as Paulatuk for a tenant with a low income up to a monthly rent of \$1,625 in Inuvik for a tenant with an annual income exceeding \$100,000.

The amount of operating subsidy that a household would effectively receive is dependent on the operating cost for that unit and the amount of rent paid by residents of that unit. As such, more information on the family structure and income of the examples you provide would be needed.

The second question relates to the income eligibility for accessing public housing. In the larger market communities (Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik) we are able to base that on the size of the unit that is required as there is a large enough base of market rentals to complete that calculation. In smaller communities an average value for the community is used due to lack of private market comparators. This is the rental Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT) used in each community.

4. In the most recent year that has complete data, how many individuals received a rental subsidy in each NWT community?

As of December 10, 2013, there were 5,835 tenants in public housing across the NWT.

5. For that same period of time, what were the total value of rental subsidies (compared to what the client would have paid at "market rates") made in each NWT community?

With approximately 2,400 public housing units across the NWT, approximately \$42.5 million is estimated to be provided in net rental subsidies in 2014-15 compared to operating expenditures of just under \$48 million. The expected rental revenue assumes a 90 percent collection rate at just over \$5.5 million.

Later today I will table an information package that explains how public housing rents are calculated in our three zones, the rental Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT) used in each community, the number of tenants by community and the estimated operating subsidy for public housing by community in the 2014-15 budget.

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 3-17(5): COST OF INCOME SUPPORT AND RELATED INCOME SECURITY PROGRAMS

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 3-17(5) asked by Mr. Bromley on November 7, 2013, regarding the cost of income support and related income security programs.

1. What is the current annual cost to administer each of the 16 income assistance and other income security programs mentioned in point 2 on page 5 of the recent Auditor General's Income Security Program Review? For the purposes of this question, "cost to administer" is defined as GNWT salaries, overhead for office space, travel, per diems and other program delivery-related expenses.
2. What are the current total annual payments made to clients under each of the 16 income assistance and other income security programs mentioned in the recent Auditor General's program review?
3. How many clients do each of the 16 income assistance and other income security programs mentioned in the recent Auditor General's program review assist annually?

#### **Income Assistance**

Income Assistance (IA) provides financial assistance to help people meet their basic needs, including child care costs. There were 3,188 distinct cases in 2012-13 and the total payments made that year amounted to \$16.2 million. IA distinct cases refer to family units that consist of one head of household and any number of dependents. The cost to administer IA, and the integrated child care user subsidy and seniors home heating subsidy, which includes wages, travel expenses, per diems and lease costs for space in small and remote communities, was \$3.465 million. Specific office costs for regional service centres are not available as the centres deliver multiple programs and services.

#### **Child Care User Subsidy**

The child care user subsidy (CCUS) is a benefit under Income Assistance and no longer a separate income security program. The cost to administer the CCUS and payments to clients are integrated into Income Assistance.

#### **Student Financial Assistance**

Student Financial Assistance (SFA) provides financial assistance to post-secondary NWT students through a combination of grants and loans. There were 1,508 students that received a total of \$15.9 million in SFA in 2012-13. The cost to administer SFA, including wages, travel expenses and per diems but not the cost of office space, was \$661,000 in 2012-13.

### **Cost of Living Tax Credit**

The refundable cost of living tax credit reduces the amount of tax individuals have to pay and is available to all territorial income tax filers. In 2012-13 this tax reduction amounted to \$21.551 million. All personal income tax payers in the NWT receive this benefit. The annual cost to administer this tax expenditure program is not available.

### **NWT Child Benefit and Territorial Worker Supplement**

The NWT Child Benefit and Territorial Worker Supplement programs both provide low-income families with monthly cash payments to assist with the costs of raising children. The Government of Canada administers these benefits on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). A total of \$1.5 million was paid out to 1,911 clients in 2012-13. The annual administrative cost for the NWT Child Benefit and Territorial Worker Supplement programs is not available.

### **Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit**

The senior citizen supplementary benefit provides financial assistance to help low-income seniors pay for living costs. The Government of Canada administers this support on behalf of the GNWT. A total of \$2.1 million was paid out to 1,081 individual seniors. The annual administrative cost for this program is not available.

### **Senior Home Heating Subsidy**

The senior home heating subsidy provides financial assistance to low-income seniors to help them with the cost of heating their homes. Support is granted either as a direct payment to heating fuel supplier or as reimbursement of heating fuel expenses. A total of \$1.3 million was provided to 442 senior households in 2012-13. The administration cost for this program is included in the administration cost for Income Assistance.

### **Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief**

The senior citizens' and disabled persons' property tax relief helps seniors and people with disabilities pay less or no property tax. In 2013 a total of \$531,421 was paid out in property tax rebates to 547 recipients in the municipal taxation area communities of Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Yellowknife. As well, 170 recipients elsewhere in the territory got paid a total of \$70,087 in property tax rebates in 2012-13. The annual administrative cost for this program is not available.

### **Supplementary Health Benefits**

Supplementary health benefits are provided to eligible territorial residents. Benefits include eligible prescription drugs, appliances, supplies, prostheses, and certain medical travel expenses. In 2012-13 a total of \$10.1 million was granted to

eligible territorial residents in supplementary health benefits. Between January 1 and December 31, 2013, 488 clients received indigent health benefits, 1,354 clients received Metis health benefits, 2,083 clients received extended benefits for seniors and 1,354 clients received extended health benefits for specified diseases. Some of these clients legitimately received benefits under more than one program. Some of the supplementary health benefits are administered directly by the GNWT and some by a contractor on behalf of the GNWT. In 2012-13 medical travel benefits, after recoveries from third parties, amounted to \$8.2 million. The number of medical travel clients, other than air ambulance, in 2012-13 was 5,093. Medical travel benefits are administered by the health authorities. The general operating cost for the medical travel office, which excludes office costs and overhead, amounted to \$1.3 million in 2012-13. Details on annual administrative cost for other supplementary health benefits is not available.

### **Territorial Power Subsidy**

The territorial power subsidy is automatically factored into regular billings for eligible general service customers of the NWT Power Corporation. In 2012-13 the GNWT provided \$5.813 million in subsidies for territorial ratepayers. Information on the number of ratepayers in NWT and the cost to administer the territorial power subsidy is not available. No direct payment is made to clients.

### **Public Housing Program**

The total operating cost of the Public Housing Program was \$44.955 million in 2012-13. Tenants paid \$5.646 million in rent, which reflects an operating subsidy of \$39.309 million. Local housing organizations are funded to administer and maintain 2,379 public housing units. The cost of administration and tenant relations was \$6.977 million in 2012-13. No direct payment is made to clients.

### **Providing Assistance for Territorial Homeownership (PATH)**

PATH is a homeownership subsidy program that is provided in the form of forgivable loans. A total of \$530,000 was provided in assistance to 10 PATH clients in 2012-13. The program is administered primarily by NWTHC district staff and it is not possible to report the specific amount of time spent on this program.

### **Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancements (CARE)**

CARE is a homeownership repair subsidy program that is provided in the form of forgivable loans. A total of \$4.872 million was provided in assistance to 232 CARE clients in 2012-13. The program is administered primarily by NWTHC district staff and it is not possible to report the specific amount of time spent on this program.

### Homeownership Entry Level Program (HELP)

HELP is a subsidized rental program that provides residents with the opportunity to transition towards homeownership. There were 172 HELP clients in 2012-13. The total operating cost of HELP was \$1.114 million in 2012-13. Tenants paid \$1.094 million in rent, which reflects an operating subsidy of \$20,000. The program is administered primarily by LHOs, although district staff complete and assess initial program applications. LHOs were provided \$28,000 for administration associated with these units in 2012-13. No direct payment is made to clients.

### Legal Aid

Legal aid provides support in the form of legal advice and representation for eligible applicants. Legal aid is funded by both the GNWT and the Government of Canada. A total of 1,177 applications for legal aid were approved in 2012-13. Total general operating expenses for legal aid services, excluding office rent and overhead administration, amounted to \$5,263,062. No direct payments are made to clients.

4. Could the Minister provide a copy of the latest Market Basket Measure of poverty for each NWT community or, if not available, a commitment on when this will be available?
5. Prior to the Income Support Program reviews associated with the Auditor General's report over the last few years, when was the last comprehensive review of income support programs and what was the title of the report produced on that review?

In the GNWT's response to the Auditor General's report on Northwest Territories Income Security programs, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) committed to developing a Northern Basket Measure, in cooperation with the federal government and the NWT Bureau of Statistics, in 2015-16.

The most recent comprehensive review of Income Security programs, prior to the Auditor General's report, was a multi-stage review conducted by ECE that began in 2004 and concluded in 2006. Three reports were released as a result of the review: the "Income Security Policy Framework" (September 2005), "Community Voices: A Report on the Income Security Consultations in the NWT" (April 2006), and "Income Security: Breaking Down the Barriers of Poverty, Promoting Self-Reliance" (July 2007).

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 4-17(5): COST EFFECTIVENESS OF GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION INITIATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Bromley on November 7, 2013,

regarding cost effectiveness of greenhouse gas reduction initiatives.

Within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the environment division supports a climate change unit that is dedicated to supporting the actions listed in Appendix 1 of the 2011 to 2015 Greenhouse Gas Strategy. In fiscal year 2012 to 2013, the climate change unit received \$3.9 million for programs, salaries, travel and overhead for this purpose, including \$1.9 million to support programs and activities delivered by the Arctic Energy Alliance.

Total reductions in greenhouse gas emissions estimated to result over the lifetimes of projects initiated in 2012 to 2013 are 3.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents. These reductions are the result of projects undertaken by governments, residents, communities and industry, including Diavik Diamond Mines' wind project, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation's Bluefish Hydro Dam Project, biomass and energy efficiency projects undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Services as well as those supported by the climate change unit and the Arctic Energy Alliance. The full cost to project proponents to implement all of these actions was \$77 million, resulting in an overall cost effectiveness of \$22 per tonne.

The cost effectiveness for rebates provided under the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program was \$41 per tonne.

The Commercial Energy Conservation and Efficiency Program had a cost effectiveness of \$19 per tonne.

The Energy Conservation Program had a cost effectiveness of \$19 per tonne.

Biomass projects funded through the Alternative Energy Technologies Program had a cost effectiveness of \$18 per tonne, and the solar projects had a cost effectiveness of \$163 per tonne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you Ms. Langlois. 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. Mr. Moses.

### Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

#### BILL 6: AN ACT TO AMEND THE MEDICAL CARE ACT

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Medical Care Act, and wishes to report

to the Assembly that Bill 6 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Lafferty.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 18-17(5):  
STANDARD INCOME ASSISTANCE BENEFITS  
BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

TABLED DOCUMENT 19-17(5):  
INCOME ASSISTANCE DISTINCT CASES  
AND PAYMENTS IN 2012-2013

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 1-17(5), I wish to table the following two documents, entitled "Standard Income Assistance Benefits by Household Composition" and "Income Assistance Distinct Cases and Payments in 2012-2013." Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Hawkins.

TABLED DOCUMENT 20-17(5):  
LETTER DATED JANUARY 27, 2014, TO  
MS. SYDNEY O'SULLIVAN, CHAIR,  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS, AURORA COLLEGE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a letter I wrote on January 27, 2014, to the chair of the board of governors, Ms. Sydney O'Sullivan. It is regarding some of the concerns about accessibility and accountability that I see with the governors in relating to their students. Of course, part of the letter is to encourage them to hold a public meeting. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. McLeod.

TABLED DOCUMENT 21-17(5):  
DETAILED INFORMATION PACKAGE ON  
CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR  
PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDIES

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 2-17(5), I wish to table the following document, entitled "Detailed Information Package on Calculating Eligibility for Public Housing Rental Subsidies." Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Can I call the committee to order. We have one item on the agenda today. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am sure that I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will now rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report from Committee of the Whole, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do I have a seconder? Mr. Miltenberger.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois):** Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, February 6, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

19. Motions
20. First Reading of Bills
21. Second Reading of Bills
22. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 4-17(5), Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2013 Final Report
23. Report of Committee of the Whole
24. Third Reading of Bills
25. Orders of the day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

