



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

**Day 78**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, May 28, 2015**

Pages 6239 – 6258

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

---

**Hon. Glen Abernethy**

(Great Slave)

*Minister of Health and Social Services*

*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Hon. Tom Beaulieu**

(Tu Nedhe)

*Minister of Human Resources*

*Minister of Transportation*

*Minister of Public Works and Services*

**Ms. Wendy Bisaro**

(Frame Lake)

**Mr. Frederick Blake**

(Mackenzie Delta)

**Mr. Robert Bouchard**

(Hay River North)

**Mr. Bob Bromley**

(Weledeh)

**Mr. Daryl Dolynny**

(Range Lake)

**Mrs. Jane Groenewegen**

(Hay River South)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**

(Yellowknife Centre)

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**

(Monfwi)

*Deputy Premier*

*Minister of Education, Culture and*

*Employment*

*Minister responsible for the Workers'*

*Safety and Compensation*

*Commission*

**Hon. Bob McLeod**

(Yellowknife South)

*Premier*

*Minister of Executive*

*Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and*

*Intergovernmental Relations*

*Minister responsible for Women*

**Hon. Robert C. McLeod**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

*Minister of Municipal and*

*Community Affairs*

*Minister of Lands*

*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)

---

### Officers

**Clerk of the Legislative Assembly**

Mr. Tim Mercer

**Deputy Clerk**

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk,  
Committees and  
Public Affairs**

Mr. Michael Ball

**Principal Clerk,  
Corporate and  
Interparliamentary Affairs**

Ms. Gail Bennett

**Committee Clerk  
Trainee**

Mrs. Danielle Mager

**Law Clerks**

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Malinda Kellett

Mr. Glen Rutland

---

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>6239</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>6239</b>
195-17(5) – Borrowing Limit (Miltenberger) .....	6239
196-17(5) – Community Fuel Prices (Beaulieu) .....	6240
197-17(5) – Building Stronger Families – Milestones Achieved in 2014-2015 (Abernethy) .....	6240
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>6241</b>
GNWT Summer Student Employment Program (Groenewegen) .....	6241
Repairs to Willow River Bridge (Blake) .....	6242
Electricity Generation Issues (Dolynny) .....	6242
Infrastructure Funding for Fort Simpson Daycare (Menicoche) .....	6242
Dredging of the Hay River (Bouchard) .....	6243
New School for Deline (Yakeleya) .....	6243
Hydraulic Fracturing (Hawkins) .....	6244
Providing Affordable Housing (Bromley) .....	6244
Hydraulic Fracturing (Bisaro) .....	6245
Business Incentive Policy (Moses) .....	6245
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>6246</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>6257</b>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>6257</b>
Bill 55 – Mental Health Act .....	6257
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b> .....	<b>6258</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, May 28, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 195-17(5):  
BORROWING LIMIT**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 2015, the federal government announced a \$500 million increase to the GNWT borrowing limit, bringing the federally imposed borrowing limit to \$1.3 billion; as well, the definition of self-financing debt is being revised. Post devolution this increase in our borrowing limit gives the Government of the Northwest Territories increased flexibility to invest, in consultation with Members of the Legislative Assembly, in much needed infrastructure that will support the responsible development of the NWT and its economy and bring down the cost of living for communities and residents. The federal government has recognized both the positive economic outlook for the territory and our disciplined fiscal management that this increase represents.

We as an Assembly must remain vigilant. As Members will recall, one of the more important fiscal planning principles adopted at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly was ensuring the government had the fiscal capacity to respond to revenue shocks and in-year expenditure pressures by maintaining at least \$100 million in borrowing authority at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

The government will continue to face flat revenue growth and expenditures pressures due to low water levels, health and forest firefighting costs during the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. To ensure we maintain the fiscal discipline required to be able to respond to these issues even with the added borrowing room, the fiscal strategy will be revised to ensure that at least \$160 million in borrowing authority is retained going into the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. This will

provide sufficient flexibility to allow the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly to undertake targeted projects and participate in the Build Canada Plan and other critical projects, like Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal, while also providing the financial capacity to respond to any further one-time revenue or expenditure shocks.

Mr. Speaker, the increase to the borrowing limit does not, however, address the fiscal issues facing the government. Over the next five years, revenues are forecasted to be flat, growing by only 0.44 percent over the next four years, or about 0.1 percent per year. There are limited options available to raise revenues from own sources in the short term, without impacting the cost of living or curtailing our economic growth potential. Furthermore, if the increased borrowing limit is used to enhance programs and services through our operations and maintenance budget, the GNWT may be forced to cut spending in other areas in order to finance the debt service payments associated with this debt.

It is therefore important to start thinking about the fiscal parameters to guide the development of the fiscal strategy to be considered by the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. This includes linking net operations and maintenance expenditure growth with the growth in the Territorial Formula Financing Grant. This will likely require the government to undertake reductions to operating expenditures to ensure we can continue to finance at least 50 percent of our capital expenditures with operating surpluses and start to return the government to a cash surplus position.

As we move into 2015, there are signs that some parts of the NWT economy are beginning a modest recovery from the financial and economic crisis, but our current real gross domestic product remains 25 percent below its pre-recession peak in 2007.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, the NWT has experienced no population growth for several years. We have initiated steps to address this trend and start growing the NWT population. We will continue to pursue our Population Growth Strategy to increase the NWT population and work with the mining industry and other business sectors to encourage rotational non-resident workers to reside in the NWT.

Until these efforts show success, our fiscal capacity will continue to be vulnerable due to declining revenues from Canada under Territorial Formula Financing.

An adequate borrowing limit based on affordability, while critical, will not mean the fiscal challenges of this Assembly or the next will disappear. Even though the increased limit allows us to invest in key infrastructure priorities, we still need to maintain control of expenditures to adhere to the Fiscal Responsibility Policy and maintain a fiscally sustainable operation. This government secured an increase in our borrowing limit, and we have begun planning on potential projects to responsibly increase economic growth and attract investment and people to our territory.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The final decision on what projects to invest in to secure our economic future belongs to the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Our fiscal challenges are not unique and we will not be shrinking from them. Recognizing our reality prepares us for the tough choices we will have to make now and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister of Public Works, Mr. Beaulieu.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 196-17(5): COMMUNITY FUEL PRICES

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The cost of energy continues to be one of the leading contributors to the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. This past winter a drop in wholesale prices for heating fuel and gasoline gave the Department of Public Works and Services the opportunity to pass savings on to the residents of some of our most remote communities.

Through the Petroleum Products Program, the fuel services division of the Department of Public Works and Services provides essential fuel services to 16 NWT communities where the private sector does not. Fuel is supplied via winter road to nine of these communities. This year, thanks to lower market costs, the department was able to reduce retail heating fuel, diesel fuel and gasoline prices from 4 percent to more than 18 percent per litre.

With this in mind, Mr. Speaker, the fuel services division is committed to passing on cost savings on fuel products it provides wherever possible. We anticipate that with the present stability in the market price for fuel, the department will be able to pass similar savings on to those communities resupplied by barge this summer.

Lower fuel prices have provided some relief from the high cost of living to residents in Whati, Gameti, Wekweeti, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake, Wrigley, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Colville Lake and Tulita. As residents and as a government, we must continue to improve our energy awareness, promote energy-efficient behaviour and seek out affordable alternative and renewable long-term energy solutions in order to achieve our vision of an environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories.

The fuel services division is a key function in the newly established energy activity within the department. The energy activity is also actively engaged in identifying renewable and alternative fuels and energy solutions to better support the GNWT's goals of energy efficiency, sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 197-17(5): BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES – MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN 2014-2015

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, in October 2014 I tabled Building Stronger Families – An Action Plan to Transform Child and Family Services, supporting the government's commitment to improve the quality of child and family services for those receiving services under the Child and Family Services Act. I am pleased to provide an update to Members on the progress to date and implementation of our Action Plan to Transform Child and Family Services.

The action plan outlines 12 major initiatives in response to the many recommendations made for system-wide change. These initiatives support our goal to provide more assistance to families at risk. Increased early support will reduce child apprehensions and the need for court proceedings. The initiatives contribute to a flexible approach to service delivery, grounded in collaboration and building on family strengths and needs.

In order to transform child and family services, we must ensure staff have the tools required to assess risk and improve practice and service delivery.

In the past year we have taken a number of steps to increase staff capacity. We have begun to adapt structured decision-making tools that staff can use when screening reports of child protection concerns to help them assess the immediate safety and long-term risk to the children and families involved. We have revised the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual, ensuring it reflects best practices and provides increased resources to support children. We have brought forward amendments to the Child and Family

Services Act that, if passed, will extend child protection services to the age of majority and the provision of services for children in permanent custody to the age of 23.

Work in areas of risk management and quality assurance focuses on the systems in place to support the work of our staff. In the past year we redesigned the child and family services annual file audit process by introducing a revised audit tool, establishing a regular annual audit schedule and creating regional audit teams with a collaborative approach to the audit process. We are also replacing the current Child and Family Services Information System with a new system that will provide enhanced case management capabilities and improved data reliability.

In the area of program administration and management, we have strengthened accountability by appointing chief executive officers as assistant directors of child and family services and have provided training on their responsibilities under the Child and Family Services Act. These appointments ensure there is direct accountability to the director for the delivery of services.

Last year the Auditor General recommended improving leadership and communication within child and family services. In response, the directors of Social Programs Forum have been reconvened. This group brings together senior staff from each region who deal with child and family programs, meets by teleconference monthly and face-to-face twice a year to discuss Building Stronger Families and the variety of initiatives guided by the action plan.

We have enlisted the Child Welfare League of Canada to complete the first phase of a workload management study. We worked with child protection workers and other authority staff to identify significant workload drivers that impact their ability to efficiently provide services. We now better understand the primary drivers we will address to create an effective and efficient workload management process in child and family services.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with the system transformation outlined in Building Stronger Families, we will continue to work with our partners at regional and community levels to ensure these changes acknowledge and reflect the many participants in the delivery of programs and services. We are committed to working together and understanding the unique interests and challenges throughout the NWT as we improve our delivery of child and family services.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to realizing this Assembly's goal of healthy, educated children. The steps we are taking will help ensure NWT children and families get the services and support they need. I look forward to working with Members as we continue our work to transform

child and family services in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to point out an irony, as I see it, with respect to hiring summer students to come and work in the Northwest Territories. Post-secondary students at southern institutions, we are supporting them, we are paying for them, and many of them who want to come back to the Northwest Territories for the summer cannot get a job with the public service.

The irony I speak about is that this government, on the other hand in another department, spends I want to say millions. I don't know the exact number, but millions of dollars to go out and promote a program called Make Your Mark. They are going out across Canada, trying to assess people who have never been to the North, don't know anything about it, don't have any connections, and they are trying to attract them to the public service.

Meanwhile, we have students in post-secondary education who are priority 1, priority 2 students who are down south working for their education. We are paying for their education; we are investing in them; but when they try to get a job in the public service, we don't have enough money to go around. We can't hire them all. So, they are down there perhaps taking a specialized field like an engineer or something in the nursing field, some experience where we could bring them home to work for the summer. You know what? They might come back and work for the Government of the Northwest Territories at some point in the future.

I think it's ironic that we would spend millions of dollars to attract strangers to come and work in the Northwest Territories in our public service, yet we can't seem to find enough money to employ our students who are coming home.

Just in case anybody out there listening doesn't know, priority 1 is an indigenous Aboriginal person under our Affirmative Action Policy. A P2, or priority 2, is an indigenous non-Aboriginal person.

I think we need to up the numbers in both of these categories. It's understood that P1 is probably for the most part in our public service disproportionately under-represented. I understand that.

I'm not saying it's a bad thing, but it's a sad thing when we only have enough summer jobs in the public service to offer those jobs to priority 1 students. We need more to offer also to priority 2. After all, when we go across the country to try to attract people, those people have no priority hiring status in our government. We don't even know them. The fact that a priority 2 student is indigenous non-Aboriginal means they are from here. Their family is here, but we are letting them slip away from us.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Human Resources on how we can better direct our resources to have more public service employment opportunities for our post-secondary kids. Thanks.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REPAIRS TO WILLOW RIVER BRIDGE

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to thank the Minister and the Department of Transportation on their ongoing efforts for a bridge at Willow River near Aklavik.

Last year the bridge was purchased and this year the bridge was hauled to Willow River and is now on site. We are hopeful that with sufficient funds the bridge will be completed next year.

One of the biggest challenges that we have, as you know, is we don't work during winter months, which is about two and a half months. By the time we get our new funding, it's April 1<sup>st</sup>, so we only have the window of two to three weeks to get this job completed. We are hopeful that with ongoing support from the department that we will have time next year to complete this work.

Once the bridge is complete, this will create opportunities for tourism and other economic opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELECTRICITY GENERATION ISSUES

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to applaud yesterday's Oscar performance by the Finance Minister in attempting to answer questions about NTPC's recent attempt to enter into an RFP franchise process in Hay River.

As I said yesterday, I respect the openness, fairness and transparency of the RFP process. However, what I don't respect is when the process is flawed and riddled with a hidden Cabinet agenda that has secretly changed our energy policy without the public's oversight.

Now, every resident in the NWT wants cheaper power. This is a given. However, the way this

government is trying to sell you this spin is not only missing key ingredients such as facts, its leaders are paving the way with a ticker tape parade that suggests they have the real solution.

The McLeod government's new secret energy policy is designed to convince you they have the answers to our energy costs. That by a singular design they can rid the oversight of the Public Utilities Board and eventually, township by township, through RFP process, expropriate a privately owned Aboriginal company.

So, in fairness, let's test their not-so-secret winning NTPC formula and let's evaluate it for efficiency and for the return on investment, as they said, for their 42,000 NWT shareholders.

So, for accuracy, let's visit the public accounts from 2004 to 2015. The first question: Can the NTPC stand on its own two feet and at least break even for the taxpayer? The simple answer is no. In fact, when we add up all the subsidies, all the contributions to NTPC, NT Hydro and NT Energy, plus calculate the dividends taxpayers did not receive from 2010 onwards and factor in the bad debt, the write-off at over \$2 million, are you are left with a grand total of \$104,482,910. This figure of almost \$105 million is what it cost our shareholders, our people, out of their pockets, to run their Crown corporation jewel from 2004 to 2015. I must add, not once did our power rates go down.

Real power savings for our residents require real solutions. But moreover, reducing our cost of living starts with partnerships, not secret agendas and definitely not misspending \$105 million of our tax dollars. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR FORT SIMPSON DAYCARE

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The Kids Corner Daycare in Fort Simpson is raising money for the construction of a brand new facility. A few months ago the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was approached for a \$200,000 contribution. Minister Lafferty responded negatively and noted that his department does not typically fund infrastructure projects if they are linked to daycare.

I need help in understanding this statement. Early in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly a daycare facility in Inuvik received \$1 million under the capital plan. If Inuvik was eligible then, why isn't Fort Simpson eligible now?

In the same letter, the Minister noted that his department is working along with other departments on a new policy to address infrastructure needs of non-profit and private sector organizations. The



message was that this may be a way for Kids Corner to get funding. So, I will be asking the Minister about the status of this new public funding of private infrastructure policy later in question period.

But I'd like to take a step back. I'd like to frame the needs of this new daycare within two significant debates. The first debate is about the proportion of vulnerable children in small NWT communities and specifically how these small communities are responding to the results of the Early Development Instrument. Compared to their counterparts in Yellowknife, and Canada more generally, many children in small communities lag behind in key areas of development.

The second debate is global in nature. Compared to other developed countries, Canada is a weak contributor towards early childhood activities. As of 2014, Canada's early childhood development spending was substantially lower than the average. The evidence closer to home is no better. In comparisons of ECD spending across Canadian jurisdictions, the Northwest Territories fares poorly next to its provincial counterparts, a statement that can be verified in the 2014 Early Childhood Education Report published by the University of Toronto.

This government says it cares about the well-being of children in small NWT communities. I invite the government to provide funding for this bold plan to build a brand new Kids Corner in Fort Simpson. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DREDGING OF THE HAY RIVER

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another session, so I need to bring up the other big issue in Hay River: dredging.

For three and a half years, I have been the MLA for Hay River North, and every session I've opened up talking about dredging. I am concerned this is going to create an economic shutdown of Hay River. We are the hub of the Northwest Territories. Because of the drought situation, we are seeing levels right now, in May, levels that are in September or August. That water level is down two feet. We have shipping issues; we have the Canadian Coast Guard having difficulty getting their boat out of the dry dock because the water is so low that the lift at NTCL won't even allow it. They are having to jimmy rig it.

I continue to get from this government that it's a federal responsibility, and I sure hope the federal government is listening to our proceedings because the federal government needs to step up and give us the money. We as a territorial government need

to start working on figuring out a plan, a way to get the federal government involved. The federal government has been giving millions of dollars here and there. Why can't they give us some on the dredging?

I'd like to thank the Regular Members on this side, because we've made some progress. We've written letters to our Minister of Transportation. He's written letters to the federal Minister of Transportation and still no answer from the federal government. Very shameful.

We need to get this situation resolved. We need our government to step up. They've done some calculations, and now we need to call on the federal government and all interested parties to have a meeting.

I would suggest to the Minister of Transportation that we have a meeting in Hay River this summer to deal with dredging in the Hay River and the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEW SCHOOL FOR DELINE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of a well-known verse that it takes a community to raise a child. However, it could be said it takes a community to educate a child.

I have made several Member's statements on and about the ?ehtseo School in Deline. Recently, I visited their school, last week. They need a new school. Knowing the financial conditions and situation in the Northwest Territories and what we are possibly facing in the coming years, there are overwhelming needs in our communities. We must think differently because of the needs. This will mean we can go further than beyond the financial words of "there's not enough money in the pot," or "it's good to do, but where will you find the dollars?"

Mr. Speaker, the Deline school is falling apart. The joined floors between the gym and the foyer have a gap that's covered up with a strip of tile so we don't see the ground. The gym walls are leaning outwards and cracks are showing up in the walls. The floors are arching. If you were to put a ball in the middle of the floor, it would roll down pretty quickly to one end. In the classrooms, floors aren't even. They are slanting down towards the outside. As I walked the halls to visit the classrooms, I became somewhat in a state of sea sickness because the floors were like waves on the lake.

The leadership would like to build a new school and they need our government as a partner to build it together. I will ask the Minister if he would look at a new partnership in building a new school for Deline. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, more now than ever, there are curious choices before all of us, choices that will pretty much define us as we go forward. It's like sewing a seed into the future every step we take. A future we hold for ourselves and our children. If not our children's future, then who?

Who do we secure this future for? Right before us, not unlike yesterday and certainly not unlike tomorrow, we must be faced with choices that have to be made by ourselves because we have been the ones we have been waiting for. We need the change that we promised we'd bring. We certainly need the strength and courage and willingness to ask the tough questions that, unfortunately, and sometimes with great courage, need to be asked. Do we have the strength within ourselves? I believe we do.

We should be defined by this opportunity that stands here today. What opportunity is that? Let us be known as the Assembly that has the courage, the willingness, the strength to ask, should hydraulic fracturing happen in our territory? It doesn't take a lot of courage to ask that. It takes enormous courage to stand by that. They're more than just words on paper. They are about our future, the future for ourselves, the future for our friends, the future for our families.

Some will stand by and lean on old decisions, the NEB's policy and direction under their watch. If we do it their way, why did we fight so hard for devolution? These rules are of the old regime. I thought we were working to untie those shackles. We wanted to go forward in our own way.

The LP hardly would tell us the past is a foreign country. They do things differently there and I thought that's why we were fighting for devolution. I'm calling for a one-year educational pause on hydraulic fracturing because we need to ask the right questions. It's not about how we should do regulations on fracturing but whether we should be fracking no matter what conditions. We will never be Alberta and nor should we try. We have a great and powerful region called the Sahtu. That region needs opportunities, and before them these are the types they have. Are we giving them the support they need? We must give them their chances.

As I said, why are we doing this? We have the courage to do it for the right reasons. More than words, let's stand by them through actions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I think about issues my constituents come to me for help with, housing tops the list by a wide margin. A person with disabilities and on the waiting list for years, sleeping in stairwells or couch surfing, young mothers with two-year-old children homeless and on the waiting list since their child was born, waiting, wondering where they are going to sleep that night.

Currently, the waiting list for socially assisted housing in Yellowknife has more than 200 families on it and it is not getting any shorter. At a constituency meeting in Detah this week, I was informed that there are five new Housing Corporation units sitting empty, heated and unoccupied during the winter. How galling for those families in desperate need of housing to see these houses sitting empty. And for what reason? No one on the waiting list qualifies for them.

What qualifications do desperate people need for access to public housing units that remain empty for years? While we spend millions on infrastructure to benefit industries that enrich shareholders and hire workers from afar, we continue to ignore the people of the North, the very people we are elected by and sworn to serve. Our priorities are skewed. Healthy, housed families with early childhood security and support are the best economic generators known.

The City of Yellowknife is trying to come to terms with the needs of the homeless through their Housing First program, recognizing that housing is the foundation of a productive, healthy life and must be considered first and foremost. As it's actually their mandate, GNWT needs to follow this lead and get going on work to fully integrate the Housing First program with Yellowknife and other communities. Building infrastructure is one thing, but making it a successful and functional part of our community is something else again, as we've seen.

Communication with clients remains an issue. Before they write off clients or shunt them down the waiting list, housing workers need to envision walking a mile in the client's shoes to learn the context for the difficulties of reporting highly variable income, being at an unfixed address, having transportation challenges for repeated visits to the office and making sporadic payments on housing arrears.

Affordability issues for housing in Yellowknife increased by a whopping 65 percent over the last five years.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BROMLEY:** Affordability issues for housing in Yellowknife increased by a whopping 65 percent over the last five years. Based on a lengthening waiting list, leaving disabled people and young single mom families in vulnerable conditions, it's clear that the simple number of housing units is extremely inadequate too. This in a market community with ready solutions.

Mr. Speaker, let's make the shameful public housing situation in Yellowknife a priority and look after our people. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been quiet on the fracking front the last few weeks, but about a month ago it was anything but quiet.

Industry, Tourism and Investment had started their public engagement sessions on fracking regulations and many of our residents were expressing their opinions. "You've got the cart before the horse," many said. "We don't want fracking," or "we want to discuss if we should frack, we don't want to discuss the regulations," were some other comments.

In response, the Minister told residents that the meetings were not to discuss the merits of fracking, that it was not the time for that. It was time to consider regulations. Mr. Ramsay reiterated that yesterday in his statement, "This work and dialogue is not about deciding if hydraulic fracturing will take place in the NWT."

It is clear to me that the government is forging ahead with fracking regardless. They have every intention to open the NWT up to development at any cost, and the concerns of residents do not seem to matter.

As I have said before, a conversation about fracking needs to happen, a conversation about if fracking should happen, how it should happen, when and where it should happen. That conversation has never been had and many residents are now and have been asking for it. There must be a thorough investigation of the practice of fracking to educate people, to comfort people, to weigh all the pros and cons of the practice. The highhanded "we know best" approach of Minister and Cabinet is not reassuring anybody. I'm not even sure if the investors are reassured.

We have a lull in fracking exploration and development applications in the Sahtu. Let's use the time wisely and do the much needed consultation with our people. The Minister said yesterday that he's committed to allowing more time. Let's be sure that we use that time for the right purpose, to consult on and review the practice of fracking.

I am not against development, much as it may sound as though I am. I am against any development that has not been thoroughly thought out, a development where the risks and benefits are unknown.

That's where we are today: a Minister intent on development without thorough examination of the pros and cons inherent in fracking development. Maybe the Minister has seen enough, heard enough to be convinced of the benefits of fracking, but many others in our territory have not. It is only just and fair that they be given the opportunity to get educated, as well, and then have a hand in any development decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have stood up in this House before and spoken, and other Members have spoken, on the Business Incentive Policy that continues to have some concerns from businesses in the Northwest Territories. I'm only bringing it up today because we have missed opportunities in the past. There are businesses that have missed opportunities in this government and previous governments.

If you look at the application for the bid adjustment that is recognized in the policy on contracts more than \$5,000 and less than \$1 million and also any other contracts that are over \$1 million, there is a local content bid adjustment applied to the local businesses of only 5 percent.

When we get contracts over \$1 million, not too many of our small businesses can bid on those contracts or put down the money to secure that contract. We can't always compete with bigger businesses that we have in the regional centres, maybe here in Yellowknife or even some southern businesses. That is the concern.

Also, the concern is that I know we haven't reviewed this policy since 2010. With that review of the policy, you look at the key stakeholders who looked at this policy and some of them are the bigger organizations throughout the Northwest Territories that also do business with the bigger projects.

Are we getting the information and input from our smaller businesses in the communities, especially the small communities? I just want to bring this to the attention of Members as well as businesses in the Northwest Territories and the public that say we adjust some of these percentages, whether it's northern content or even switching to local content. What are some of the benefits we can see at the local level?

For instance, if we adjusted it between 5 and 10 percent, we'd have more local hires in communities. We'd be supporting the small businesses that can't actually compete for these contracts. We could actually do some of the apprenticeship work that I know the Department of ECE is working on to get some of our local guys doing some apprenticeship work. There would be local economic runoff for the hotels or the schools, for the restaurants.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. MOSES:** As I said, a lot of these businesses in the small communities cannot make the bid on the contracts around \$1 million or over \$1 million. If you get a business of a high local content of 10 or 15 percent, we will get more people working in that community or migrating to that community from the region or around the Northwest Territories and we'll build the economy wherever the work is happening. So, it's an option I want to explore more.

I will ask questions of the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment later on, looking at these options that can help our local businesses, help our local economy and diversify our economy throughout the Northwest Territories outside of the regional centres and outside of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome, everybody. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 823-17(5): FORT SIMPSON DAYCARE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I know in my Member's statement I mentioned that the Kids Corner Daycare in Fort Simpson asked the Minister of Education for \$200,000 towards a new daycare facility. In his rejection letter, he noted that his department doesn't typically support infrastructure projects that are linked to daycare, yet a daycare facility in Inuvik received \$1 million in the capital budget early in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

Can the Minister explain the rationale for his decision not to support the daycare project in Fort Simpson? Mahsi.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to daycare operations, we work closely with the operators. With the experience in Inuvik, that was some time ago. There was a need for a daycare establishment. The community fund raised up to 90 percent of the funds. That is an experience we've gone through. There is a policy being drafted now on public investment on private infrastructure. It's been shared with the planning committee. Now there's feedback to Cabinet. It's before Cabinet to develop a policy with respect to that, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** The funding of private infrastructure policy is certainly being worked on, but before I get to that, the government, right from the start the Early Childhood Framework aimed to enhance the quality of children's programs and services. In a document on the department's website, I noted that a review was underway to examine program funding and governance.

Can the Minister indicate whether the review is addressing the matter of daycare infrastructure and whether any funding will be earmarked for the purpose of enhancing daycare facilities? Mahsi cho.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** With our programming, obviously there is always room for improvement. What the Member is referring to is enhancement of feature programs that we're concentrating on as we speak. There are programs that we are going to enhance as well. So, it is looking at the programs and services in the 32 communities we serve. We will be making those changes that will benefit the communities along the way. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Can the Minister identify which of the GNWT departments are working on a policy to support the infrastructure needs of non-profit and private sector organizations? Mahsi.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We do have a committee established that deals with these kinds of initiatives and policy development. The Program Review Office has initiated the discussions.

As I stated, that letter has been sent to standing committee and the feedback has come back to us now within our Cabinet to consider those recommendations brought to our attention by the standing committee to integrate that into our new policy that has been drafted. So, we will be updating that and sharing that with the standing committee once it's available. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Can the Minister provide a timeline for completing this policy? In other words, will it be done before this Assembly is concluded by our September sitting? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I need to confirm that with the Program Review Office. Part of the target date will be either late this summer or before the end of this term of the government. We want to establish a policy, so we want to expedite that since we have the feedback from the standing committee. We will expedite the process along the way. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, when we're talking about the policy, is that something that will be done at the end of this Assembly or will have to make its way into the transition document for the next Assembly, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Those are discussions we are currently having and that could be part of the transitional document. There are other programs under review. It is part of the discussions we are currently having with the Program Review Office, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 824-17(5):  
DREDGING OF THE HAY RIVER

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my statement, I have questions for the Minister of Transportation.

The Minister of Transportation indicated he was going to write the federal Minister of Transportation to get going on the project to do dredging in Hay River. Can he give me an update on where that status is? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have written my letter to the federal government on dredging the Hay River. I have not received their response. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I'm just wondering if there's some sort of process that we have with the federal government. If we've written them a letter, it's been a couple of months now that we haven't heard back from them. Is there a process that we could actually get some results on this dredging? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We know that the officials do talk on a regular basis. We continue to have our officials dealing with the officials from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to see if it's possible at least to initiate some discussions and see if it's possible that there could be some dredging done in the Hay River. That will be our attempt to continue discussions with those officials. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I'm just wondering if those officials are any prompter than the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Transportation from the federal government, because we sure aren't getting any results from them.

I'm wondering if the Minister will commit to having a meeting in Hay River with those federal representatives. He's indicated to me in the past that the Coast Guard and Public Works from the federal government were involved in this process.

Can we get some results in actually seeing the federal government starting to talk in Hay River about dredging the Hay River? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I cannot set up meetings for the federal officials. However, we can ask, so I will have the deputy minister from the Department of Transportation, GNWT, contact the officials that are responsible for dredging all rivers up here, mainly Hay River, and try to set up a meeting in Hay River with the federal officials responsible.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering if we could actually get the federal government in to attending some of these meetings if we got some of those interested parties, if we got NTCL together, if we got the NWT Fishermen's Federation together, some of those types of people who are desperately in need of this dredging.

Is there a way that we can have some of them if we had a Transportation Strategy meeting and all those people showed up and talked about dredging? Obviously, the Department of Transportation, GNWT Transportation knows this. Is there a way that we can make sure that we have all those parties at the table when we have this meeting set up?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Certainly, we can discuss the consultations we had on the Transportation Strategy, the NWT Transportation Strategy, with the federal government and the desire for all of the people who are using the Hay River, the transport people, fisheries and so on, the Coast Guard, to be able to get together and speak to them about all of the areas where we see the impacts of the fact that we need dredging in Hay River.

Everybody knows that the dredging is needed. It's just a matter of trying to get people to get the money to get the dredging done.

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

QUESTION 825-17(5):  
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about the issue of hydraulic fracturing, not unlike my good

colleague to my left, Ms. Bisaro, and the concerns from the public.

One of the concerns from the public, and I certainly see it as an issue as an individual MLA, has been why have we not had the courage to just go straightforward and ask the question to Northerners: Is hydraulic fracturing appropriate for the Northwest Territories? Have that dialogue, understand and educate ourselves as to what the pros and cons are of it, and then step forward and work on regulations if given the, say, good guidance, authority, or at least the direction and suggestion, if that is appropriate for the Northwest Territories.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We worked long and hard to get our Devolution Agreement with the federal government. We also made a decision to regulate the oil and gas industry here in the Northwest Territories ourselves. Had we not made that decision, the industry would be regulated from Calgary by the National Energy Board, and Members on the other side of the House would not have the opportunity to question anybody and our government wouldn't have opportunity to influence policy or direction on regulations. That would be left up to the National Energy Board of Canada.

What we have in front of us is an opportunity, and now Northerners and this government have the opportunity.

I want to thank the Member and the Regular Members for their help in helping us learn as much as we can about this process. We spent the last four years learning about the process of hydraulic fracturing. We're moving forward with the process to develop draft regulations. We've heard from Northerners on important issues, water quality, air quality, disclosure. We're working on all of those things, and it's because of the work of the standing committee and the Regular Members and the people we've talked to around the Northwest Territories that we continue to move in that direction. We believe we can manage the resources that we have here in the Northwest Territories ourselves, and we intend to do just that.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Largely, I don't necessarily disagree with much of what the Minister had said, but I still think we've missed our moral compass on this particular issue, which is there's a decision on how to do fracking, not a decision as to should we do fracking. I welcome that from the NEB, and I welcome the authority we've gained, but what is stopping the department from actually just getting out there to ask that basic building block question?

You have to have a solid foundation before you build a house. Let us ask the question and have the courage to ask the question: Should fracking happen in the Northwest Territories, yes or no?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** On April 1, 2014, this government made a commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories to devolve and then evolve. We have been at this for just over a year, it is an evolution process. We are continuing to work on a process, and I know the Member is saying we should ask that question right up front. The process isn't even halfway through. Yesterday in this House I committed to giving us as much time as we need. We are going to take to the end of August to get public comment.

We are going to go through this process, and Members on that side of the House seem to want to pre-empt that entire process and ask that question. Let us finish the work that we start, then we can ask that question.

In response to some of the other comments I heard from Ms. Bisaro, she said we're going to do this at any cost. We are not going to use the process of hydraulic fracturing at any cost, and I never said that in this House and I have never said that publicly, so I take offence to some of the comments from the Regular Members that we're going to do this at any cost.

It's not going to be at any cost. Like I said yesterday in response to some other questions, if you're going to be in the energy business, like I believe the Northwest Territories is going to be in the energy business, you better be looking after the environment and we intend to do just that. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** This is like putting icing on a cake and we never asked them if they like cake, type of thing, and we are serving it to them.

What the question really comes down to is we should ask them about what the fundamentals of the process are, which is should we allow fracking in the Northwest Territories and under what conditions?

Talking about down the road is great, and it's not pre-empting the problem, it's about asking the root of the question, which is the meaning of why we want to do something, because that drives the regulations. We passed the Wildlife Act and then we did the regulations. We'll pass the Mental Health Act one day and then we will write the regulations. You don't write the regulations and go back and ask the question. It's the old saying, as we've all said, "The horse has left the barn."

I would like to see the Minister stand up and say, "We will go back and ask that peer question." Will he do that? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We've been at this for all of 14 months. It's been our responsibility to manage oil and gas activity onshore in the Northwest Territories. It's only been 14 months.

We are in a process right now. That is not the question. The Member is trying to ask that question. That is not the question we're asking right now. Don't we owe it to the residents of the Northwest Territories to better understand exactly what we're getting ourselves into before we ask that question, before we throw that opportunity out for the people that live in the central Mackenzie Valley and in the Sahtu who are hungry for the jobs and the economic opportunities? We want to put infrastructure into the Sahtu as well.

We need to manage this resource and we're going to do this work. We're not making any decisions today, and for Members to think that we're making decisions today, that is not the case. We are not rushing into this. We are taking a measured, proactive approach to this and that's what we're going to do. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My kind of question, of course, and I appreciate that. I always have a saying, we should know what the question is before we're willing to answer it. I certainly am supportive of development and I'm supportive of the good work happening in the Sahtu region. It's just the question needs to be asked first, and we shouldn't be afraid to ask that question.

So, I'm going to ask the Minister, does he, firstly, have concern with this question? Is the department concerned about this question? Should the public be informed in any way that the department is not willing to ask the right question, the critical question, the meaningful question that will define our time, which is: Should hydraulic fracturing happen in the Northwest Territories and, if so, under what conditions? That's critical, and I'd like to see some courage and maybe some leadership from the Minister willing to ask that clear, simple question. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Leadership is not taking a world-class opportunity that we have in the territory and putting it on the sideline. What we're trying to do is manage this. We're trying to get out; we're trying to educate the public; we've been to many communities; we're halfway through the process that's underway today; and we can manage this resource.

I'm getting the feeling that some Members on the other side of the House don't believe that we can manage this resource and that we can do it in an effective way. We want to manage the environmental concerns. We want to manage the opportunity that this presents us with. It is a world-

class resource in the central Mackenzie Valley; make no mistake about it. It's there and we can manage it. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 826-17(5):  
GNWT SUMMER STUDENT  
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about this government's opportunity to provide post-secondary students who come home to the Northwest Territories to work for the summer. I don't know what the statistics are right now on whether that number has been growing. I'm not sure what the statistics are with respect to how many of those students are priority 1 hires and how many are priority 2s, and I'd like to know, also, how many of those positions that are made available are made available here in the capital and how many are in the regions, and I'd like to know if the Minister has any of that information at his fingertips as a starting point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The departments try to hire as many students as their budgets would allow them to hire for the summer. But we do try to achieve a greater number than what we have been averaging, around 300. So, as of right now, we have hired 230 summer students and another 23 who are ready for signing. So, 253 summer students.

At this time last year, we had 217 summer students and we ended up hiring 312 last year. So, we're expecting to beat that number this year. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'd like to ask the Minister, do you have any idea what the breakdown is? Obviously, they're hired for our Affirmative Action Policy, which would then employ priority 1 and priority 2 hire candidates, and I'd like to ask the Minister if he has any kind of a breakdown on how many of each of that category are hired by these departments. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Of the 230 who are signed on, 120 of those students are priority 1 candidates and 106 of those students are priority 2 candidates and four students hired to date have no priority status. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** That is very welcome news, because I tend to hear more from the priority 2 students who are out studying, and when they come home, for some reason, they get screened out. So, it's very good for the public to be aware of that breakdown between P1 and P2 students. So, I'm glad we've got that out there and on the record.

However, we have more than this number who are out taking post-secondary education. We have a recruitment and retention issue in the public service in the Northwest Territories. I still think it would be better if there was an initiative to hire more summer students and try the best we can to match their area of learning and training to a position in the public service here in the Northwest Territories.

So, I'd like to ask the Minister, how would he see ensuring that departments have money to hire more students, and does he know how many post-secondary students there are in total, perhaps, who are outside of the Northwest Territories in school? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The Department of Human Resources tracks some students by the amount of applications. So, we start in December by holding open houses. We contact students. We go through a process of inviting students. We have a website inviting students to apply.

Last year we had 598 students apply for summer employment, and of that we hired 312, like I indicated. To date, we've had 558 summer students apply.

My understanding is that at the end of this month, a lot of the technical students will be returning to the Northwest Territories, so we're expecting a little bit of a jump there. So, the next point where we see increases is usually at the end of May. So, we're anticipating that we could easily beat the number of last year, but I don't know exactly how many students will actually be hired. Again, it would depend on department-by-department budget numbers. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps in the past, and I'm not too sure of the details of this, this government collaborated and cooperated with the private sector to expand the number of students employed back in their home Northwest Territories for the summer months who are involved in post-secondary education.

I'd like to ask the Minister if his department has recently contemplated the idea of doing a top-up to the private sector for hiring post-secondary school students in their workplaces and is that a way that we can expand the number of opportunities? We don't want to lose our students to the South. We would like to get them back home and get them some experience in their field of training. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Those are real good ideas that I'm going to have a discussion with the deputy minister of Human Resources on.

One thing that was contemplated this year, it was interesting, it was brought up by another Member

last year, and that was hiring students on a 0.7, 0.8 basis so that they have an opportunity to also work outside of their field of studies and maybe go into the private sector a bit and then give the private sector an opportunity to also attract the students. That was something that we looked at so that we would broaden out. If we were to hire all the students at 0.75 as opposed to the full-time job during the summer months, then we'd be able to increase the amount of students by 100, for example, last year. So, that was something that we looked at closely.

There was a bit of an issue with doing that right then. Maybe we didn't have the time in HR to be able to sort out all the numbers and so on, but certainly that's the one idea that we would look at, subsidizing the private sector to be able to attract students and also doing some as part-time summer jobs for summer students so they could also venture into the private sector. Those are good ideas that the department will look at. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 827-17(5):  
ASSESSMENT OF  
DELIN SCHOOL FACILITY

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I mentioned that I recently went to Deline and went to visit the school. I want to speak to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Does the Minister know, given the assessment of the Deline school, that the school literally is falling apart? Does the Minister know that?

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The information that I do have from Public Works and Services, working very closely with my department, is that there's been a building assessment done in 2008, and the building ranking obviously came back as good condition at this point. But as the same time, my department visited the community's school in November 2013 and met with the officials, met with the community members and identified one of the areas, the floor that the Member is referring to. It has been identified, the floor movement. My department is working closely with Public Works to resolve that issue as we speak. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The Minister is correct. I have copies of my Member's statement and my exchange with the Minister of Education, also the Minister at that time, the Minister of Public Works, talking about the work that's been done on the Deline school.



I want to ask the Minister, it's like having a plate or a bowl of Jell-O and putting straws in it and putting a building on there. The building is shaky. It's moving and it's falling apart. All the king's horses and all the king's men can't keep Deline's school together again.

---Laughter

So you need to build another school. The Deline community is asking this government if they're looking at if they were to work together, they could look at the concept of working with the community, working with the government to say, if we are to build it, can you lease it off them? We had that type of discussion. I believe at the time when I asked the Minister of Public Works, that type of discussion can be had.

I want to ask the Minister of Education, is he willing to come to Deline to the school and say, "Yes, let's see if we can do something?" Given the life of this government, given the financial situation we are going to be in, is this the type of thinking that could be had with the community of Deline?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Any opportunity for the department to visit the community, obviously, I'm receptive to it, having my department and myself visiting and also meeting with the officials and the community members on how we can deal with this matter. As I stated, there are at least six different items that are being worked on as we speak since November 2013. It may not be completed fully, but those are areas that we continue to work on, because we have to keep in mind the safety of all our students.

When the Member is talking about opportunities to meet, by all means, those are areas that I'm willing to consider, as well, meeting with the MLA and also his leadership.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** When I questioned the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment when I spoke about the same and similar responses back from the Minister, which we appreciate, I'd like the Minister today to really think and seriously take the opportunity to come in to Deline, look at the school, look at the conditions that we're subjecting our children going to school in these types of conditions. It's amazing that school is still together with the condition that it's in. If you look at the foyer and the school gym, the foyer and the school gym are falling apart. I think the only thing that's holding them together is that strip of tile on the floor there. It's just a gap in there. If you took that strip off, you would see a gap in the gym floor. It's like this. It's amazing. It's a crying shame in this day here that we're subjecting our children to this type of education facility.

I want to ask the Minister if he would be willing to come soon to Deline to look at the school and have a sit-down with the leadership to look at some

partnerships where the community can take a larger role in building a new school. Deline needs a new school.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** What the Member is referring to, obviously, is the floor movement between the gymnasium and the corridor, and my department is fully aware of that. The Member and I are considering visiting Deline, if it all works, on June 12<sup>th</sup> for the grad. We're still working on the logistics for that. If it works, then that will be ample opportunity to sit down with the Member and also the leadership to go visit the school, as well, because that is part of the plan as we speak.

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

QUESTION 828-17(5):  
COMMUNITY ACCESS FUND

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement about the bridge at Willow River, the community is very thankful for the support from the Minister and department, but moving forward in the next Assembly, the community would like some assurance that this Community Access Program will continue in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

I'd like to ask the Minister, will they recommend that the Community Access Program continue in the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly?

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That program is fully utilized all the time. It's a very good program. All the communities like it and we're going to maintain the program.

**MR. BLAKE:** This program that I'm referring to, the Community Access Program, has roughly a million dollars in that fund. We have 32 communities that make use of these funds and it's very limited to the amount that you can put in for.

Will the Minister recommend that this fund be increased?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We had recognized that it was the previous government that had tripled the budget from around \$300,000 to just slightly over \$1 million. We recognize that the budget is fully utilized and we are receiving applications well in excess of what money is available. We continue to have internal discussions in DOT to see if there's a possibility internally to move some money around. So, we continue to have that discussion.

There are a lot of areas where there are pressures, of course. We have highways, we have marine services and airports and winter roads. So within those areas we are looking to see if it is possible to move money around internally.

Alternatively, I guess we go back to the House to look for additional funds, but at this time we are looking internally at that, in hopes that maybe in the future there will be a little bit more money put into the Access Program. Thank you.

**MR. BLAKE:** We're getting our transition protocol here to recommend to our next government what to carry on with, and I thank the Minister for doing that with this program here, but I'd like to also recommend that this fund be increased. Even by \$200,000, it helps the communities a lot with programs that create employment in the communities and I hope that happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** At this point in the transition planning, we are not working specifically on any of the budgets, departmental budgets; however, we would have an opportunity to maybe discuss some of the programs that are very well-utilized, some of the more popular programs, and we could have that discussion in the transition meetings as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Before we go on, colleagues, I would like to welcome back to Yellowknife, I guess, Mr. David Lovell, former mayor of Yellowknife. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 829-17(5):  
PUBLIC HOUSING WAITING LIST

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions to the Minister of Housing. Specifically, I have questions for the Minister. The need for housing is acute throughout the Northwest Territories, as we heard, for all people on the ever-growing waiting list, but the need is even more acute for people with disabilities.

Can the Minister tell me how many clients on the housing waiting list in Yellowknife and the NWT are people with disabilities? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have 894 people on the housing waiting list across the Northwest Territories. I'm not sure if we have them broken down as to those with disabilities or not, but I will find out and I will share the information with the Member. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Minister. I heard 894 people. I believe they would be families. People.

---Interjection

**MR. BROMLEY:** Okay. So, we don't know how many families.

Another group of housing clients in desperate need than most are single parents. Not only are they suffering from lack of housing but their children, especially for the very young, are not getting a secure, healthy beginning in life that we desire for all of our children right from the start.

How many of the families on the current waiting list are parents with very young children? Mahsi.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** As far as the ones who have young children, I'm not quite sure of that. I do have the numbers for the people who are waiting for one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom and that would give you a fairly good indication of the number of people that are in the family. But we recognize that our largest growing segment in the population are those with young families, so we're going to take the direction that we put up a lot more family one-, two-bedroom, multiplex-type units across the Northwest Territories and I think that will address that particular issue.

I'll get the numbers for the waiting list on the number of bedrooms and share it with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Obviously, 894 people for our population is very shameful. We have to do a better job. When people who lack safe, warm, secure housing see unoccupied Housing Corporation dwellings with no tenants in them being heated through consecutive winters, they are understandably frustrated and feel that this is a horrible waste and an unjust use of scarce public resources.

So, what changes in policy are being contemplated? I thought we'd done this already. This is going on for years. What policies are being contemplated or will we finally act to make sure that in the face of the desperate needs we see, available housing is not left aging and empty? This is just common sense, while real people with real needs are left unserved. It's mindboggling. Mr. Minister, will you fix this?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We've taken a number of steps in the last little while to try and address some of the issues that the Member speaks of. We've had a number of vacant units in the communities. Through an Affordable Housing Initiative, we built a lot of these units on spec, assuming we were going to have the clients for them. Unfortunately, we overestimated the clients who might be eligible, so we turned a lot of those units into public housing units to try and address the public housing shortage.

The units that the Member speaks of, we're just in the process now of... Those again were built trying to transition people from public housing into homeownership. Again, we overestimated the number of clients that we might have. So, we are in the process of converting those particular units into

public housing because the need now is for more public housing. I think we've pretty well tapped out a lot of our homeownership clients, so we're going to convert those into public housing like we did in a number of other communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister. We've made a lot of progress in the last five years in small communities, but it's been at the cost of people in Yellowknife and especially people who have moved here from other communities. This is totally unacceptable. The Minister is continuing to focus away from Yellowknife and it's getting ridiculous.

Reallocating existing housing stocks between programs and changing rules regarding eligibility does not alter the basic fact that there are not enough homes in the territory for the people who live here.

How many new housing units does the corporation plan this year, and how many of those homes will actually be assigned tenancy to the most vulnerable citizens of the Northwest Territories, the homeless? I'd appreciate that information for both the Northwest Territories and for Yellowknife. Mahsi.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We apparently budgeted \$45 million to put into housing programs for this year. I think we've got about 45 new or replacement public housing units, and I will confirm that number and share it with the Members. Plus, I'll also share the allocation.

The Housing Corporation, as the Member said, I think has seen a change in the last five years. We've tried to address a number of housing issues. We're taking over the funding from ECE. I think we're going to be able to access probably 55 more units in the capital, plus a number of the other programs in the capital that we support through contributions, and then we're working with the developer, I think through the ECE transfer that offered us a few options. So, we've taken another 19 units for the capital.

So, with the limited budget we have and the challenges we face, I think we're continuing to try and address some of the need for homes and places to stay across the Northwest Territories, and I disagree with the point that we're doing it at the expense of Yellowknife. I don't think that's true. I think we're treating all regions across the Northwest Territories fairly, and if you look at the numbers in our budget, you will see that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 830-17(5):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
POWER CORPORATION

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a follow-up to my Member's statement earlier today, I would like to reference from edited Hansard, March 11, 2015, where Minister Miltenberger stated, "Depending how we evolve in terms of distribution and generation, we have to look at things as I raised previously, the role and relationship of the Power Corporation. Right now it is a stand-alone power corporation with a board. Given our close working relationship and financial investment, is that the best structure, could it be structured more efficiently and effectively in any other way?"

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister elaborate what he meant when he stated these comments in the House? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister of the Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has shown himself to be a very vocal and aggressive defender and supporter of powerful money, multinational interests headquartered outside of the Northwest Territories and clearly today he's going to vent his spleen on the Power Corporation, which is, I think, a very good corporation that we'd all be lost without.

On the issue of dividends, let's make the distinction between the Power Corporation and a private company. The people of the Northwest Territories own the Power Corporation. There's one shareholder. Rather than take a dividend, we reinvest all the money back into the system in the Northwest Territories to make sure we provide services. Over time we have had a relationship with the Power Corporation that has become closer because there has been significant things that have happened that if we did not have that relationship, would have led to very, very significant increases in the rates. Let me specifically talk about the money we put in the life of this government to cushion the shock of the increases due to diesel costs. Let me talk about the \$20 million we put into low water that would have had to have been covered by anybody providing that service.

So, that relationship has become very close. The Auditor General has pointed out that that relationship has been close and that we should look at how we should change our reporting relationship because of that close working relationship. The Power Corporation is the main vehicle for energy policy for the Government of the Northwest Territories and, in many cases, social policy in the Northwest Territories. When we work to do alternative energy, when we work to minimize our greenhouse gas emissions, when we look at LED lights across the Northwest Territories, when we look at converting Colville Lake to solar with

batteries to cut our diesel and our greenhouse gases, when we look at the solar in Fort Simpson. Those type of things, they're a part of the government's policy, energy policy, carried out on our behalf by the corporation that we own as a collective.

So, those are some of the musings and the Auditor General has flagged them for us, as well, in a very practical reality in terms of how do we account for the money that the Power Corp spends in a relationship with the territorial government.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I'm a supporter of the truth, transparency and accountability, so the Minister of Finance can characterize all he wishes. I'd like to go back to November 7<sup>th</sup> to the Northern News article where the Finance Minister was openly musing about the NTPC's demise, suggesting that NTPC be taken over by the GNWT and, as he stated, "If we hadn't given them this \$80 million, I shudder to think what the rates would be."

Again, can the Minister elaborate why he was so keen on threatening to dissolve the NWT Power Corporation? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I wasn't expecting to dissolve the Power Corporation. The Power Corporation is a critical vehicle for the territorial government and its energy policy. However, the relationship has evolved over the years. There was a time, many Legislative Assemblies ago, when there was a dividend required from the Power Corporation, but as things have changed, cost of energy has gone up, the decision was made to not require the dividend, to reinvest whatever money they have back into keeping the costs as low as possible.

We have had to engage with the Power Corporation clearly in a way that it doesn't make it as stand-alone as it would be in some other jurisdictions and we have other configurations that we live with. For example, we have a Housing Corporation that has no board that is part of the territorial government and is our vehicle for delivering public housing, market housing in the Northwest Territories.

So, post-devolution, as we evolve, we have to look at that relationship with the Power Corporation, and as we look at the borrowing limit and we look at generation initiatives and who is going to drive those and the direction that the government is going to provide to the Power Corporation to do the things that the Legislature and the government needs done, that means a close working relationship and, once again, point to the fact that the Auditor General himself has pointed out that we need to change how we account for our relationship with the Power Corporation because of that close working relationship. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Now, months later, the Minister in his own press release of May 26, 2015, clearly and

boldly supports NTPC's participation in an RFP process in Hay River, and he points out this "could potentially lead to lower electricity rates."

To the Minister: Why the flip-flop? In November, you're shuddering to dissolve the Power Corporation and now you're praising their ability to somehow lower electricity rates. I think the people are a little bit confused. Can the Minister explain this flip-flop?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The government has been very consistent in its approach to energy and to the Power Corporation to how we deliver things, how we deliver power, our emphasis on the cost of living, and it's very, very simple. The issue that the Member refers to, we have the proof before us. You have one community at 31 cents per kilowatt, you have two neighbouring communities at 21 cents per kilowatt.

Can we effect a positive change? Yes, we can. I believe that we will significantly close that gap if that opportunity is presented to the Power Corporation.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Too bad it's a done deal, as it appears to be here. The NWT Power Corporation, by its own statutes, is more than able to submit a bid for an open RFP process. However, this week we clearly saw political interference and action on our Minister of Finance responsible for NTPC, and our Premier jointly endorsed a ticker tape parade press release in support. The question we need to ask is why. Why would this Cabinet need to endorse and intervene with an open public process? Can the Minister explain this?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Some would suggest that intervening in a process that's already underway would be meeting with one of the proponents after the public process has started, as has occurred. However, the issue here is very clear. It's a political one. I'm the Minister responsible. I'm very well aware of the political sensitivities that this issue has, that if the Power Corporation would have gone ahead without political due diligence we would be in a considerably different situation. Then we would be getting pilloried and vilified and hectored for different reasons. We have covered the bases. We have looked at the issue carefully. I took it back to Cabinet. Cabinet looked at it and said, "Power Corporation, carry on with your business." We went to committee and we've talked to them about that. We wanted to politically, as the shareholder, make sure that we were in sync with what the Power Corporation is technically able to do on its own, but politically it made only eminent sense to have us touch those bases.

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

QUESTION 831-17(5):  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the goals of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices. Going back to my Member's statement with the Business Incentive Policy, I threw out a solution there in terms of looking at increasing our local content in the Business Incentive Policy. One suggestion is, when I've talked to local businesses back home, maybe flipping it, flipping the local content to 15 percent and the northern content to 5 percent. You'll still get the northern content in your local content for the Business Incentive Policy, but when you'd make it localized then you're diversifying economies to the communities across the Northwest Territories. I gave a lot of benefits in my Member's statement to that, all the benefits if we focused more content to the local businesses, and we'd be supporting local businesses.

My first question to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment: Has the department looked at increasing the local content or even, furthermore, switching the local and northern content percentages during the Business Incentive Policy review?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We looked at this a few years back and we had contracted a company to take a look at the scenarios and how we could do our bid adjustments. A couple of different scenarios were put in place and at that time it wasn't considered necessary to be looking at the changes to the current adjustments. But that's not to say that as we go forward, Members and the business community here in the Northwest Territories may have other ideas on how we can strengthen the Business Incentive Policy here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** I appreciate the history of the review of this Business Incentive Policy, and maybe in future I can look at those findings. In that review, or even now since it hasn't been reviewed since 2010, has the Minister spoken to some of our key stakeholders in our local communities? I'm not talking about key stakeholders like the NWT Chamber of Commerce, NWT Construction Association, none of these territorial stakeholders. We need to hear from the local stakeholders that do business in our communities and provide jobs for our local residents.

Has the Minister consulted with the local businesses to see what they are saying and not what the territorial organizations are saying? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** If we were going to go down the path of opening up a review of the BIP, key stakeholders like the NWT Chamber of Commerce, the NWT Construction Association and other industry associations would certainly be part of that.

For the most part, we believe that business here in the Northwest Territories is benefitting from the current BIP that we have in place. We have heard some concerns that it needs to be strengthened. There needs to be more protection for what I would deem as true northern businesses with headquarters here in the Northwest Territories and employees here in the Northwest Territories.

Again, this is something that, as we continue to move on, I know that we are getting late in the life of this government, but it could be something that is flagged in the transition to the next government. If the Members feel that there's enough concern out there about the status of it today, it could be something that we could look at as we move forward to the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** As I mentioned, and as the Minister knows, as mentioned in some of the ministerial statements, our economy is slow and in some of the regions and some of the communities there is hardly any work or no work at all. If we can start looking at when we are delivering contracts, we do in fact try to increase the local content or increase the amount of work in that project that a local business can do.

Has the Minister consulted and looked at what businesses we have out there – I know we do have a registry – that can focus on doing the business that we put out RFPs and contracts and they ensure that our local businesses do get that part of the contract? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We do do that type of work, and I guess a good case in point is the Tuk Inuvik Highway. It was very important that the money stay in the North and that local contractors were involved there. We see the benefit of that with the employment levels in both communities of Tuktoyaktuk and also in Inuvik and other communities in the Beaufort-Delta as well.

There are ways the government can continue to emphasize the importance of keeping money here in the Northwest Territories, and we will continue to look at opportunities to do just that. Thank you.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's my case in point. I mean, that wasn't a contract; that was out for public tender. But if we did have a contract out for public tender and we increased the local content, then we get more people working in that community and then we get people from all over the regions, the Sahtu, Yellowknife, even from the Yukon, and all the communities in the Beaufort-Delta benefitting.

That is what I'm trying to say here. If we change this, not the sole-source or the negotiated contracts, but if we put it in the contract, in the BIP, we would see those results.

I would like to ask the Minister one last quick question with the registry. How often does he update the registry and ensure that local businesses and businesses in the Northwest Territories are up to date on the registry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** As Members know, as part of our decentralization we did move the BIP office to the community of Hay River. I will get the information that the Member is asking for and I'll provide that to all Members when the registry is reviewed and when that happens. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 832-17(5):

##### HYDRAULIC FRACTURING CONSULTATION

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I want to follow up on the questions from my colleague to my right, but also from my Member's statement. I want to ask the Minister some questions about fracking and why we are not consulting.

So, my first question to the Minister is exactly that. Why is the Minister avoiding doing a consultation process on the practice and the process of fracking? The Yukon did it and it took them a year, I think, to do a thorough evaluation of the process to do consultation in all parts of their territory. Why is the Minister avoiding doing that in our territory? Thank you.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, the Government of the Northwest Territories inherited filing requirements from the National Energy Board when we took over responsibility for oil and gas activity onshore here in the Northwest Territories. We have strong regulations and rules in place to protect the environment. We've heard from the standing committee. We've heard from the public. We're halfway through the process that we have today embarked upon. We heard about water quality, air

quality and disclosure. We're addressing these things, Mr. Speaker. I know the Member has said, while there's a lull in the activity here we should be asking different questions. What we should be doing is trying to ensure that we have strong rules in place here, strong regulations in place here, and it is about managing the opportunity and the resource and also protecting the environment. With strong rules and regulations in place, we believe we can protect the environment and develop the resources we have in place here in the NWT.

**MS. BISARO:** The Minister is extremely confident. The Minister says he's heard from the public. I think what he's heard from the public is not what other people are hearing from the public, because I'm hearing many people in the public who are not sure that this is the right way to go.

The Minister yesterday said, "We are confident that regions like the Sahtu and the Beaufort-Delta can realize the benefits of their oil and gas resources without harm to the environment." The Minister may be sure, but there are an awful lot of residents of the NWT who are not sure, and I think the Minister is presuming. Because we've inherited regulations and the responsibility for the NEB in our territory because of devolution, responsibility does not mean that we should absolutely go ahead and do it. We still need to ask that question.

So, I want to say to the Minister, if you are so confident that this can go forward without any harm, the public is not. So, what are you as a Minister doing to give the public that confidence? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** It's too bad I can't ask questions to the Member because I'd like to ask the Member where she found out that I was quoted as saying that at any cost we want development in the central Mackenzie Valley. I never said that, so I want to get that on the record as well.

We have a process in place and we are going to continue that process. We haven't made any decisions, and some of the rhetoric that's coming from some of the Regular Members, it would say that we have made decisions. We haven't made any decisions and I want to be clear on that.

We've given ourselves more time. We'll take as much time as we need. We've got until the end of August, and we will take as much time as we need to ensure that we have the strongest rules in place, the best practices in place here in the Northwest Territories so that we can manage the resources that we have and the opportunities that we have here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I did not attribute the "at any cost" to the Minister. That's my personal opinion that that is the Minister's belief because that's what I see from his actions and from his words that he speaks.

The Minister says there's a process in place. Because we have a process does not mean that we have discussed and consulted about the fracking practice itself. We have never had that conversation. It needs to be had. Because we have said we are going to frack, now we are going to figure out how to do it? That does not allay the fears of the public.

So again to the Minister, I want to ask him what is he doing to give the public confidence that fracking is, as he says, such a wonderful process? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Again, the rhetoric doesn't really do anything to the discussion that we're having today. We are involved in a process. We're going to see ourselves through that process. We believe that we can manage the resource, we can manage the environmental concern and I'm not the only Minister in this government. We've got a Cabinet on this side of the House. I'm not making decisions unilaterally. We are moving forward and we are going to be looking at the environmental concerns, we're going to be looking at the opportunities, the economic opportunities.

I'll say it again, we haven't made a decision yet. We have not made a decision. We're talking about a process that isn't even halfway through its operation. We've given ourselves now until the end of August. We're going to have a discussion at the end of this process with the Regular Members. We're having a discussion with industry, we're consulting and I thought I heard the Member comment that we're not consulting. We're consulting with the Aboriginal governments across the Northwest Territories, Members, the public. We're doing everything we can and we've given ourselves some more time, so I'm wondering what exactly the Member wants. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to take an hour and tell the Minister what I want. However, the Minister says that there has been no decision, but the Minister keeps referencing that there's a process in place and that process is basically looking at how to do fracking, not if. That conversation, again, as I've said, has never been had. There are studies which say that the risks of fracking cannot be managed. We haven't had that conversation in public. There have been conversations behind closed doors. The Minister is asking about regulations of any and all organizations who will talk to them, but that precludes or that assumes that fracking will occur.

So, I again ask the Minister what is he doing to make sure that the public is confident that fracking is a good process and that it's the way to go without discussing the actual why should we frack with the public? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We need to know what we're getting ourselves into. We've spent the last four years, we've had trips to the Bakken, to Calgary with Members of the standing committee. We are trying to learn and trying to understand, and as I mentioned in response to some questions yesterday, not every basin is the same. The water quantity that would be required to frack a well in the central Mackenzie Valley is not the same as the Bakken. The geology is much different. We have to understand all of these things. It's easy to make a decision and just cast an opportunity aside. We want to study that opportunity. We want to ensure we know what we're talking about, and we're going to see the process through to the end and we're going to be happy to sit down with the Regular Members at the end of this process to discuss with them the next steps forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 9, written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With great pleasure personally, I ask this Assembly for unanimous consent to return to item number 8, oral questions, on our standing orders of the day. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent denied

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

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 245-17(5):  
LETTER FROM MAYOR OF HAY RIVER,  
DATED MAY 27, 2015,  
REGARDING SUPPORT FOR  
NWT POWER CORPORATION BID

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following letter from the mayor of Hay River, dated May 27, 2015, regarding support for the NWT Power Corporation bid. Thank you.

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

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 55:  
MENTAL HEALTH ACT

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 1,

2015, I'll move that Bill 55, Mental Health Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. 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. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Friday, May 29, 2015, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
  - Motion 43-17(5), Reappointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Mental Health Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:18 p.m.