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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Thursday, February 14, 2008**

Members Present

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Hon. Norman Yakeleya.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House.

Before we begin, colleagues, I would like to point out that we have special interpreters joining us today. The Assembly is assisting in a pilot project operated through the Yamazhaku Society with support from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to obtain interpreters in our aboriginal languages. The Assembly has agreed to provide the training experience for these students.

We have with us today students who are interpreting in the Chipewyan language. The Assembly is happy to assist in this worthwhile endeavour.

Point of Order

Mrs. Groenewegen: I rise on a point of order under Rule 492(1) of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, which states that a Minister is not at liberty to read quotes for dispatch or other state paper not before the House without being prepared to lay it on the Table. This is in context to the Premier's response to my questions yesterday when I was asking questions about the concession agreement.

On page 23 of unedited *Hansard*, Mr. Roland referred to eligible and ineligible costs that could affect different firms involved and also spoke to issues of guaranteed price, fixed-price contracts, refund of contingency, bonding, independent engineer auditing in construction, project management board and numerous other things related to the Deh Cho project, which I think are matters which are contained in documents that are not before this House.

Under these circumstances, I would ask the Premier if he would be prepared to table the concession agreement between the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Mrs. Groenewegen has risen on a point of order at the first opportunity and quoted the rule under the point of order. I will allow a bit of debate on this point of order. To the point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: As I have said on numerous occasions, both in the media and in this House and at other venues, as Regular Members, we have found it very difficult to obtain materials with reference to the Deh Cho Bridge project. I feel the Premier and the government have in fact portrayed our access to the contrary.

The concession agreement is something we have asked for on a number of occasions and only received an embargoed-type copy of it last Thursday. We were then able to look at a copy. When we finished looking at it, we must return it to the Clerk of Committees when we depart the room — I mean, it has been provided to us under very strict conditions.

I don't believe that in the Premier's speaking to the contents of the concession agreement yesterday, and referencing material that is covered in this concession agreement, the government is portraying it in the same light we are. We're bound to this confidentiality, but I feel the government is portraying it as if access to it is not an issue, to the point where the Premier stood up yesterday and listed off a number of things which actually relate to that concession agreement.

My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that in fact, if there is transparency on this project, then I would need to know reasons why this could not be made public.

Mr. Speaker: To the point of order, Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess, number one, I wouldn't want to, for debate on this subject, say that the Member has raised an issue that I think falls under more debate than what's happening. Specifically to the issue that she's raised on this item, we know that as Members of this House we debate a lot of things in this House or respond as Ministers are required to respond to questions that Members put before us. We respond with information from briefing notes

that are done up by departments and so on and so forth with that area. Even the questions, as she's referenced herself to this document they received under embargoed copy, is something she is referencing in the question.

So is this just another avenue of trying to make it look like this government is not doing due diligence, is not being forthcoming? I would take point to that, Mr. Speaker. Since the 16th Legislative Assembly has taken hold in our tenure, we've provided a lot of information, as Members have been requesting. And we've left it at that, at that point. When we're required to go before committee on specific issues, we continue to do that.

As for publically putting this forward, we know that the government has contracts on numerous initiatives, whether it's a water treatment plant, a school, a vehicle. When bids go out, we open them. They open bids publically and give you a price. But the rest of the business piece of it stays in context of the department. When a company has not been satisfied, for example, with the results of that and they request information, they're only given as to why their piece didn't qualify. They don't get a chance to review all of the other information that other bidders may have put forward. That would be the context of where we're coming forward and putting our position forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, in this area I think we've tried to be open and transparent. Obviously that's not to the satisfaction of Mrs. Groenewegen. At this point we still stand by the fact that in referencing or responding to questions, I've done so whether it's an information item or a briefing note I have from the Department of Transportation or FMBS, in that area. What we have done is due diligence. I didn't reference a page. I didn't reference a section or anything like that.

So I would go back to yourself, Mr. Speaker, and say that with this area, I don't believe we've contravened any sections. I would wait to hear back from yourself on what's your position.

Mr. Speaker: To the point of order. Seeing no more debate on the point of order, I will take the point of order under advisement and review it through *Hansard*. I will come back with my ruling at a later date.

Item 2, Ministers' statements.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 13-16(2) PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL HOUSING MINISTERS MEETING

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I would like to provide the Legislative Assembly with an update on

provincial and territorial activities currently being undertaken in the area of housing.

Mr. Speaker, the housing challenges facing this Territory and this country are great. The challenges are further compounded by the uncertainties surrounding federal housing funding.

On March 31, 2009, all federal funding for homelessness and repair programs as well as for new construction is scheduled to sunset. This also includes the three housing trusts, including the Northern Housing Trust, which provided \$50 million towards our three-year Affordable Housing Initiative. This is in addition to the fact that CMHC funding for public housing continues to decline at a rapid pace.

The impact of this decline in funding is enormous. It will lead to a total shortfall of \$339 million over the next 30 years for the N.W.T. alone. Nationally the shortfall is well over \$20 billion. As of today the Government of Canada has made no commitment to renew programs that are scheduled to sunset and has given no indication that they are willing to revisit the issue of declining funding. This is despite the fact that the federal government has enjoyed large surpluses in recent years, partly due to savings accrued by CMHC as social housing mortgages are retired.

On February 6, 2008, provincial and territorial Housing Ministers met in Vancouver to discuss the state of social and affordable housing in Canada. Though this was the first meeting of provincial and territorial Housing Ministers since 2006, I'm pleased that this meeting resulted in a unified response to the housing issues facing our territories, provinces and, indeed, the entire country.

Provincial and territorial ministers were disappointed that the federal government, while invited, did not attend these important meetings. Provincial and territorial Ministers are, however, taking action to engage the federal government to address the country's critical housing issues and are urging the federal government to respond quickly to support the four million Canadians in need.

During the forum, I, along with my fellow Ministers, reaffirmed our collective support for principles adopted in White Point, Nova Scotia, in 2005 that define an effective federal-provincial-territorial partnership to meet the housing needs of Canadians.

These principles include that provinces and territories have responsibility for the design and delivery of housing quality and programs within their own jurisdictions; respect the special relationship and fiduciary responsibility of Canada with First Nations, Metis and Inuit people; recognition of the federal role in housing, such as

mortgage insurance, and its pivotal role in research and knowledge transfer; federal consideration of each province and territory as its primary delivery partners on any new and existing federal housing funding; and that the federal government will provide each jurisdiction with the opportunity to participate in cost sharing or delivery or both through bilateral agreements.

It is my desire to see the federal government sign on these principles as an important step to establishing a national housing framework.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey the high level of frustration at the provincial and territorial levels with the lack of federal presence at the forum despite being invited. Minister Solberg rejected an invitation to attend the meeting, despite the fact that a federal Housing Minister has not met with their P-T counterparts in over two and a half years. Along with many of my colleagues, I expressed my strong concern with the lack of federal engagement on this matter at the meeting.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the pressure placed on the federal government by provinces, territories and third parties to meet on this issue, Ministers received a last-minute commitment for a delegation of Ministers to meet with the federal Minister in Ottawa within 60 days.

If this meeting does in fact take place, I will be attending this meeting and insisting that at a minimum, the federal government make an immediate commitment to increase the level of funding for housing programs, including those set to expire in March 2009. I'm also hopeful that Minister Solberg will agree to establish a federal-provincial-territorial partnership based on the principles agreed to by all provinces and territories.

I left the meeting of Ministers more convinced than ever of the need for all levels of government to place a greater focus on the role housing can play as a contributing factor to improve many social problems. As a result, I feel it is an issue that should be raised in discussion between federal, provincial and territorial Finance Ministers, as well as among First Ministers.

I'm also prepared to take an assertive approach to lobbying the federal government to re-engage with provinces and territories on housing. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador have assumed the chair of the provincial-territorial housing forum, under the leadership of Mr. Shawn Skinner.

I would like to publicly express my support for the more assertive approach to dealing with the federal government that the forum will be taking under the leadership of Mr. Skinner and his officials. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 14-16(2) AIRPORT RUNWAYS OPTIMAL LENGTHS AND ISSUES PROJECT

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Air transportation is a critical service in the Northwest Territories. In many N.W.T. communities, airport support is the only real mode of transportation for residents and for bringing community re-supplies. Having a runway of the appropriate length provides the opportunity for air carriers to use the most appropriate type of aircraft to serve the N.W.T. communities.

Recognizing the importance of continuing to look at means to improve air services and to ensure continued compliance with Government of Canada aviation regulations, I am pleased to advise Members that the Department of Transportation recently completed the N.W.T. Airport Runways Optimal Lengths and Issues Study.

Work on the study was supported by consultations with communities, air carriers, the Northern Air Transportation Association, Transport Canada and the N.W.T. business community. I thank all these parties for making a valuable contribution to this study.

This timely study considered a number of complex factors to determine whether runway extensions could significantly improve specific community airports in our system.

Air services in the North are very expensive. Runway extensions can, in some cases, result in the use of more efficient aircraft types which in turn will assist in lowering the transportation costs. The N.W.T. Airport Runways Optimal Lengths and Issues Study helps us prioritize the pressing need to extend runways at selected N.W.T. airports.

The department is currently assessing the study's recommendations and will consider how to implement priority airport extensions in consultation with the Northern Air Transportation Association, N.W.T. air carriers and Members of this House.

Completion of this study is just one of many ongoing initiatives carried out regularly by the Department of Transportation to ensure that the N.W.T. transportation system continues to evolve to support safe, reliable and effective services for all N.W.T. residents.

Mahsi cho.

Mr. Speaker: Before we proceed, colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention in the gallery to the presence of a former Member of the House, of the 14th and 15th Assemblies. The former Member for Great Slave, Mr. Bill Braden, is in the House.

Applause.

Mr. Speaker: I understand Bill is leaving tomorrow on his new endeavours, and we wish him well in that.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 15-16(2)
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

Hon. Floyd Roland: I wish to advise Members that the Hon. Jackson Lafferty will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Justice Ministers' meeting in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker: Item 3, Members' statements.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ACCESS ROADS TO
COMMUNITY GRAVEL SITES

Mr. Krutko: It's been some time since the community of Aklavik has been endeavouring to get connected to the rest of the world via a connection to the Dempster Highway from the community of Aklavik.

There have been discussions over the years with the Department of Transportation, the hamlet, the municipality and the Association of Municipalities by way of motions that have been passed to investigate the possibility of connecting the community to the Dempster Highway.

A road to a quarry for gravel, such as the one at Willow River, is about 5 kilometres from the community, yet in light of the floods of two years ago and shore erosion and climate change, it is now becoming more apparent that the need for access to a better road to the quarry site is an essential service.

My colleague from Tuktoyaktuk and his community face a similar challenge in terms of global warming and shoreline erosion. As a government we are responsible for protecting our people, our property and, more importantly, the government assets that are in those communities.

I find it amazing that we are going through a process of looking at red-flagged projects, but there is no mention of these projects. Also, in light of a municipal strategic budget item that has been presented in regard to capital for tax-based and non-tax-based communities, there is only one non-tax-based community, Nahanni Butte, which is receiving money from this project, and no other non-tax-based community.

There's also talk about a Canadian building fund in regard to accessing funds from the federal government of some \$25 million a year. But again, when will the communities of Aklavik and

Tuktoyaktuk have access to these important dollars, to meet the challenges we face because of the lack of access to quarry sites and gravel, which is urgently needed to improve the infrastructure in our communities?

At the appropriate time I will have questions for the Premier, asking exactly what this government is doing to ensure that we have this critical piece of infrastructure in place for our communities.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS
FOR SENIOR AND DISABLED HOMEOWNERS

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the issue of preventative maintenance programs for seniors and disabled persons. Many seniors and disabled persons who own their own homes are already burdened with a limited ability to properly maintain their homes. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, since the amalgamation of the Seniors and/or Disabled Preventative Maintenance Initiative program by the NWT Housing Corporation, seniors and disabled homeowners have now had to carry more of the burden of preventative maintenance duties for their homes. For example, Mr. Speaker, under the new program the seniors and disabled persons can now only access assistance for major maintenance work needed; preventative maintenance assistance is no longer there. I think we all know the benefits of preventative maintenance.

The Seniors and/or Disabled Preventative Maintenance Initiative program is now part of the CARE program — one of four NWT Housing Corporation programs that have replaced 14 programs. Seniors and disabled homeowners must now meet the new set criteria for assistance. Again, Mr. Speaker, these programs are for maintenance matters only; preventative maintenance work of any kind would no longer qualify for assistance.

Mr. Speaker, there are approximately 150 seniors and disabled homeowners in the South Slave region including my riding of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. With many of their homes already considered to be older homes, it is critical for these homeowners to be able to access assistance to do regular preventative maintenance on their homes. Under the old program an annual assistance of less than \$1,000 was provided to these homeowners towards preventative minimum costs. Mr. Speaker, this annual minimal assistance goes a long way to benefiting both the homeowner and the government. It prevented extraordinary maintenance repairs on the home, giving the homeowner peace of mind, and it also extended the life of the home, allowing the applicant enjoyable

ownership rather than living in government subsidized housing.

Mr. Speaker, according to the current housing market in the South Slave region, the average cost of a home is \$300,000. So for the cost of less than half a house....

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Beaulieu, your time for Members' Statements has expired.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, according to the current housing market in the South Slave, the average cost of a home is \$300,000. So for the cost of less than half the cost of an average house in the South Slave region, we can once again provide this very important annual assistance to seniors and disabled homeowners.

I will have questions for the Minister Responsible for the Housing Corporation later this afternoon. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS TO STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, the cost of attending post-secondary institutions continues to rise. With the exception of funding for travel, our Student Financial Assistance Program does not have any mechanism to review these costs on a regular basis and adjust funding levels available to students. For example, Mr. Speaker, the University of Alberta has announced that for the 2008-2009 academic year, the cost of tuition will go up by 4.6 per cent, and the cost to stay in student residence will go up by 8.75 per cent. This is fairly representative of what occurs every year at most southern post-secondary institutions and translates into \$215 more for tuition and \$335 more to stay in residence. This means that an N.W.T. resident will be paying roughly \$550 more to attend and live on the U of A campus in September 2008.

When you add in the inflation factor for food, books, school supplies, personal care items and clothing, it would not be out of line to state that students attending the University of Alberta next September will be facing between \$750 to \$1,000 in additional costs. Students not living in subsidized university accommodations could conceivably face even higher rental cost increases given Alberta's red-hot economy.

Mr. Speaker, we all want Northerners to excel in their post-secondary studies, but for this to occur, we have to ensure supports are in place and that the Student Financial Assistance we provide is adequate to ensure success. I believe that just like the annual food basket price review done for Income Support program clients, we need to review the funding that we provide under the Student Financial Assistance Program to post-secondary students on, at the very least, an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, we like to say in the Northwest Territories that we have the very best student financial system in place anywhere in the country. I believe that in order to stay current with the ability to say that, we need to be consistent in the way we assess needed increases to the Student Financial Assistance program, because we definitely want to encourage our students to seek post-secondary education.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS REGARDING G.N.W.T. CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, businesses across the Northwest Territories spend years building up their capacity to compete in an open market. G.N.W.T. has an obligation to ensure a fair and transparent process for awarding G.N.W.T. contracts.

I don't agree with the practice of calling for public tenders and cancelling the tender without a justifiable reason. A prime example is the highway maintenance contract for five years on the Dempster Highway. A public tender was put out. Contractors submitted prices as per the scope of work. The contract was then cancelled, re-scoped, and put out more quickly than I've ever seen this government do before.

After making some inquiries, I was informed that the prices were higher than budgeted for and bid bonds were wrong — and bid bonds are usually not required for maintenance contracts, just on capital projects. During a meeting with the Minister and the deputy minister, I was informed that the prices were reasonable based on the scope of work.

Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the contractors based their prices on. They based them on a scope of work that's given to them by the department. They don't just pull numbers out of the air. The fact that there was a 2 per cent difference between the two low bids proved that the estimates could have been wrong, and the submitted prices were closer to the actual costs. The contractors submitted prices. They have to make sure that their pencils

are sharpened, because this is what they do for a living.

I have heard too many contradictory versions as to why the tender was cancelled. This is causing me and the business community to lose confidence in the department and the direction they are heading. We have too many examples in G.N.W.T. where work is tailored to certain businesses or individuals. I understand that we do have agreements, and I respect that fact, but I also respect the fact that people who compete in an open market need to be protected. This government has an obligation.

I for one, Mr. Speaker, will not stick my head in the sand and wait for all this to pass and just leave it at that. We have to do what we can to not allow this to happen too often. Thank you.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REVIEW OF BOARDS AND AGENCIES

Mr. Ramsay: Today I'm going to speak about an issue that I've raised numerous times with the last government. That issue is the boards and agencies review that was done by the last government.

Some of the best work I've seen as a Member of this House was done via that review. The review was shelved before decisions were to be made. The last government wasn't interested in pursuing the review, because I don't believe they had the intestinal fortitude to carry through with the work and the decisions that were required to make a difference. So to the shelf it went.

Here we are three years after the review was mothballed trying to find ways to reduce spending. This government should immediately dust off the agencies and board review and get to work addressing the legitimacy, requirements, governance and competence of these boards and agencies.

My colleague Mr. Hawkins spoke a couple of days ago about the need to find board appointees from amongst residents of the Northwest Territories. I agree with him. If you do not live in and contribute to our economy here in the Northwest Territories, then sorry: go find a board appointment in B.C. or in Alberta or wherever you are residing.

As a government we need to address the competency of boards and the governance they should be providing. We should not have boards that simply rubber-stamp annual budgets and reports. There has to be a more conscientious effort on behalf of this government to ensure that boards and agencies are fulfilling their mandates.

Mr. Speaker, given our current financial outlook, we need to look at more focused community services boards. I'd go so far as to suggest today that we look at amalgamating the health authorities across

the Northwest Territories into one territorial body with representation from each region. If we did this, we could save ourselves \$7 million per year. Plus the authorities would not have to compete for staff, and the staff could work in different communities without the hassle that they currently have to go through.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRIBUTE TO THE NASOGALUAK BROTHERS

Mr. Jacobson: Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about three of our extremely talented brothers who brought great pride to our home community of Tuktoyaktuk and all of the N.W.T.: Bill, Eli and Joe Nasogaluak.

Bill Nasogaluak is a world-renowned, self-taught sculptor and painter. His work is based primarily on interpretations of what he knows best of his Inuvialuit culture.

Mr. Speaker, the myths and traditions of the Inuvialuit people, their relationship between the land, wildlife and our cultural heritage provide Bill an endless source of inspiration. Bill's professional focus is mainly carving and painting, where he can be found working on large stone carvings outdoors and many murals in the North. We're familiar with ice and snow sculptures. Bill has studied throughout his life. He is considered to be well-educated in the arts and techniques. Although Bill has never received a formal education in art, Mr. Speaker, he is well respected by all the art community. Bill currently resides in Toronto, Ontario.

Like Bill, Mr. Speaker, Eli finds a great source of inspiration for his works from his culture but also more from the contemporary situations such as modern-day life and everyday living. Eli was born in Tuktoyaktuk, attended school in Akalvik, Tuk and Inuvik and in Fort Smith. Eli is a member of many art boards and has attended many exhibitions in Canada and overseas. Eli has won numerous awards for his artwork in Canada and overseas and has been a regular at the Caribou Carnival ice sculpting contest here in Yellowknife over the years. Eli's amazing work can be found worldwide. He currently resides as a full-time artist here in Yellowknife.

Along with Bill and Eli, Joe Nasogaluak is considered....

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

Joe Nasogaluak is considered to be one of the top carvers in the North. Although Joe's the youngest of the three brothers, he's been a professional artist the longest, starting his career in 1987 and quickly making a name for himself with mythical carvings. Since then, Mr. Speaker, Joe's works have been sought after by collectors and distributors worldwide.

Of all of his achievements, his most favourite is when he worked with his brothers, Bill and Eli, on the seven and a half-tonne marble carving and when they participated in a family snow carving competition held annually in the Winterlude Carnival in Ottawa. Joe still resides in Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Speaker, Bill, Eli, and Joe Nasogaluak are truly inspirations in their own right to the people of Tuktoyaktuk and the Northwest Territories. The brothers have represented the N.W.T. at numerous Winterlude Carnivals, winning competitions in '02 and '07 and second-place finishes of the Winning Artists Choice Award selected by their peers.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud and honoured to recognize the tremendous achievements and many successes of the boys from Tuktoyaktuk: Bill, Eli, and Joe Nasogaluak.

Applause.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR FORT LIARD
LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, for the residents of Fort Liard to have meaningful input on the housing decisions that affect so many of them in their daily lives, as it stands now, there's no elected board for housing or a local housing authority. Currently they have one individual in the community who is tasked with determining who gets housing and trying to initiate eviction proceedings.

I personally do not think this places a fair burden on one individual. As well, just the perception of a bias in allocating social housing can be very divisive in a small community. Many constituents have voiced their frustration over the current processes that are in place.

I do not think there's any wrongdoing that needs to be investigated. But I do think, Mr. Speaker, that the NWT Housing Corporation, the hamlet, the local Acho Dene Koe band need to work together on addressing the issue of public participation in making housing decisions.

The time is now for an elected board representing a cross-section of residents. This board will make decisions related to local housing issues in a fair and equitable manner. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make mention, as so many of us already know, that February is Black History Month and that 2008 marks the 175th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire.

It has been 12 years since Parliament officially recognized February as Black History Month. In a unanimously carried motion brought forward by the Hon. Jean Augustine, this month hosts activities scheduled across Canada to provide the chance to put the spotlight on the contributions made to our communities and to the country by Canadians of African and Caribbean descent.

The many nationalities that compose Canada's Black community have been here helping pioneers. They have built and defended Canada and Canada's society from the very beginning. From Matthieu da Costa's arrival in the 17th century with the first European explorers to William Hall, Canada's first Victoria Cross recipient, the impact and the contributions made to our history is untenable. It's incredible, Mr. Speaker.

Black History Month is an opportunity to reflect on the long history and celebrate a heritage that has struggled, endured and certainly overcome. It is also a time for us to reaffirm our commitment to promoting respect, equality, diversity in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all Members of this House and the people of the G.N.W.T. to celebrate the achievements of black Canadians and recognize the important role they have played in our national history. Their contributions have helped shape Canada's diverse mosaic, and they have established themselves in our collective identity.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to some day when this House will proclaim this and make this a milestone for our Territory as well.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIFE'S DESIGNATION AS MOST
SUSTAINABLE SMALL CITY IN CANADA

Mr. Bromley: Our capital city of Yellowknife has been named the most sustainable small city in Canada.

Applause.

Mr. Bromley: I hope you will join me in congratulating our capital in feeling pride about its hard work toward achieving sustainability.

The *Corporate Knights* magazine of Toronto judged 18 small cities with populations under 250,000 on their efforts to have minimal environmental impact and to create a healthy population. Yellowknife came out tops. It was given recognition for the \$300,000 that is budgeted to do a geothermal research study at the abandoned Con mine site to potentially access heat from underground. Yellowknife's community garden co-operative — dedicated people who both grow their own food and contribute produce to those less fortunate — added to Yellowknife's profile. The report further recognized that people are able to walk and ride bikes to work because of our extensive trails and short commuting distance.

I would like to congratulate the city councillors and mayor of Yellowknife for providing the leadership to strive for sustainability. They have committed \$500,000 to a Community Energy Plan that sets steady targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and \$175,000 to a Smart Growth Plan looking at long-term urban planning.

I know they are aware of the many ongoing issues that pose challenges and need attention. I'd like to briefly mention, on the Community Energy Plan, that the one large project, the pellet boiler going in — I believe it is for the swimming pool and the arena — they're coming in within 1 per cent of achieving their target in greenhouse gas reductions with that one project. It must be a modest target, but they can build on that.

Mr. Speaker, social, environmental and economic sustainability is of vital importance to all life in the North. The best way to achieve it is to use our own local and regional resources to meet our basic needs. By enhancing literacy, mixing in traditional knowledge, tapping the innovation and industry of our people and using the materials at hand, we can produce much of our own energy, food and shelter in ways that build robust local economies, capture people's imaginations and community spirit, and respect the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members join me in acknowledging and supporting the efforts of all communities working towards sustainability. Once again, bravo, Yellowknife. Keep it up.

Applause.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
2008 CAGER BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms. Bisaro: Today I'd like to wish everyone Happy Valentine's Day and, in my statement, highlight a sport that I love. I want to alert all Members of this House to an upcoming event that is sure to please and delight even the grumpiest among us.

The N.W.T. Power Corporation Junior Cager and Senior Cager Basketball Championships will be held in Yellowknife February 22 to 24 and February 29 to March 1. Members can go to any school in Yellowknife on either of these weekends and witness kids from communities across the North having fun and playing my favourite sport. Basketball rules!

Mr. Speaker, these two weekends will showcase both our upcoming athletes and our current star athletes. There will be competition in five different categories: grades 6, 7, and 8, under 15, and under 19. The tournament will showcase members of both the men's and women's 2008 Arctic Winter Games basketball teams competing, in this case, against each other, representing their home communities.

This is a big tournament, Mr. Speaker. For the 2007 championships, Yellowknife hosted 73 teams from communities across N.W.T. and Nunavut. More than 150 basketball games were played by more than 700 athletes, and all this was done on two weekends.

It is through the efforts of volunteers that these two weekends are successful, volunteers like Bill Burlington of Sir John Franklin High School, who has been teaching in the N.W.T. since the days when Pine Point was a vibrant community; volunteers like the numerous teachers and community members who coach these teams; and volunteers like the members of the Basketball N.W.T. organization who volunteer tirelessly before and during these championship weekends to ensure the kids have a great time and enjoy the competitions.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge and applaud the corporate sponsorship of the N.W.T. Power Corporation, which recognizes the value of sport and what an active lifestyle can have for our young athletes. The Power Corp commitment to these tournaments ensures successful championships.

When the temperature drops past minus 30, a weekend of basketball will warm you up and create good memories. I have my own good memories from involvement in this sport as a player.

So, Mr. Speaker, dust off your sneakers, pick a gym, and cheer on your community's team next weekend, February 22 to 24, and the following weekend, February 29 to March 1.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ANNIVERSARY OF QUEBEC CITY

Mr. Abernethy: July 3, 2008, marks the anniversary of the founding of Quebec City. Four hundred years ago this year, Samuel de Champlain sailed from France, landing three months later at

Pointe de Quebec to establish a permanent settlement on the St. Lawrence River.

The trading post he built there became Quebec City — at one time the capital of New France — a territory that extended from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, as far north as Hudson's Bay and as far south as Florida. It was an important staging ground for the development of modern-day Canada and continues to be an entry point for thousands of new Canadians.

Quebec City is celebrating the anniversary with a year of wide-ranging cultural events and festivities, including the nationwide commemorative bells project. The Hon. Josée Verner, Minister of Canadian Heritage, invites capital cities across Canada to mark this historic event by ringing the bells and chimes at 11 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time on July 3, 2008. This is the date and time that Champlain is thought to have landed in 1608.

It may seem early, but I encourage this Assembly, as well as other communities across the North, to participate as well. This can be done by raising the Quebec flag and ringing the bells on July 3. It's never too early to begin planning our participation.

This symbolic Canada-wide activity gives us all a chance to express pride in what our nation has become and what we are capable of achieving in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Speaker: Before I go to Members, I would like to recognize some very special visitors in the gallery today. We have eight interns who are visiting us for a few days from the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme. I would like to recognize Ryan Cookson, Sabrina Hoque, David Michon, Kayla Monteiro, Katie Robb, Aamir Taiyeb, Matthew Thornton and Judith Wong. On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Northwest Territories, welcome to our Chamber.

Mr. Abernethy: I'd like to recognize two people: John Argue, a resident of the Great Slave riding; as well as Bill Braden, a resident of the Great Slave riding and a former Member of this House.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a constituent of mine and chair of the WCB, Mr. Denny Rodgers.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, on my way I saw a constituent, Mr. Archie Smith, who I'm very pleased and honoured to recognize, and as

well Mr. Rodgers, the chair of the WCB from Inuvik. I had breakfast with him this morning.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'd like to recognize two residents of Hay River South: Heather Copewell, who is here awaiting the arrival of a new baby; and my constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I realize Mr. Braden has already been recognized, but may I just take this opportunity to tell him that we do miss him around here. I know we have new Members here. And also to wish him well in his career as a photographer.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the interpreters and interpreter trainees: Alizette Abel; Terry Villeneuve; Archie Smith — the bestest guy; Mary Jane Michel; Bernadette Lockhart; Elizabeth Boucher; Henry Catholique; and Joyce Isadore. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here.

Item 8, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins

Oral Questions

QUESTION 71-16(2) PROJECT CONSULTANTS FEE STRUCTURE

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all aware of cost overruns on many of our infrastructure projects, which have been spiralling out of control for a number of years. It's something we need to be very concerned about and finally get on top of, because projects get cancelled and deferred.

It has come to my attention that one of the contributing factors to this problem is the way the fees are structured for project consultants. The fees are structured based on a percentage, which actually may give the consultant an incentive to encourage cost overruns. Mr. Speaker, that is not the way we should be running these projects.

My question to the Minister of Public Works and Services is: will the Minister commit to a timely review of the fees we are providing to consultants to ensure they are not unwittingly providing incentives for cost overruns?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the government of the 16th Assembly has appointed a committee made up of all the infrastructure departments in the lead, and what we're tasked with is to review the infrastructure process and the process used to select and determine prices and also do the construction. We'll certainly, as part of

that, consider the concerns the Member is raising, and we will report back as things progress.

Mr. Hawkins: I'm glad to hear it's at least being discussed, but the way the Minister coins it is that status quo will continue to be the process that we'll live by. I cannot justify that we don't attach a fixed fee as opposed to percentages, because we cannot justify losing people on jobs over poor fiscal management that this government's been running by.

So will this Minister, who can do the job, clearly and immediately take on this task and report back to this House on his findings on a way we can save money and fix the process so consultants don't have the advantage of these projects by encouraging them to go into cost overruns?

Hon. Michael McLeod: I thought I had been very clear and concise when I committed to take that on as part of our review. I'll reinforce that by saying yes, we will take his advice and follow it up.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I'm not used to a "yes" from this Minister so quickly. Now, what does "immediate" mean in this particular case?

Laughter.

Because at the rate government moves, "immediate" could be the 17th Assembly. So I'd like this Minister's definition of what "immediate" means. Are we going to see it before the next sitting?

Hon. Michael McLeod: I'd like to respond by saying that the Member can consider it started already. Thank you.

QUESTION 72-16(2)
HOUSING PROGRAM RESIDENCY
REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation a couple of questions on our residency guidelines.

I'm dealing with an issue back in my riding where a young student went down south, and for whatever reason that student returned to Fort Simpson within two weeks. When she applied for the housing program, they said she was ineligible because she was a non-resident because she moved away. There is something fundamentally wrong with that assessment there, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Minister about the guidelines and policies with respect to accessing programming when you're a student.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm aware of the case that the Member's referencing, and I have the same

question. I'm in the process of following up with the Housing Corporation that leaving this Territory for two weeks should in no way impair a Northerner's residency. So we're in the process of sorting that one out.

Mr. Menicoche: Just in general terms, what exactly is the policy for our students who are going down south to get trained and wanting to come back to live and work? We shouldn't be creating barriers for them to live, either. But what exactly is the existing policy, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, under the rules of SFA, as long as a student is on SFA and is training and is eligible for SFA and is down south in post-secondary institutions upgrading their education, they continue to be considered a Territory resident, they're covered with their health care, they continue to get SFA, and they're considered to be N.W.T. residents for the purposes of all those areas, including voting. So we're very clear that if you're there for two years, four years, working on your Masters, you're a Northerner, and we want you to come home. Thank you.

Mr. Menicoche: It just doesn't make sense why this rule's being applied to this student in this case where it didn't really work out. It happens to many, many students over the course time, where they go down for the course, but it doesn't work out, so they come home immediately. But she was gone, like, two weeks. We have had employees who take longer holidays down there. Are they non-residents down there as well, Mr. Speaker?

I would like to urge the Minister's office to review this case carefully and allow this young student, this young adult, to act as their programming and policy intends. Mahsi.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I appreciate the urgency of this issue as articulated by the Member, and I would just reiterate my commitment that this issue is already being dealt with. We have been in contact with the Housing Corporation, and we should quickly get this resolved without too much further ado.

QUESTION 73-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask questions on SFA today, but I guess I'll just have to ask questions on the Deh Cho Bridge instead.

Mr. Speaker, lots of e-mails have been coming into my e-mail box, and I want to sincerely thank people for taking the time to share their opinions and their questions on this very significant piece of capital infrastructure. I encourage that. Whether it is pro or against, I am very interested in hearing people's input. I also want to thank people who phoned in

this morning and took the trouble to become involved through a phone-in radio show on CBC.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House, when the Premier was asked about putting together a projection of what it would cost to terminate the agreement to proceed with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, he indicated that FMBS would embark on that exercise, and this material may be available within a couple of days. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if he would take the next step in that process by sharing that estimation with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and allowing them to respond as to whether or not they would consider that to be a reasonable determination of costs to exit.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the question asked of them, as I responded the other day, was work we could do for our membership. I am sure, even when the question was asked, that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation's interest is in looking at what liabilities they may be at risk for.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I believe the agreement with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation does provide for what they call a value for termination on an occasional, from time-to-time, basis.

I would like to ask the Premier: has such a valuation for termination ever been contemplated by this government or shared with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation in order to assess what it would cost our government to terminate this project?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we have not looked at it from a 16th Assembly point of view. In response to the Member the other day, I did commit that we would look at what that potential may be.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I would like to ask the Premier if he would share that valuation that the FMB comes up with, with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation as a next step, to see if they would like to respond to that dollar value.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, in a sense there are a number of partners involved in this. We are back stoppers, in a sense, as was pointed out by Members of this Assembly, on this project. Information that we would do, we would share with all parties involved. They haven't requested this, and I can't see why we would go to them for their evaluation of our work.

From the FMBS side, we have been monitoring the fiscal impacts of this project and ensuring that we've covered off areas of risk points for the G.N.W.T.

Mrs. Groenewegen: The Premier certainly has the opportunity available to him to pose that question to

the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation after FMBS puts that work together.

Moving on to just a slightly different kind of accountability exercise related to the Deh Cho Bridge, I'd like to ask the Premier if he is aware of the exercise that is referred to as a peer review. There was previously a bridge that was under design and contemplation in British Columbia. It was the \$1 billion Golden Ears Bridge. It was in B.C. At one point there was a call for a peer review of the financial circumstances surrounding this project. At the end of the review the entire business model was ordered changed.

Is the Premier familiar with the concept of a peer review of the financial circumstances surrounding this project?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, peer reviews are done on a whole number of initiatives. In fact, as we're doing our work in preparing for the business plan, looking at our fiscal situation, deputy ministers would be sitting down together to review each other's options that they may be working on. We've seen that in a number of initiatives throughout.

For ourselves, though, a peer review on the financial side, when you look at it, is a review of the work that's done. There has been a cost-benefit analysis that is public. Yes, when you look at it, the numbers have changed since the price has gone up.

But if we take a Territorial viewpoint here, we would never be able to afford half the communities that are in the Northwest Territories if we stuck to an absolute business model as to what the costs are and the cost-benefit analysis and so on.

I'm not sure what we'd want to do with that area. The information that we're working around has been public.

QUESTION 74-16(2) ACCESS ROADS TO COMMUNITY GRAVEL SITES

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to my Member's statement about the road to the gravel source in Aklavik and also about not having it — it's an essential service — I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation.... In the last couple of years there has been some work that's ongoing between the Department of Transportation, the community of Fort McPherson and the residents of Aklavik for an all-weather road to connect the community of Aklavik to the Dempster Highway. Yet nowhere in the information I've been reviewing is there any capital investment in this idea.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation: exactly where is it in the capital planning process that the

communities can see some capital investment in developing an access road in Aklavik to the gravel source, which is some 15 kilometres from the community?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Mackenzie Delta for the question in regard to the Aklavik gravel source.

In 1996 the community of Aklavik applied for funding under DOT's programs in terms of a local program. They fit the funding of what they wanted, and the department responded in terms of assisting Aklavik through an ATV trail.

Since then, Aklavik has gone through many discussions with the department and has requested that the department, along with the government, look at an all-weather road to the gravel source, as the Member has indicated. They want to see where this fits in terms of the plans, in terms of having an access road to that gravel source.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the Minister touched the wrong button with that one. The Community Local Access Road Program as it sits right now only allows a community to access \$50,000 a year to put a road in place, yet I notice in the capital plan there is some \$500,000 for Nahanni Butte to put a road into that community.

I'd like to ask the Minister: knowing that there is only \$50,000 a year and the program hasn't worked, will the Minister consider giving us the same offer that's being made to Nahanni Butte, of \$500,000 a year, to put a road in to the gravel source? Maybe we can do something with that.

I'd like to ask the Minister: is he committed to consider looking at \$500,000 a year, similar to what is being offered to Nahanni Butte, to put a road into the gravel source?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Nahanni Butte road program is a public access road program. The Aklavik road is a community access road program. I would work with the Members here in terms of the issue with Aklavik in terms of seeing what could be done, and I would have to take this up with my colleagues in terms of these programs. There are two different programs we're looking at in terms of this issue.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, again, I believe the Minister said yes. I'd like to thank him for the \$500,000, and I look forward to building my road.

Laughter.

I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister realizes that programs and services we do have are consistent and that they are also fairly distributed. I know we are looking at other communities. I know Tuk is asking for a similar arrangement. Again, I

think the emergency we're under is because of the effects of global warming, shore erosion, the amount of floods that we're starting to see — they're increasing — and the effect on capital, Mr. Speaker. We spent \$2 million in regard to the flood in Aklavik two years ago to haul gravel from Inuvik to Aklavik. That's a \$2 million investment, which could have built this capital investment to get this road in there.

I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly how soon can he respond back to me to find alternatives or options that we can use to find a way to get this into the capital planning process and get this road built so that the people in the community of Aklavik can feel safe and secure in their community?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, on the programs we talked about, I would be happy to work with the Member in terms of his issue he's pressing today for the department and this government. Of course, the department is always looking at ways to improve mobility and reduce the cost of living and have the benefits that go into any communities down the valley here. I'd be happy to sit with the Member, sit with my colleagues here, to see where we could look at requests the Member is asking for from the department, put it in our projects and see where we can move forward with it.

I did receive a letter from the Aklavik Dene Band in terms of their support for Mr. Krutko's request. We're taking that very seriously, and we're looking at it. I'll be happy to sit with the Member and see what we can do and have a discussion with committee in terms of when we put down our infrastructure and see where the priorities are.

Mr. Speaker: A final, short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the community of Aklavik also has this in the strategic plan they developed last August. Again, the community is fully supportive of this. Knowing we are looking at alternative funding sources — we have the municipal infrastructure funding, and we're talking about the Building Canada Fund — I'd like to ask the Minister to ensure that we do have our opportunity to have access to these program dollars so we can take on this initiative. Thank you.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to say to the Member that we received the request from the community of Aklavik. We are considering it within our plans in terms of our priorities, and we'll look at that. Again, I'm very pleased to see that the community of Aklavik has actually put a number down to contribute to this project. That deals well within the department in terms of a partnership on certain projects.

QUESTION 75-16(2)
G.N.W.T. POLICIES ON
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister of Public Works and Services. Over the years the G.N.W.T. has used a number of different methods to facilitate and advance infrastructure projects. One of these is a Public/Private Partnership, an example of which we're currently experiencing.

As the G.N.W.T.'s infrastructure deficit grows ever larger, it is likely that P3 projects or business-facilitated projects will become more and more commonplace. I'm concerned that this government does not have adequate policies and procedures in place to adequately handle and monitor these kinds of projects.

I'd like to ask the Minister: do we currently have any document in place that outlines the process to be followed for P3 projects — things like parameters for agreements between parties, project management and so on?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to go to the department to see what we have in place, but I'd venture to say that all P3 initiatives are done on a case-by-case basis. Thank you.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's willingness to look into this issue, and I would hope he would do that and report back.

Does the Minister agree that there is a need for developing a policy to administer P3 projects?

Hon. Michael McLeod: There have been very few projects brought forward to this government that are classified as P3. I believe there was one in Fort Smith many years ago. A lot of work was done in the area of policy development in and around P3 projects. The other one is the Deh Cho Bridge, of course. As we move forward, there needs to be more analysis done as the federal government has, as part of the building Canada plan, a funding initiative that's referred to as the P3 models. We need to move forward if we're going to access some of those dollars.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the Minister said yes in there, that he would look into a policy. Having assumed that yes, there is a policy about to be formulated, I'd like to know when that might happen and when we could expect to see the completed document.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We as a government have committed to doing a lot of work in the area of infrastructure and infrastructure development and all the different aspects, including planning of budgets and looking at the costs and being able to accommodate the contracts so they get out earlier.

I would be glad to try to include.... We've agreed that we will be as comprehensive as we can, and I'd be glad to bring the issue of the P3 forward to that committee for consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask the Minister if he would come back to committee for input, but he's beat me to the punch, so good for you.

I would urge the Minister to get a policy in place as soon as possible. These kinds of projects are somewhat unusual, and we need to have as much governance, as much of an umbrella for overseeing these projects as possible.

If the Minister could respond to my question in terms of timing — I realize that "as soon as possible" could mean tomorrow; it could also mean three years from now — if he could give me a narrower time frame, I'd appreciate that.

Hon. Michael McLeod: The infrastructure committee has been meeting since this government was formed and cabinet was selected. We have a lot of work in front of us. There is some desire to have some recommendations brought forward. We need to review a lot of the policies. We'd have to upgrade some of the policies. We'd have to also develop new ones. I'm trying to be very careful not to make a commitment we may not live by, but I would suspect that we could start presenting some of the initial findings very soon, hopefully by the next sitting.

QUESTION 76-16(2)
REVIEW OF BOARDS AND AGENCIES

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier, and it gets back to my Member's statement from earlier today, where I talked about the boards and agencies review that was conducted by the 15th Legislative Assembly and the government of the 15th Assembly. It looked into the 112 boards and agencies here in the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned, some of the best work I've seen here as a Member was done by that review. It was shelved in 2005.

I'd like to ask the Premier: where exactly is this review, and who's in charge of carrying out the rest of the necessary work contained in that review?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the work that was done previously, in fact, was chaired by Minister Miltenberger. It just so happens that in this government, the 16th Assembly, he is the lead on the refocusing-government portion of our initiatives. This area would be falling under that activity.

Mr. Speaker, we would have to look at all the boards and agencies, not just health authorities but

education authorities, the relationship we have with them, and the LHOs as well, looking at where there may be potential overlaps. That work is to be done, and the lead Minister, again, is Minister Miltenberger. They've started collecting that information and dusting things off.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for that, and I'm just wondering if.... It sounds like the government may be starting over, and I'm wondering if they are going to use the work that was done in 2004-2005 as the basis for advancing the review of boards and agencies. I'd also like to ask him whether that review would take in such things as governance, residency and competency of board members.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we're not about reinventing the wheel. If work's been done by previous governments, that would be a good starting point for us. It is part of the work that's included. This refocusing-government piece will incorporate a whole number of initiatives, this being one of those.

Mr. Ramsay: I'm just wondering if the Premier could provide the House with a time frame on the work that's going to be going into the review of boards and agencies across the Northwest Territories.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as the Members are aware, we've been trying to finalize a schedule of getting the upcoming budget in place and how much of the change we can incorporate in our first year. So the time line's in front of us.

Much of that work would flow into the '09-'10 business plan process, so we're going to see what work may be able to be carried forward. But the refocusing piece, and the amount of work that's required, would take us more time than the typical approach we take to business planning. I would say much of this type of work would flow through into the '09-'10 business plan process.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up, I'd just like to ask the Premier why it is necessary that the review of boards and agencies that was done three years ago is going to have to wait that long again to see any real progress being made.

I'm wondering, and maybe the Premier could explain it to me, why are we including the review of boards and agencies with the other work the government's doing through this reduction exercise in budgeting? Why is this included in that, and why can't we move forward with the work on boards and agencies today?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, one thing we've learned — and we must learn from past history —

is if we are going to make decisions, we have to make sure they don't come back and reinvent themselves because we haven't quite closed all the loopholes that may be established or end up coming out as we make changes. There's a substantial amount of work involved in the refocusing-government piece. The boards and agencies are a big piece of that. As I've worked with Members, our time frames.... There's a lot of work being done now. The time frames we have are tight, and that is one of the reasons why it would fall into that area.

Work will be done so that it can be presented, and Members can be reviewing that through the business plan process as early as the fall.

QUESTION 77-16(2) HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, going back to my Member's statement, I mentioned I was told that the bids on the highway maintenance contract were reasonable based on the scope of work. I received a letter with some numbers on it, and this letter, actually, Mr. Speaker, is an insult to my intelligence. I'm no engineer, but I know these numbers are not reasonable. I don't know how the numbers were reached. I don't know if it was the summer or winter that they used these numbers on.

I would like to direct my questions today to the Minister of Transportation. I'd like to ask him: the decision to cancel the highway maintenance contract — was that made in the regional office?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Member's correct that the decision to cancel the contract was done on the advice of, recommendations and discussions with the regional office.

Mr. McLeod: I'd like to ask the Minister if the regional office has the authority to cancel tenders.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the final decision to cancel the contract was made with the deputy minister.

Mr. McLeod: Why, then, was the contract cancelled by the deputy minister? Does the region not have the authority to cancel the contract? Why did the deputy minister cancel the tender?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The prices were too high, and with the processing system inside the department, the contract was cancelled by the headquarters.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: I say again, the letter I received was an insult to my intelligence. I can add these numbers up just as well as anybody else.

I'd like to ask the Minister if the department felt they were obligated to cancel the tender because of public comments made by the Minister to give an additional 20 per cent guaranteed on top of the 50 per cent already guaranteed.

This, Mr. Speaker, doesn't create a level playing field. I guarantee you any money that if these tenders were opened today, one company will be low-balled because there's not a fair playing field.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure Members of this House and members of the public that when this department decides to cancel any government tenders, it's based on strong merits, it's based on a financial decision, and this decision was based on a financial position that the tender came in way too high – 2 per cent way too high. This had nothing to do with any other issues. It's just that the prices were way too high.

QUESTION 78-16(2)
PARTICIPATION OF G.N.W.T. STAFF
VOLUNTEERS IN 2008 ARCTIC
WINTER GAMES

Mr. Abernethy: My questions are to the Minister Responsible for Human Resources and are a follow-up to questions I asked on Tuesday with respect to Arctic Winter Games and the volunteers.

Recently, in an effort to secure enough qualified volunteers for the 2010 Olympic Games, B.C. civil servants have been offered half their salary if they sign up to help out. The government felt that these are the kinds of programs large employers should be doing to create a positive work environment and good employee morale.

When morale is already challenged in the G.N.W.T., requiring employees to take lieu or annual seems a little shortsighted. The games are valuable. They're going to add a significant amount of value to Yellowknife, a significant amount of value to the Northwest Territories as a whole.

Given the approach of other jurisdictions and our previous direction in 1998 in the last games, I would like the Minister to commit to reviewing their decision once again and modifying it so these employees don't have to liquidate annual or lieu for volunteer periods of up to two hours a day.

Hon. Bob McLeod: We're talking about the Arctic Winter Games. We're not talking about the Olympic Games or the Canada Winter Games, as have been previously referred to. The government of the Northwest Territories is following a policy that has been in place for 40-some years. We think we've been more than generous with our leave policy for participants in the Arctic Winter Games.

Mr. Abernethy: Clearly the Arctic Winter Games aren't as large as the Olympic Games, but for a

Territory of 44,000-ish people, this is a very significant event. Yellowknife is going to have thousands of people in the community participating in the games. For a population of 19,000, having thousands of additional people is a pretty big deal, and they need volunteers.

You talk about our position. Our position has changed. As I said before, in 1998 we gave the employees the time off. We allowed them to take up to two hours a day, where operational requirements permitted, without penalty to annual or lieu. We are now rigidly applying policies and procedures that do affect staff and do make them question whether they'll volunteer or not, or when they will be scheduled.

Once again, will the Minister look at reviewing their direction on this and being fair and equitable with employees?

Hon. Bob McLeod: If the Member wants us to go back to take the same position as we did in 1996, that would mean we'd have to look at the funding. We provided considerably less funding in 1996.

I just want to advise the Member that we have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. I think we have to take a fair approach. Other communities in the Northwest Territories won't benefit from reviewing this. We've followed leave policy, and we've expanded it to include head coaches and first responders. I think the government has been very fair in this regard.

Mr. Abernethy: Regardless of where the games are held, whether they are in Yellowknife or some other community in the Northwest Territories, I'd be standing here saying the same thing.

We're talking about morale. We're talking about helping the games be successful. My biggest concern is scheduling. They've got lots of volunteers, but the difficulty is scheduling the morning and afternoon 4-to-7 shift and 7-to-10 shift. People in the government aren't stepping forward for those shifts as readily as they may, if they're unable to get the times out without affecting their credits.

I would, obviously, like you to go back and review your policy and think about the image you're sending and think about the image other jurisdictions are sending and rethink your position. So once again, can I get the Minister's commitment to go back and review that policy and change it?

Hon. Bob McLeod: My expectation is that after the Arctic Winter Games have concluded, we would review the policy to see how appropriate that policy still is.

QUESTION 79-16(2)

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS
FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED HOMEOWNERS

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I spoke about seniors and disabled homeowners and their need to be able to access assistance from this government to conduct regular preventive maintenance work on their homes.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation provide this House with the number of seniors and disabled homeowners that were assisted through the Seniors and/or Disabled Preventive Maintenance Initiative program prior to the introduction of the CARE program?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, in the information I have, in 2004-2005, there were 168 clients; in 2005-2006, 156; and in 2006-2007, 162.

Mr. Beaulieu: I'd like to thank the Minister for the answer. I would like to, once again, emphasize the need for providing assistance to seniors and disabled homeowners who are doing preventive maintenance work on their homes. Can the Minister tell me if these homeowners can access preventive maintenance only programs today to have work done on their homes in the fall?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, under the CARE program.... The Member indicated in his Member's statement that there was a consolidation of programs, and the one that now captures the seniors and disabled funding is the CARE Program. Seniors are now eligible to apply every year for up to \$2,000. There is, as well, a larger home repair program for seniors in their own homes for a forgivable loan for \$90,000 that's repayable — or forgivable — up to anywhere from one to ten years. The previous amount was, I believe, \$20,000 over ten years, and you couldn't reapply for ten years. In this new one, as soon as it's paid off, you're eligible to reapply.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, with the current CARE program in place, there's such things as a requirement for full insurance on the program. Some of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, live in log homes. There are no fire hydrants and no full-time firefighters. This all adds to the cost of insurance. For example, insurance on one unit that's approximately 1,000 square feet with these dynamics to it will cost \$3,500 — not affordable for seniors.

Under the old Seniors and/or Disabled Preventive Maintenance program, they were able to access that program without a requirement to carry insurance, which is now a requirement in the new programs.

Would the Minister be prepared to meet with me to discuss other options for bringing preventive

maintenance programs to the seniors and disabled persons in my riding, in order to provide options to the seniors where they are not required to have all the various requirements under the current CARE program?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concerns of the Member, and I recognize that in some cases our policy design and program design tend to have a very modern, urban focus and sometimes maybe undervalues the reality that in small communities where people burn wood — as the Member indicated, they may be living in log homes or older homes where they don't have fire hydrants and those type of things.... So those are very legitimate concerns.

I would extend the invitation that the Member made. In fact, I would like to broaden it to say that I would be very pleased to sit down with the housing officials and the appropriate committee to talk about issues like the Member has raised and improvements that could be made if there are policy issues or process issues and/or re-profiling of funding.

This current program amalgamation was done trying to improve services. If, after this particular length of time, as we look back and we recognize that there are areas of improvement required, we're definitely interested in identifying those, as well as identifying what improvements we can get done.

QUESTION 80-16(2)

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, this 16th Assembly has identified healthy, sustainable communities as a high-priority goal. Yesterday I spoke about youth. They make up an important part of these healthy communities. I'd like, in the absence of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs if his department is planning to continue its support for the Northern Youth Abroad program.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we've been a supporter of the Northern Youth Abroad program since 2005. We partnered up with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We've been providing financial support and meeting on a regular basis to see some of the outcomes and have been very satisfied with what we are seeing. We've had a number of meetings and recently had some further discussions. We have decided that we will continue to support this program.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you for that response — very good news. This organization is doing incredible work, and I think we're already seeing the returns.

Another aspect of the sustainable communities is, of course, the economic, the social and the environmental components of sustainability. I'm

wondering if, in that aspect of sustainable communities in the new deal, all three components of sustainability are being profiled in the requirement for community energy plans in the integrated sustainable community plans — for the capital plans. I see this as an opportunity to highlight those three aspects of real sustainability. So if we're going to carry out a sustainability plan, let's make sure those aspects are in there. Can the Minister assure me that those aspects are in the exercise?

Hon. Michael McLeod: I see we've moved away from the youth abroad program and we've entered another line of questioning.

Mr. Speaker, the integrated communities sustainable plans are something we've worked on together with the federal government. We felt in order for the communities to be able to become sustainable and to become self-sufficient, they need to develop a number of plans. They are working on energy plans, capital plans and innovative initiatives within the communities. I'd certainly be glad to share the information, and possibly share some of the models we've come out with, with the Member, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 81-16(2)
G.N.W.T. TOURISM
MARKETING EFFORTS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, it's well known that I'm a big supporter of tourism. I can tell you honestly that I've got the scars to prove it.

The fact is the Territorial government, I think, is being outpaced by other territories such as the Yukon, and even Newfoundland, about promoting tourism and regional tourism. I'm not a guy who goes to bed too early at night, I should say, and sometimes at one o'clock in the morning I see these wonderful ads by Newfoundland. They really draw you in, and I can't help but think: "Jeez, I'd love to go to Newfoundland." And then a few minutes later there's a Yukon ad, and it's a wonderful commercial about "Come to the Yukon." But you know, something I never see is "Come to the Northwest Territories." It seems to kind of disappoint me. I think we're really letting our residents down in the Northwest Territories.

My question is to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. What is he doing to promote the Northwest Territories in a national profile, to raise our profile so we can help bring in some of those fresh tourism dollars to all regions of the Northwest Territories?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to see the honourable Member come to realize the value of tourism and that he will support making

more resources available to promote the Northwest Territories.

I think that as a territory we have been very successful in the last few years in increasing the level of resources available for tourism. We have been working in partnership with the N.W.T. Tourism Association. We have the Tourism 2010 Strategy. We have more than doubled the amount of money we are investing in tourism.

Working with the other two territories of Yukon and Nunavut, we established a marketing campaign that was held in conjunction with the Canada Winter Games and that was very successful. For the first time in nine years we had the federal government invest in tourism for the Northwest Territories. So we have really increased the exposure for the Northwest Territories.

To be able to reach the par of a province like Newfoundland, I think we would have to look at investing more resources. We would probably have to look at perhaps introducing a hotel tax, which every jurisdiction in Canada has except the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. It costs money to advertise on a national basis, and advertising on TV costs a lot of money. That's the direction we have to go.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of partners out there that would be more than willing to engage, such as the Canadian Tourism Commission — the CTC. The fact is that I think the potential does exist out there. The fact is we're missing out on a huge market that comes to the Northwest Territories, such as the southern Canadian market as well as the American market.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hear what else the Minister is doing. Is he advocating for a potential hotel tax to help find new revenues so we can reinvest in tourism advertising, or is he searching for other types of joint partnerships? If so, what partnerships is he considering at this time? If I may note, we just cut back on some of the tourism product diversification programming money that was out there for our tourism market, tourism companies. People are having a difficult time drawing in a new market. I want to hear how he's promoting this.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct the Member. We haven't cut back on the tourism product diversification program. All we're doing is re-profiling the money so we can cash-flow it better. We're still working on the same levels that were approved previously. I think there's a whole number of different areas that have potential.

I should point out that we keep track of our tourism numbers very closely, and while our overall tourism numbers continue to increase, what we are finding is starting to get disturbing. The numbers for the rubber-tire tourists and so on have been starting to

decline, also for the consumptive tourists, like sport hunters and fishermen. The only area of increase is for business travellers. We have to keep that in mind when we are looking at ways to spend money for tourism. I think the most important thing is that we want to continue to keep the federal government investing in tourism.

Mr. Hawkins: Can the Minister tell this House today: would a typical tourist, whether they are rubber-tire or they come here just to fish — things like that — spend more money than a business traveller? As far as I see it, a business traveller would come anyway. So who spends more money?

Hon. Bob McLeod: I would suggest that the business traveller who comes up and stays on as a tourist would probably spend more money.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: No questions.

QUESTION 82-16(2)
NEW DEAL
FOR COMMUNITY GOVERNMENTS

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs in regard to the new deal that has been put out there over the last couple of years. There are concerns raised by the communities as to what happens over a five-year term we put on it. Is there going to be a suspension to this program? Exactly what is going to happen after five years?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the new deal is here to stay. We expect the communities to be more independent through this program. We expect the communities would become municipal taxation authorities. That is the goal we set when we worked with the communities. They have been asking for that for many years, and that is the goal we have worked towards.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the new deal, it is a new initiative. I know that it does have some hiccups in the way it will be implemented, but I would like to ask the Minister: will there be a period of time, say within the next year or so, where we can do an evaluation or assessment to see what is working and what is not and adjust it so we can make this program successful?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the program was designed with checks and balances so communities can continue to have input on areas of concern. We have already heard some early promise of that capacity. I think overall in the area of O&M and capital, we have stabilized the investment in the communities that communities are comfortable with. We have spent a lot of work in the area of building capacity and staffing problems. We have developed an evaluation

framework, and we will be bringing that forward for discussion and having the communities adopt it so we can do the review in the next little while.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the new deal, I know the government still has some ownership or some control over certain things such as infrastructure, water treatment plants, and also maintaining and managing water treatment plants. Does the government have a plan in place as to exactly how they would allow the community to build capacity, take on those program responsibilities and also ensure that they have the resources to maintain and run the infrastructure in the future?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, most of the capital has been turned over to the communities. There have been some areas where we haven't turned over some of the capital items or facilities — more in the case of the facility not being up to standards the community would accept. We still have some carry-overs that were on our infrastructure plan that we intend to move forward on. Those are some of the water plants; I believe we have eight that we have still to deliver. However, for the most part, the communities have accepted the infrastructure. We still need to work on and develop some capacity in some of the communities, but for the most part, that's already been transferred.

Mr. Speaker: Final, short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: In regard to capacity in communities, one of the biggest challenges we're facing in our communities is finding professionals to run and maintain our communities: the SCOs, the financial officers, even bylaw officers in some cases. I know we had the Community Capacity Program where we used to train people through MACA, Housing and whatnot.

I'd like to ask the Minister: will we continue with such a program so we can have homegrown individuals who can take on these jobs in their home communities?

Hon. Michael McLeod: The whole area of capacity building has been one that has been brought forward as a concern. There are concerns regarding the number of available qualified SCOs. There is also the concern that was raised yesterday or the other day by the Member for Tu Nedhe about qualified recreation workers in the communities. We also need to have people who are qualified and certified in the area of finance.

We are working with LGANT, or Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories, to see what we can do. There have been a number of suggestions. One of them is to develop a pool of qualified people from which we can draw in times of

emergency or when somebody leaves without giving adequate notice.

There is also the School of Community Government, where we have done a lot of training over the years. We offer, on average, about 80 programs a year to all the communities. We have had great success in that area.

We recognize this as a problem area, and we will continue working with the communities so they're given some comfort that we have qualified people.

QUESTION 83-16(2)
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

Mr. McLeod: In response to my last question, the Minister of Transportation said that the contract was cancelled because the price was too high. But in a meeting I was told that the price was reasonable based on the scope of work. Which is it? I was also told that the bid bonds were wrong.

I'd like to ask the Minister: are bid bonds usually asked for in an O&M contract, and were they a requirement in the second contract that went out?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The cancellation of the contracts was based on the fact that the price almost tripled, in terms of the required work that was done.

Bid bonds are sometimes required on some of the contracts they do within the Department of Transportation. We are removing the bid bonds from the re-scoping of the new tender's work, in that we're not going to require bid requirements on the re-tendering of this contract.

Mr. McLeod: I'd like to ask the Minister why the bid bonds weren't required on the second contract. They're sometimes used to eliminate small companies from bidding on work — the companies in the community that sometimes can't afford bid bonds.

I'd like to ask him why the bid bond was removed from the second tender.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: In terms of the bid bonds, the re-scoping of this tender is not stated. The original tender was for five years. This tender is now for three years, with a plus-two option.

I would have to work with the department to get the specifics on the details of the bid bonding question. And I'll be happy to sit down with the Member and discuss it further with the department, in terms of this plus the legal question.

Mr. Speaker: The time for question period has expired. I will allow the Member a supplementary question.

Mr. McLeod: I've tried asking questions. I wasn't getting answers that satisfied me, so I asked them in the Assembly. I was looking for some straight answers. I didn't believe I was getting them, and I didn't believe the reasons I was given were good enough.

I'd like to ask the Minister my final question. This is a good example of how we sometimes.... The government underestimates all our projects. And when the actual prices come in, we're surprised. But we shouldn't be. These people do this for a living, so they obviously know what they're doing.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he had the authority to publicly commit to an additional 20 per cent on top of the 50 per cent that's already guaranteed Thank you.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, that's a hypothetical question, and I'm not too sure. I'd have to speak with my colleagues in terms of what the cabinet's or the government's position on this question here.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: I don't believe I asked a hypothetical question. I'll ask it again. Did the Minister have the authority to publicly commit an additional 20 per cent to the 50 per cent already guaranteed? That's not hypothetical, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I will see if I can get the question here. Mr. Speaker, I'm not too sure if the Member was making reference to my quote on the CBC, on the radio that I did with CBC.

In terms of the authority, certainly the Minister has some authority based on recommendations from the department. The department and the Minister will talk. The Minister will make the decision. Basically, this is an issue that needed to go back for re-tendering of the work here. That's what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker: The time for question period has expired.

Item 9, written questions. 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. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills, Hon. Michael Miltenberger.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 4 MISCELLANEOUS STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 18, 2008, I will move that Bill 4, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008, be read for the first time.

BILL 5 AN ACT TO AMEND THE MAINTENANCE ORDERS ENFORCEMENT ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that on Monday, February 18, 2008, I will move that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, be read for the first time.

BILL 6 AN ACT TO AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I give notice that on Monday, February 18, 2008, I will move that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, be read for the first time.

BILL 7 SECURITIES ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Finally, I give notice that on Monday, February 18, 2008, I will move that Bill 7, Securities Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Item 17, motions. Mr. McLeod.

Motions

MOTION 2-16(2) HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE MOTION CARRIED

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 17 on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker: We are on item 17, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: We're on item 17? I apologize for that. I thought we were in first reading of bills. I'm way ahead of the rest of you.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Highway Maintenance Tender Packages CT100644 and CT100634 be produced and provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure for

review and analysis and that the Committee report its findings back to this House at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Mr. McLeod: I want to thank my colleagues from the committee for allowing me to do this. It was short notice, and I appreciate the show of support.

I asked to put this motion in because I have some concerns with how these tender packages rolled out. I had some questions that I posed to the minister.

We talked to contractors, and they let us know some of some of the practices that go on with the tendering processes. If this is the way we may have to go in the future — if it's a precedent-setting exercise — then maybe it's something we have to do. If we have concerns with tenders, then we can refer them to one of the Standing Committees for review and report the findings back to the House. I think that's something we should look at.

I just had so many questions, and I felt I wasn't being given the answers I deserved. I had questions on how it rolled out and why it was cancelled. I'm still not convinced. I was given numbers that I didn't think added up.

That's why I thought I'd use this opportunity to bring this motion forward. Again, I appreciate committee's support. This is something we may have to look at doing in the future if we have concerns with how contracts are administered.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 18, first reading of bills.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 1 INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008-2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: I move, seconded by the Hon. Member from Deh Cho, that Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 19, second reading of bills. Hon. Premier.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1 INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008-2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: I move, seconded by the Hon. Member from Deh Cho, that Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the government of the Northwest Territories to make interim appropriations for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, had had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion carried; Bill 1 read a second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker: Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2) and Bill 1 with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2), and Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009. What is the wish of the committee, Mrs. Groenewegen?

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, your committee would like to consider Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, in Committee of the Whole today.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Is the committee agreed?

Some honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. We'll take a short break, and we will begin with Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order.

BILL 1 INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008-2009

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Prior to the break we decided to have the opening comments with regard to Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009. So

with that, I'd like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, requests authority for appropriations of \$381.275 million for operational expenditures and \$110.291 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2008-09 fiscal year.

This interim budget provides the necessary resources for the G.N.W.T. to operate for the first three months of the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The 2008-2009 main estimates will be presented during the May-June 2008 sitting of the Legislative Assembly and will include funding for the entire 2008-09 fiscal year.

The interim appropriation provides for only a portion of the full-year requirements for operational expenditures. The capital investment expenditures amount reflects the full-year requirements for those projects currently in construction or those projects that will need to be tendered at the start of the 2008-09 fiscal year in order to avoid construction delays.

The \$381.275 million in operational expenditures represents 33 per cent of the total expenditures included in the 2007-08 main estimates. A number of departments are requesting funding that exceeds the average 33 per cent due to operational requirements and the need to put in place contracts for specific work at the beginning of a fiscal year. These departments include:

- 1) The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) requests an appropriation of \$58.79 million, or 52 per cent of the 2007-08 main estimates amount, as MACA provides funding up front for regional operations in the first quarter of each fiscal year. This primarily represents the funding for community infrastructure contributions totalling \$33.6 million, and contributions for community operations totalling \$12.4 million.
- 2) The Department of Environment and Natural Resources requests an appropriation of \$27.2 million, or 49 per cent of the 2007-08 main estimates appropriation. At the beginning of the fiscal year, in anticipation that the fire season will start in early summer, the department puts in place contracts for fire suppression estimated at \$11.5 million.
- 3) The Department of Public Works and Services requests an appropriation of \$20.25 million, or approximately 42 per cent of the 2007-08 main estimates appropriation. The department puts in place as-and-when contracts for building maintenance for the full year at the start of the fiscal year.

- 4) The Department of Finance is requesting \$4.2 million, or 37 per cent of the 2007-08 main estimates appropriation in part to cover the costs of insurance and the contractual obligations put in place on behalf of the G.N.W.T. at the beginning of the fiscal year.
- 5) The Financial Management Board Secretariat is requesting \$20.5 million, or 29 per cent of the 2007-08 main estimates appropriation — \$15.3 million of this amount is for the operating contribution to the NWT Housing Corporation.

As directed, departments were required to develop their 2008-09 interim appropriation requirements using the following parameters:

- 1) Funding is to be included only for the seven pay periods that fall within the time frame of the interim appropriation.
- 2) Contribution funding is only to be included for those recipients that require the funding within the time frame of the interim appropriation.
- 3) Other expenses should only include the minimum requirement during the interim time frame. However, where it is absolutely necessary to enter into contracts for the full year, the full-year requirements have been included.

The interim operations expenditures appropriation does not include any new funding that has not been approved by the Legislative Assembly.

Due to the nature of capital projects, in particular the logistics of planning for labour and materials, as well as the need to complete a project once construction has begun, it was decided that the full-year requirements of the preliminary Capital Acquisition Plan would be presented as part of the interim appropriation.

The \$110.291 million in capital investment expenditures represents a 4.7 per cent increase from the 2007-08 capital plan.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I am prepared to review the details of the interim appropriation document and answer any questions Members may have.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I move that we report progress.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009. I'm glad to report progress.

Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

Mr. Speaker: Do we have a seconder? Mr. Beaulieu.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. Hon. Premier.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 2 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT NO. 3, 2007-2008

Hon. Floyd Roland: I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, be read for the third time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 2 read a third time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 23, Orders of the Day, Mr. Clerk.

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee in Committee Room A at the rise of the House today.

Orders of the Day

Orders of the Day for Friday, February 15, 2008, at 10:00 a.m.:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Returns to Oral Questions
- 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 6) Acknowledgements
- 7) Oral Questions
- 8) Written Questions
- 9) Returns to Written Questions
- 10) Replies to Opening Address

- 11) Petitions
- 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
- 18) First Reading of Bills
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

MS 1-16(2): Sessional Statement

MS 9-16(2): Public Housing Rental Subsidy Survey Results and Plans for the Future

Bill 1: Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009

21) Report of Committee of the Whole

22) Third Reading of Bills

23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 15, 2008, at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

