



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Wednesday, February 20, 2008**

Members Present

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, 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 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Before we go to Orders of the Day, I would like to reply to the point of order raised in this House on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, by the Hon. Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Miltenberger cited rule 23(k) and (m) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly* as well as the parliamentary convention of not making reference to persons who are not able to defend themselves in this Chamber.

The point of order was raised after Mr. Miltenberger's review of the unedited *Hansard* pertaining to the Member from Yellowknife Centre's statement and oral questions made in the House on Monday, February 18, 2008.

Mr. Miltenberger specifically referenced Mr. Hawkins's comments regarding the community of Fort Smith as well as the tone of the comments and the use of what Mr. Miltenberger identified as inaccurate, sweeping generalizations. Mr. Miltenberger also objected to Mr. Hawkins's reference to individuals not able to defend themselves in this Chamber.

I invited debate on the point of order, and Mr. Hawkins rose to clarify his comments, citing *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* regarding the tone and intent of Members' comments. Mr. Hawkins also questioned whether the point of order had been raised at the earliest possible opportunity.

I reserved my decision to a later date, allowing for review of unedited *Hansard* and of the rules and authorities governing this Assembly.

To address Mr. Hawkins's argument with regard to the timing of the point of order, I find the matter was raised by Mr. Miltenberger at the earliest opportunity. It is the practice of the House to allow Members an opportunity to review the unedited *Hansard* and raise a point of order regarding unparliamentary language at the commencement of the next day's proceedings.

I will now address the practice regarding reference to individuals not present in the House. In reviewing Mr. Hawkins's remarks in the unedited *Hansard* and considering the tone and intent of the Member, I find no evidence of intent to slander or slur, directly or indirectly, an individual not present in the House.

Mr. Hawkins stated: "I questioned the independence of a review conducted internally by a senior member embedded within an organization." I accept Mr. Hawkins's explanation that he was attempting to illustrate a point of argument. I find no point of order in this instance.

I will move now to the rules of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Miltenberger cited rule 23(k) regarding the use of abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder, and rule 23(m) regarding introduction of a matter into debate that offends the practices and precedents of this Assembly.

Notwithstanding Mr. Miltenberger's reference to the rules of the Assembly, I also took into consideration the language Mr. Hawkins used and referred to Marlowe and Monpetit, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. I quote from page 526:

"In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary the following day."

It is always difficult to evaluate the context or intent of words spoken by a Member. After careful review of Mr. Hawkins's comments as set out in the

unedited *Hansard* from February 18, 2008, as well as his remarks during debate on the point of order, I conclude that there was no point of order.

I would, however, like to take this opportunity to caution Members with regard to the statements they make in this House. While the particular statement or question may not strictly contravene our rules or constitute unparliamentary language, they often have other unintended consequences.

All Members of this House are protected by parliamentary privilege when they rise to speak. This is a fundamental right and immunity enjoyed by all parliamentarians in modern democracies. The onus is on each of us, individually, to exercise restraint with responsibility, wisdom and sensitivity to the impact our words may have on the people and communities that we all represent. Thank you, Members.

Item 2, ministers' statements, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 21-16(2) 2008 N.W.T. OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARDS PROGRAM

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that nominations are being sought for the 2008 N.W.T. Outstanding Volunteer Awards. This program was developed in 1991 as a way to celebrate outstanding volunteers in the Northwest Territories and to highlight the importance of volunteers to Northwest Territories residents.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, in partnership with Volunteer NWT, is pleased to support this important initiative and jointly invite all residents to nominate that special volunteer in their community.

Volunteers are the key building blocks of healthy communities and have a strong tradition in the North. A recent survey showed that more than half of Northwest Territories residents aged 15 and over take part in volunteer activity.

We need to take action to ensure the volunteer sector stays strong. We know that volunteer organizations in the North have had a hard time recruiting and retaining volunteers. With an aging population, that number of active volunteers is declining.

One way to promote volunteerism is to recognize and honour the efforts of those who contribute to our communities. There are four categories of individuals or groups that can be nominated. The four categories are for individual, elder, youth or group nominations. A single nomination form can be used for all categories. The form is available at

all community government offices or through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Once the date for nominations is closed, a selection committee comprised of representatives from each region reviews them against a range of criteria. The winners will be announced at a special ceremony scheduled to be held during National Volunteer Week, which this year is the week of April 27 to May 3.

It's amazing to see the quality of nominations the department historically receives for these awards. The individuals and groups nominated are from a wide range of backgrounds, and they all share a common trait: they are people who give their time and energy to communities to improve the quality of life for all residents.

People who volunteer are not looking for recognition. The nominees are pleasantly surprised when selected and usually say that there are many others who deserve to be recognized.

The N.W.T. Outstanding Volunteer Awards recognize these tireless community builders and encourage others to follow in their footsteps. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 22-16(2) DRIVE ALIVE! — REACHING OUR YOUTH

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, on November 30, 2007, I announced the launch of the Department of Transportation's safety awareness program, *Drive Alive!* This new program is intended to enhance ongoing safety awareness efforts to significantly reduce the number of collisions, injuries and fatalities on our roads, trails and waterways.

Mr. Speaker, safety is our top priority. We are deeply saddened when we hear of tragic accidents, especially those involving our youth. Accidents must be prevented. When a snowmobile, vehicle or boating accident injures or takes the life of one of our young people, it is devastating to everyone. Unfortunately, many of these tragedies could have been prevented by encouraging residents to make safer choices when moving around the Northwest Territories.

The department will be working with its *Drive Alive!* partners throughout the Territory and across all modes of transport to seek every opportunity to raise transportation safety awareness.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation's web site now has a page for young people, providing them with resources and information to help them make safer choices. This initiative is aimed to reach out to young people in every community and to help encourage a more safety-minded future generation.

To help launch this new youth page, *Drive Alive!* is sponsoring a writing contest open to young people in the Northwest Territories from grades 4 through 8. Each entrant will be asked to write about what they can do to keep their families safe on our highways, trails, lakes, rivers and while venturing out on the Beaufort Sea.

We will be posting the winners from each grade level on our web site and in a future publication aimed at young people. Each winner's school will receive \$300 to help their school celebrate this achievement. The contest closes on April 30, and I will announce the winners on May 30.

Mr. Speaker, additional information on the *Drive Alive!* writing contest can be found on the department's web site. I trust that all Members will encourage their young constituents to enter this contest.

Our youth are our future, Mr. Speaker. We must continue to encourage them to develop safe and healthy habits to reach their full potential. Mahsi cho.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 23-16(2)
FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL
MINISTERS' MEETING:
YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, last week I met with my federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss the upcoming review of the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the proposed amendments currently before Parliament. This federal law applies when a young person aged 12–17 is alleged to have committed a crime.

The act is intended to promote the long-term protection of society. It does this by addressing young offenders' underlying issues that contribute to offending behaviour. It is intended to rehabilitate young persons and reintegrate them into society and provides meaningful consequences for their offences.

Although the act successfully manages the majority of youth in conflict with the law, there is growing concern in all parts of Canada that it is unable to address the needs of some violent youth and repeat youth offenders.

The federal government has announced that a full review of the act will begin this year. My colleagues and I agree that while we recognize that the act works appropriately for a majority of youth offenders, there is significant concern that makes a review both timely and necessary.

For some time provinces and territories have recommended changes to permit greater ability for courts to order pretrial detention. Specifically, we believe we need a new way to deal with youth who

commit multiple non-violent offences, such as repeated snowmobile thefts.

My counterparts and I have been concerned that the federal government's proposed amendments do not go far enough to allow out-of-control youth to be detained before their trials. Here in the Northwest Territories several community leaders have contacted me to say that the Youth Criminal Justice Act needs to be more flexible to meet the needs of all of our youth. It works well in most cases, but we need to be able to deal with out-of-control teenagers in a better way.

I am pleased that the federal government took the opportunity to hear from all jurisdictions on these important topics. They heard that the changes to the act that they have proposed in Bill C-25 missed the mark. The federal government has indicated that they may consider amendments to this bill to better respond to provincial and territorial concerns. They acknowledged the importance of partnerships in the delivery of youth justice and are listening to our priorities.

While the details of the review of the Youth Criminal Justice Act have yet to be announced, I am certain that last week's early discussions will inform the federal government's decisions on priorities and how to proceed.

I plan to remain actively engaged in this review as it moves forward so that the views and perspectives of the N.W.T. are well represented and any changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act respond to the needs of our communities and our youth. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Item 3, members' statements.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak today about the reduction and reinvestment exercise currently being undertaken by the government.

The Premier has said that this is a new way of doing business, and indeed it is. I agree with the government taking a look at spending. As I've said, our current spending levels are not sustainable, and something needs to happen.

Whether, in fact, this is the right approach is debatable. What I am having difficulty with is how the government is entering into this whole reduction and reinvestment scheme without getting a baseline or an analysis done of information first and then thinking about what the possible ramifications of decisions will be.

I'm not sure that the Premier and the government are even aware that public comments made about reductions and job loss not only negatively affect their own public service but also have a ripple effect throughout our entire economy. Based on the average family size of 3.5 people, with every employee who would leave the Northwest Territories, we'd lose \$65,000 in transfer payments.

There is a real sense of uneasiness — especially here in Yellowknife — such as I haven't seen since the mid-'90s when the gold mines were closing down, and as I'm sure there is in other communities across the Northwest Territories that have large numbers of public servants.

This government seems to lack the sense to understand that loose communications, poor messaging and lack of coordination is going to have negative impacts on small businesses, on the housing markets, and on our ability to attract employees.

Has the government thought about the negative impact to our economy? We should have gone out and done a thorough analysis that a zero-based budgeting exercise would have given us. Then we would have some solid information on which to base our decisions.

We did not need to panic the public service. We did not need to disrupt our economy.

I'd be interested to know whether this government enlisted the services of our relatively new macroeconomic policy shop in the Department of Finance to try to better understand what impacts would be made by the decisions that they are making.

Based on my knowledge of how government works, if we cut \$135 million and reinvest \$75 million, it would seem that it would only take us three years to be back in the same fiscal position that we're in today.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Ramsay: Again I would say that it would only take us three years to be back in the same fiscal situation that we find ourselves in today.

I question the logic of causing so much pain and agony when there was a need to base our decisions on solid data, not what departments are willing to sacrifice. How exactly will this plan leave Members three and a half years from now in the 17th Assembly? Mahsi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING POLICY

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, with this being Education Week, I, along with several of my colleagues, would like to acknowledge the educators of our Territory. In particular, I would like to recognize those who invest their skills and energy to educate the students of Hay River.

These weeks set aside to recognize specific professions are a good idea. However, if we are to truly respect and recognize our teachers, we could most sincerely do that by ensuring that our schools and their staff are adequately resourced to make the most positive impact possible in the education tasks of our children.

To that end, I would like to draw particular attention to the issue of inclusive schooling. The intent of inclusive schooling is a noble notion. It is premised on the model that children of all learning capacities should be educated in the same classroom.

However, when children with very special needs are integrated into the classroom without the necessary support of special needs and classroom assistants, the consequences do not serve anyone's interest, let alone the child with the special needs. Far too often this dynamic of being under-resourced places untenable stress on the teacher, denies children who may be gifted, as well as the mainstream learners and, most importantly, is a disservice to the students with special needs.

It's easy as a government to pay lip service to our educators during Education Week. But let's give them the real support they need every day in their classrooms to educate our children. We should be looking at strengthening our commitment of resources to education. And it should most definitely be off limits for any reduction considerations as we proceed with that debate in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CHIEF JOHNNY D. CHARLIE MEMORIAL SNOWMOBILE TRIP

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the 10th anniversary of the Chief Johnny Charlie Memorial Ski-doo Trek is coming up on March 26–31, 2008. The family of the late Johnny D. Charlie would like to invite everyone to participate in the final run of the ski-doo trip, which is now in its tenth year, from Fort McPherson to Old Crow in the Yukon, some 300 miles.

Throughout his life Johnny D. Charlie made this trip a priority, first by dog team in his early days and later with snowmobiles. After his death in 1998, his family decided to continue making the trip in memory of their father. His family feels that it's important for them to keep in close contact and

communication with the relatives in Old Crow in the Yukon.

The whole intent of the trip when it first started in 1999 was to show many people the traditional route, which is taken over the Richardson Mountains, down the Porcupine River, and over to Old Crow in the Yukon. It opened up the old traditional portage trails, and then they marked the trails, they cut out the trails and, more importantly, they included the youth to take part in this activity so they, in the future, will know the route between Fort McPherson and Old Crow in the Yukon.

Finally, Johnny Charlie wanted to ensure, like many of our chiefs before him, that the Teetlit Gwich'in of Fort McPherson and the Vuntut Gwich'in of Old Crow in the Yukon stayed united by having the opportunity to continue a practice that's been in place for hundreds of years as people move back and forth between communities.

Mr. Speaker, the final run will happen on March 26 to 31. Again, everyone is invited.

Since the beginning of time aboriginal people across the North survived in this cold, harsh environment and also by following the caribou for their food source and also practising traditional cultures and values and ensuring that they are connected with extended families in other parts throughout the Northwest Territories. At the end of the winter season, spring would come, and then they'd continue to celebrate. Mr. Speaker, our people will continue on with this practice today with feasts, dances, and storytelling about what has happened in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I seek and ask to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Our people have continued to celebrate by way of feasts, dances and storytelling about their journeys during the past winter, and get together like they did for hundreds of years.

Yet we also continue to celebrate in the Mackenzie Delta at that time of year through different festivals that take place by way of the Mad Trapper Rendezvous in Aklavik, which is March 21–24, the Mackenzie River Jamboree in Tsiigehtchic, which will be April 4–6, and the Peel River Jamboree in Fort McPherson, which will take place April 18–20.

Again, Mr. Speaker, everyone's invited. Thank you very much.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO DAY CARE SPACES AND SUBSIDIES

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, when we're back home visiting and talking to people, they bring many issues to our attention. While on the campaign trail, we heard many issues.

One of the issues I heard from a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, was about day care subsidies and the lack of day care spaces. We have a lot of people out there, and I was talking to a couple. One is going to school and the other is working. And it was almost impossible and very expensive for them to keep their child in day care — almost \$900 per month per child. You don't get a discount for the second child.

We ask people out there to.... These people try to contribute to the N.W.T. They try and work. And we, unintentionally, send a lot of people the wrong message. Subsidies that we provide, I believe, are intended well. But we do, I believe, send a message sometimes that you are better off staying at home. We have heard it from a few people.

Subsidies were meant to help get these people back on their feet, not put their feet up and watch TV while other people are working, struggling with day care costs and having to come up with the money for day care.

I look at the money this government spends. These people are not asking you to pay the full amount. What they want is something that is equal, right across the board. These people pay their taxes. They pay into the system. All they are asking for is a bit of a break, some help, because they will continue to contribute because that is the way they are.

I see us spending money: \$235,000 we want to spend on an area at a correctional centre; we want to spend \$540,000 on a fence; I see \$4.5 million in contracts that are leaving the N.W.T. All this money could be used to help a lot of these folks with their day care subsidies. They are not asking for handouts, Mr. Speaker. They pay into the system, and they want the system to treat them fairly.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACT OF REDUCTIONS ON SOUTH SLAVE DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL

Mr. Beaulieu: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about recent discussions on government cutbacks and their potential impacts on operations on the South Slave District Education Council and the governing body for education for Lutsel'ê and Fort Resolution.

The council was established in 1991 to administer K-to-12 education systems for Fort Smith, Hay River, Katlodeeche First Nation, Lutselk'e, and Fort Resolution. Council serves eight schools, with a total student population of approximately 1,800. The council is comprised of one representative in each of the five community-based district education authorities.

Council's primary responsibility is to provide educational needs for students in the South Slave region. This involves determining the allocation of financial resources, monitoring, evaluating and reporting results to its stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the council is very concerned to hear of recent potential government cutbacks. Any reduction to school funding could offset priorities identified previously. The previous government committed to reducing teacher-student ratio to 14:1 — from currently 15:1 — over the next two years and increasing PE and trades' teaching positions. Any degree of cuts will have a detrimental effect on the council, the local district authority and, more importantly, the education of the students.

On areas to be examined for cutbacks and re-profiling, this government must make education a priority and remain committed to its previous commitment to the South Slave Divisional Education Council and ensure this Assembly's efforts to support youth are continued.

The council and their respective DEAs have shown good fiscal responsibility. In addition to this, the council's recently implemented numeracy and literacy initiatives addressing key identifiable needs are showing promising results. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the council needs continued support from this government to maximize results and build a better future for the N.W.T.

Later on today I will be asking questions of the Minister of Education.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, is the global day which connects women around the world and inspires them to achieve their full potential. International Women's Day celebrates the collective power of women past, present and future.

The first National Women's Day was observed in the United States on the 28th of February in 1909. It was the result of women's oppression and inequality, which spurred women on to become vocal and active in campaigning for change. In 1908, for example, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights.

Fast-forward to 1977, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on member states to proclaim a day for women's rights and international peace. Following the United Nations' lead, Canada declared March 8 as International Women's Day in Canada. On that day we honour the advancement of women while remembering the need for continued vigilance and action to ensure that women's equality is gained and maintained in all aspects of life. On March 8 we celebrate the women in our lives and in our communities.

Canada's theme for International Women's Day this year is "Strong Women, Strong World." The women in our communities have great strength. They are the caregivers, the educators and the healers. They are leaders and mothers of our leaders.

The N.W.T. theme for International Women's Day is "The Importance of Traditional Knowledge." And how important that knowledge is. It is our personal responsibility to listen to the words of wisdom that our mothers and grandmothers pass down to us. Someone said that when an elder passes away, it's like watching a library burn. We must not lose the wealth of knowledge that our women elders have to share. In two weeks' time, on March 8, talk to an elder or a wise woman in your community. We can learn lessons from these women that we cannot learn anywhere else. These lessons are not written down; they are oral traditions. They are the stories that teach us patience, tolerance and kindness, necessities in today's sometimes intolerant world.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 7, at noon here in the Great Hall, the Status of Women Council of the N.W.T. will hold their annual Bread 'n' Roses Luncheon to mark International Women's Day and to present the 2008 Wise Women Awards. Please attend and join in honouring the women of the North. When we empower women, we secure a brighter future for everyone. Thank you.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Speaker, earlier in the life of this Assembly I made a Member's statement concerning the voluntary sector in the N.W.T. The voluntary sector is essential to community wellness. Volunteers and voluntary groups, often referred to as non-government organizations, support the values and overall health of communities at large. In my previous Member's statement and follow-up questions to the Premier, I asked the Premier to improve the G.N.W.T.'s relationship with and financing of this sector.

A first step would be to designate a lead minister responsible for the voluntary sector, a minister responsible at the executive level, rather than putting the entire sector under the responsibility of a

department with a focused mandate such as Municipal and Community Affairs. The sector covers all areas of responsibility and is not limited to just sports and recreation. There is clearly a difference between volunteer development and the area of sports and recreation and dealing with government-wide policy and financing issues that cut across the sector as a whole.

When I asked him to designate a minister responsible for the sector, I received no commitment from the Premier. Since then, the Members of this Assembly have completed our strategic planning. In our strategic plan there is clear reference to supporting and strengthening the voluntary sector as a whole. The cabinet's response to the strategic plan also makes reference to supporting the voluntary sector, as did, although incredibly briefly, the Premier in his opening comments during the sitting of this Assembly.

In order for the voluntary sector and government to work more effectively together, the responsibility for entrenching and maintaining the relationship should rest in the executive. Other jurisdictions in Canada, such as Newfoundland and New Brunswick, have already adopted this approach.

A department dedicated to relationship building, located in a department such as MACA, even though they have a lead role in sports and recreation, will be less effective in reaching across the whole of government than the responsibility based in the central and executive location.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I'll be asking the Premier questions concerning the voluntary sector and will be seeking his commitment to dedicate a Minister at an executive or cross-government level to be the primary contact for relationship building and strategic planning with the voluntary sector as a whole. Thank you.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I also want to highlight the volunteer sector. It seems to be the day on both sides of the House for volunteers, the people who work in community groups and agencies and the volunteers who give their time to keep our communities healthy, vibrant and safe.

The voluntary sector is a key component that will make this government's preventative and fiscally responsible approach work. The voluntary sector includes community groups that provide services dealing with poverty, substance abuse, family violence, homelessness, art, youth justice and the environment. They work on prevention of social issues and on skill development such as literacy, land skills and social communication.

Volunteer groups provide information about environmental issues to help us build a sustainable North, and they work hard at organizing sports and recreation events, as with the 20th Arctic Winter Games, soon to take place. Volunteer groups lead us in celebrations, music festivals, arts exhibits, cultural events and spring jamborees across the N.W.T., which help to build community and remind us of our collective joyous spirit. The sector helps us help each other. Volunteer groups have an ear to the ground in our communities, and they often understand ahead of government what the needs are to keep us safe and vibrant.

This government contributes millions of dollars to front-line volunteer groups yet offers very little directed support to help ensure maximum returns on this investment. Acknowledging this, we adopted the Volunteer Support Initiative in 2005, but we have yet to provide the necessary funds to really implement it. I want to recognize that with the loss of federal support, we did step up to provide emergency funding.

However, in recognizing the volunteer sector as one of this government's most important partners, I urge this House to fully implement the N.W.T. Volunteer Support Initiative, confirm multi-year funding to provide certainty and efficiencies, identify a high-level single point of contact and communication, and work with Volunteer NWT to make a difference.

As we have recognized in our goals, it is through partnerships that our government can move forward in times of fiscal restraint. The voluntary sector can work with this government, business and our residents to achieve sustainable, vibrant and safe communities and the goals of the 16th Assembly. Mahsi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL SERVICES IN NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

Mr. Jacobson: On February 15, I received notice as the MLA for Nunakput that there will be no doctor visits in the communities of Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour. In the months of February and March of '08 in my home community of Tuktoyaktuk there will be one doctor's visit on March 14.

Mr. Speaker, as a former mayor of Tuktoyaktuk I'm used to getting these letters every time there's a shortage of doctors in Inuvik Hospital. I'm consistently amazed with the professionalism and the compassion shown by Dr. deKlerk and his team. They do the best they can to meet the medical needs of the communities of the Beaufort-Delta. However, there's also a need to maintain operational capabilities in Inuvik Hospital,

and sometimes these competing interests collide and the hospital wins.

I have also heard that there are video telehealth units that are not being used and are still in boxes in the communities. They need to be operational so that doctors and nurses can try to keep patients in their communities and not increase medevac costs, which are a consequence of not having regular doctor visits.

Mr. Speaker, there needs to be a concentrated effort in encouraging doctors to move to Inuvik. Incentives, job sharing, increased training opportunities and even more pay should all be considered. Managing a person's health through regular contact and follow-up in their home communities lowers the overall cost of health care in the system and justifies additional costs in recruiting and retaining doctors.

In closing, I'd like to thank all the nurses and doctors, both long-term and those just filling in, for their dedication to the health and well-being of the constituents of Nunakput. I will have questions at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLOSURE OF THE DEH CHO HALL

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, in November I raised the issue of the impact that the closure of the Deh Cho Hall will have on several key non-government organizations in Fort Simpson. The government's decision to move its own offices rather than upgrade Deh Cho Hall has left the library, the family resource centre and other local organizations scrambling to find new space. At the time, I asked the Minister of Education to take a proactive approach and organize discussions with the community to help identify alternate space for these valuable organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister did commit to work with the community to establish a transition plan. Regretfully, that has not happened yet, and the clock is ticking for these groups. They still have nowhere to go, and there is a real sense of urgency in resolving this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard time and time again the challenges NGOs face in finding affordable spaces. I believe the government needs to show some goodwill and be willing to work with the community to help identify alternate space for these valuable organizations. I would urge the Minister to live up to his commitment and meet with the community as soon as possible to ensure that suitable arrangements can be made.

I will be asking the Minister questions about the status and the updates on this issue. Mahsi cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONTRACTS FOR WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about perceived fairness or, I should say, the lack thereof in a recent awarding of a bundled contract of five water treatment plants by the Department of MACA.

An unsuccessful bidder who has documented a number of strange coincidences has contacted me. What they have noted would lead any reasonable person to question whether this was an actual RFP or merely an exercise to ensure that MACA's preferred contractor was awarded these contracts.

A brief background. MACA realized that the escalating cost might mean delaying some of the five water treatment plants on their capital plan. To their credit, MACA started looking at an innovative solution to ensure that all five water plants were examined so they could be built with one design and by one contractor. So, Mr. Speaker, a good approach from MACA.

I'm sure you're asking: who is the perceived contractor? To do this, they hired a southern Canada firm, from Abbotsford, B.C., to be exact, and they had determined the work could be done. This same firm presented to the five communities a preferred solution and approach in the presentation made by MACA in April of 2007. Mr. Speaker, this sad sonnet will continue with this firm; you'll hear more about it later.

After an expression of interest in August 2007 two contracting groups qualified to respond to the request for proposal issued and finalized in November 2007. The unsuccessful consortium, both well-known and respected Northern-based firms with decades of experience in the North, and after spending a considerable amount of time, money and investment, were advised that their proposal could have been stronger for the case in the areas of operations, warranty options and support options. Mr. Speaker, how local do you have to get?

This leads me to believe that the cost of this competition was not the problem. Here we have a southern contractor — they're back again, Mr. Speaker — who defines the feasibility of the scope of the project, works closely with MACA on the project and may, for all I know, have assisted in the design of the parameters of this contract being awarded to them.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, did anyone from MACA phone the unsuccessful proponent to clarify these areas of concern, that we had a southern-based contractor working with these communities on individual contracts? And by the way, they may even be involved in the contract RFP call. Who knows? Probably the answer is no.

The concerns are related to this process, Mr. Speaker, and they indeed deserve an explanation.

The fact is that this Northern company, this Northern consortium, wouldn't reconsider even bothering to respond to this request for proposal, knowing very well the fact that this southern company from Abbotsford, B.C., was involved early on in this project.

Mr. Speaker: Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Speaker: Members, I would like to draw your attention today to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Stephen Dunbar, a resident of the Northwest Territories currently attending Carleton University in Ottawa as a graduate student in the department of political science. Mr. Dunbar's master's thesis project is on consensus government. As part of his research he hopes to conduct interviews with as many of you as possible. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Dunbar to the Assembly today.

Applause.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize four distinct individuals here in the audience. It's as part of the Corrections awards that they were recognized this afternoon. I'd like to recognize, first of all, Anthony Beck on receiving the Lifesaving Award; Mr. Gordie Oystrek for receiving the Corrections Exemplary Service Award; Mr. Paul Pearce, also for the Corrections Exemplary Service Award; and last but not least, Mr. Quinn Groenehyde, also with Corrections Exemplary Service Award.

Hon. Bob McLeod: I too would like to recognize Gord and Jessie Oystrek, constituents from Yellowknife South. Also, I'd like to recognize Father Joe Daley from St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church here in Yellowknife. Also, Joe Constreau, the federal representative in Yellowknife.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today as well to recognize my constituents from Hay River South: deputy warden of the SMCC, Quinn Groenehyde, who received the Corrections Exemplary Service Award; and his wife, Jenny, who is an educator in Hay River.

Also, as Minister Lafferty said, Correctional Officer Anthony Beck, who has today received a lifesaving award, and his wife, Lynn Beck, who is also an educator in Hay River. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Hawkins: I too wish to pass along a welcome and recognition to Quinn Groenehyde. I remember when I first moved here to Yellowknife. He taught us basketball as well as many other things. My compliments go to him.

Mr. Paul Pearce — I worked with him at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. He's a good mentor out there. I want to pass special recognition to him.

Mr. Gord Oystrek, a training officer there — he taught us a lot of things in safety. It seems to me that every time he worked harder on us, he smiled as we screamed out in pain.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to all of those, and congratulations on their Corrections Exemplary Service Awards today.

Mr. Menicoche: I'd like to recognize in the gallery my Constituency Assistant from Fort Simpson, Ms. Janice Mandeville.

As well, I'd like to recognize a former Fort Simpson and Deh Cho resident, Father Joe Daley. Mahsi cho.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to send congratulations to all the correctional officers in particular. There are many people in the gallery, and I don't want to recognize anybody twice.

I just want to recognize Mr. Walter Orr, who is a constituent of mine and an engineer with Ferguson Simek Clark.

Mr. Speaker: If we have 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 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions, Mr. Hawkins.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 116-16(2) CONTRACTS FOR WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I raise concerns today about the transparency and fairness of the recent awarding of a bundled contract for five water treatment plants to a consortium led by a southern contractor, the Abbotsford, B.C., group that I talked about. It has brought concern and attention to this process that need to be dealt with.

Can the Minister of MACA outline for this Assembly the involvement of this southern contractor's services in supplying and developing the design of the water treatment plant process, and potentially even in the awarding of the contract?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I need more clarity on which project he's referring to. We haven't awarded any contracts for bundled water plants as of yet.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from Municipal and Community Affairs that says to the Northern firm, the one group from the North that applied on this RFP to do this proposal. They were told that they didn't get it. That only leads to the assumption — or I should say, the obvious position — that the southern firm must have been awarded the project, because we only had two groups applying for it. The Northern one didn't get it; the southern did. What was their involvement?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to repeat my answer. There was no contract awarded. We are still in negotiations. I can't respond to the Member's question.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, let's put it this way. The Minister may be technically right, but when you tell one group, "You didn't get it," that means the other group did get it. If you're still in negotiations with them....

What involvement did this group have, going back to the original work they had done — this southern company from Abbotsford — with the communities and MACA in preparing for this water treatment process bundled contract? In what process did they have involvement?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, this is a competitive procurement process that we have embarked on. The Member is asking questions for the details on the company that's bidding. At this time, I don't feel it's appropriate to answer that.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, at least now we're on the same page on this whole issue. We're talking about the group that the Minister doesn't want to talk about.

To further clarify, I'd like the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to agree to go back and look at the situation, because the southern contractor from Abbotsford, B.C., did a fair bit of work on these water treatment plants — and the potential proposal that came forward, that they bid on — and they are in negotiations right now and receiving.... Would he go back and review this file to make sure that everything was on the up-and-up, that they did not have an unfair advantage by

building the proposal and then bidding on it and then subsequently getting it? Thank you.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, maybe we're not on the same page. We haven't issued a contract yet. We certainly agree to go back and review it once we decide if there's going to be a contract issued. With no contract yet issued, it would be a worthless exercise.

QUESTION 117-16(2)
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I've got some questions again today for the Minister of Human Resources.

The first question is: are micromanagement, retribution and dictatorial leadership effective ways of leading healthy and functional organizations or departments?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what kind of threats he's referring to, but I normally think that threats are probably not appropriate in any circumstances.

Mr. Ramsay: Yes, the Department of Human Resources is what I'm referring to. I'm wondering: are random searches of staff offices, monitoring of e-mail, excessive use of discipline and fear of reprisal for acting in the best interests of clients and of the public effective ways to motivate and increase the productivity in that department?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, as I tried to explain yesterday, we are not undertaking random searches of people's offices. We have a backlog of work that has been carried over from previous departments, and we've been working very hard to eliminate this backlog. Because of the fact that we have very limited resources, we have to work on weekends. We have a backlog team, whose only time they can work to reduce the backlog is on weekends. Not everybody works on weekends, so we have to be able to go into offices to get files that we need to clear up the backlog.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, all of the items I've listed here in my previous questions are the realities that exist today in the Department of Human Resources. All of the MLAs on this side of the House, or most of them, have received disturbing stories from constituents on the realities of working at or receiving services from the Department of Human Resources.

Is the Minister of Human Resources aware of the realities within the Department of Human Resources and the concerns of staff and the public?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that when you're processing 7,000 cheques every two

weeks, you'll have some complaints. I am aware that there were over 2,000 final pays that were carried over from the previous government under the old system of decentralized human resources, and I am aware that we've reduced that backlog by 50 per cent. Most of the complaints that are coming in are from ex-employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: I guess they didn't want to work there either, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Human Resources should be the example to which all departments are compared. They should be the most transparent with respect to the application of human resources policies and procedures. After all, they're the ones who provide HR advice to all departments, boards and agencies of the G.N.W.T. Clearly there's a lack of confidence among the public and the public service that the Department of HR is living up to this standard. The inadequacies within the department....

Mr. Speaker: Do you have a question, Mr. Ramsay?

Mr. Ramsay: Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, what immediate actions will you be taking to improve the morale and the overall functionality and credibility of the Department of Human Resources?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the department as well as the Member that Human Resources is not the only department that is responsible for the morale of the Territorial public service. The managers in all departments are responsible for managing their employees. Human Resources is a service department. We provide services to the Government of the Northwest Territories and to the managers.

QUESTION 118-16(2)
SUPPORT TO SOUTH SLAVE DISTRICT
EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, today I talked about the South Slave District Education Council, which had concerns over recent discussions of potential cutbacks and the need to reaffirm this government's support. Will the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment honour the commitment to increase funding for special-needs support, trades and physical education instruction by reducing the PTR from 15:1 to 14:1 in the South Slave regional school?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi. Mr. Speaker, the G.N.W.T. is in the process of making a decision with respect to supporting the 16th Assembly's

priorities and planning and the proposed budget that will be brought forward here in the spring.

Supporting the education of our youth is our top priority, Mr. Speaker. We do have a decision that is coming down on us that will involve the Members as well. We will be making a decision in terms of how we invest in our youth and also the schools at the community level. That will be one of our priorities that we continue to support. Mahsi.

Mr. Beaulieu: I thank the Minister for that response. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to improving funding for small outlying communities so that these communities will have adequate opportunity to provide basic quality high school programming for properly preparing students for both functional grade level and Alberta achievement tests?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, one of the goals and priorities of our department is to support the programs that we have with the schools and with the community. Yes, we will continue to support those areas.

Reiterating that, one of the priorities of the government is to look after the youth — the children of our communities — so we will take those into consideration as well. Mahsi.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Speaker, there is potential for saving the result of the G.N.W.T. reduction in spending that could allow for re-profiling of important educational priorities such as literacy and numeracy.

Can the Minister confirm that there will be no G.N.W.T. funding cuts to South Slave schools?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's commitment in this particular area, as it is a high interest in the communities. We have already received correspondence from the communities saying that education should not be cut from the budget.

Those are decisions that still need to be made, and we will certainly take those into consideration — the concerns and the issues that were highlighted here. It is one of the priority areas for this 16th Assembly government, so we will continue to push that forward as a priority item. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: A challenge for many smaller communities is teacher retention. Teacher turnover is high in small outlying communities, resulting in interrupted improvement efforts. Within the schools, the Decha school has frequently had no choice but to limit the recruitment efforts to teaching couples only due to a lack of housing.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to visiting my communities along with the superintendent of the South Slave district council to meet with me and the community to address the community's ability to recruit and retain staff?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, certainly I am more than willing to visit the communities in the Member's riding. We did make some arrangements to go to the communities sometime after session. I am committed to that.

The issue that he has highlighted — the recruitment process — is another area that we are focussing on as a department, working along with the NWT Housing Corporation, whether it be housing issues or the recruitment area. We are fully aware of it. In our department, one of our goals is to develop plans to deal with it. Mahsi.

QUESTION 119-16(2)
DOCTOR SHORTAGES IN THE
BEAUFORT-DELTA REGION

Mr. Jacobson: In my Member's statement today I made reference to impacts of the doctor shortage in Inuvik and the delivery of community clinics on my constituents. There are costs of both financially in terms of residents' continued health and well-being to justify greater recruitment and effort on the part of the Health and Social Services Department and Human Resources.

Can the Minister please outline if there any extra considerations for doctors who may wish to practice in the Beaufort-Delta.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing a very unusual situation, even within the environment of pressures we normally feel, in terms of shortages of health care professionals.

We are short of four doctors in Nunakput, and it's because two of them.... Well, we normally have about eight, and we're funded for nine. But we're operating with about five, because two doctors have left to practise elsewhere and two are currently on leave.

So the Beaufort-Delta authority has made a choice of something that they've never done before, which is to not be able to have doctors visit the communities. We're looking for locums to fill these positions as soon as possible. We're hoping to have the full complement by the end of March.

Mr. Jacobson: Has the government considered talking to the N.W.T. Medical Association about getting their agreement on the increased pay and benefit package for those doctors who'd be willing to live in the communities outside Yellowknife?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, as the House is aware, there are currently negotiations going on between the doctors and the government, so I have to refrain from commenting on anything like that. But I could advise the Member, Mr. Speaker, this is not really.... This is an unusual circumstance, where we are operating with about half of the normal complement of doctors. It is a situation which we are working to fix.

In the general term and in the long term, the department continues to work to improve our packages and our working conditions and training opportunities and everything else to make this place an attractive place for health care professionals, including doctors in rural areas.

Mr. Jacobson: Is the Minister aware of any telehealth terminals in any communities — the health centres — that are not operational?

Hon. Sandy Lee: The telehealth program is in the process of being expanded. In Nunakput, we have services available, and in Inuvik, Ulukhaktok, and I believe we put a new one in Tuktoyaktuk. There's a lot of services being rendered through the telehealth system. However, we hope to expand those services as well.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the department getting the telehealth program up and running in the communities that are capable of doing it.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. I didn't hear a question there.

QUESTION 120-16(2)
CONTRACT FOR AKLAVIK
WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to respond to comments in regard to water treatment contracts that are out there, because personally, I've been waiting two years to get a water treatment plant in Aklavik. We have health hazards in that community by way of high numbers of stomach cancer in that community. I think, as a government, we're responsible to ensure the public health and well-being of our people are taken care of.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of MACA in regard to water treatment for Aklavik. It's been well over two years. We were promised two years ago that we were going to get this plant in place. It's still not there.

I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it not on the ground, and exactly how soon can we get it into the community so we can deal with these health concerns in those communities?

Hon. Michael McLeod: The Member is right. There have been a number of challenges getting water taps put in, in a number — I think eight — of our communities. We looked at different ways to try to accommodate the communities by saving some costs or trying to have our projects fit within what we have in our budgets.

We wanted to look at a new process. And we've looked at a process which we refer to as the vertical integration of this project, which would include covering all aspects of delivering water plants, including the shipping, design, assembly, warranty and potentially even operating support.

It's been a long process. We had initially wanted to come forward last year, but we didn't get approval to do so. It has, first of all, gone through the request for qualifications and has been tendered out, or a request for proposals has gone out, and that process is ongoing. We hope to have that concluded, hopefully, with a positive conclusion. That will remain to be seen, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the hamlet of Aklavik and myself fully support the efforts of MACA in trying to deal with this problem. We know that it's a cost issue, but again, we have health concerns in our communities. We need to address the water problems in these communities.

So again, I'd like to ask the Minister: do you have any time frames on when we can see construction beginning in these communities?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I guess we have to give a two-part answer to that. If things don't pan out the way we anticipated or if we don't have a positive outcome in the final stages of our request for proposals, we may have to go back to the drawing board. But if everything goes well and it ends up that a contract is awarded, we'll have that proceed this summer.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the health of the people of Aklavik is at risk here. There are high cases of stomach cancer in that community. It's been diagnosed through having to send a medical team in there to diagnose every resident of the community. And it's fully directed towards the water problem. I think, as this government realizes, that should be a top priority of this government. For someone in this House to stand up and say, "Delay, evaluate, assess the program and then come back with reasons," we can't afford that.

So I'd like to ask the Premier, along with the Minister, that this project be put on top of the list in light of the health issues in that community. People can wait and have projects delayed in their ridings or communities — have at her — but not in mine.

Hon. Michael McLeod: I don't think it's fair for the Member to state that the stomach cancer is a direct

result of our water. Our water's been tested. The *H. pylori* virus is of concern, of course, but the treatment through the current facility deals with that. The medical officer has indicated that it's not related to the water or the water plants.

Mr. Speaker, we do take water and water quality very seriously, and it's a high priority. We're doing everything we can to move that forward as fast as we can.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I won't argue with the Minister on this. I know what the *H. pylori* is all about, and I think there is that connection. So I think it's important, as a government, to deal with health versus infrastructure.

Again, it's crucial that this government does not fall back on the commitments they made to the community and to MLAs when it comes to capital projects for our ridings because of someone else's concern from some other riding.

I'd just like to get some assurance from this government that they're not going to backtrack on the commitment that's been given to the people of my riding — especially the people of Aklavik — and that this project will proceed.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to the Members, we made a commitment to the community leaders, and we made a commitment to the Members of this House.

Our process, we're very confident, is fair. Our process has the equivalent of a fairness commissioner. We have a review team and an independent evaluator. I think we've taken all the precautions we need to take and even gone further because of so many concerns raised. We include the Department of Justice; we include the Department of Health; we include the people from FMB, MACA, Public Works. So I'm very confident that there is a very fair process and everybody will agree, once we provide most of the details, should they wish to see that.

QUESTION 121-16(2) CLOSURE OF THE DEH CHO HALL

Mr. Menicoche: I just want to follow up on my Member's statement regarding transition times on the Deh Cho Hall in Fort Simpson.

I'd like to ask the Minister of EC&E: what work has been done to date with the non-government organizations that are using the Deh Cho Hall to help them with the transition planning, assisting them in finding new spaces in Fort Simpson. Mahsi.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member for asking that question,

because I did commit in the House that my department will follow up working with the community to remedy the issue of office space in the community for three different organizations. Since then, our department has been working with the organizations that have been highlighted here, with the Open Door Society and also the community library and heritage society.

We are making some progress in that area, Mr. Speaker, and there has been contact in the community. That's what we've been doing since our last session. We will continue to make that effort.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to advise the Minister that I've been getting contrary information from the people that run those organizations. There hasn't been a meeting set up, to date. As well, in some of the back-and-forth correspondence we've received.... I thought the intent here, too, was to appoint a contact person, a point of entry within the government that these NGOs can work with. To date, there's been no such person established or identified. I'd like to ask the Minister: will the Minister identify a contact person these NGOs can work with?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I made a commitment that my department will be working with the community of Fort Simpson, specifically with those three organizations. I will make a commitment here again today that my department, my deputy and also the Director of Education Operations and Development, as a person, will be going to the community of Fort Simpson sometime next March — probably early March — to deal with that particular issue.

So we are making progress, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, we will continue to work hard with the community to identify a solution with their help and with their input.

Mr. Menicoche: I'd just like to ask the Minister that I be kept in the loop as they progress forward with this issue. Let me know the times and dates they'll be in the community — proposed meeting dates. I'd like to have that information to share with those I deal with. Hopefully, they'll be dealing with the same people at that time. Mahsi.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, it is important to keep our Members informed of our progress, so I certainly will provide what information I have to date to the Member. Certainly, we'll keep the Member posted on our upcoming meeting with the community next month.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Once again, I'd like to state the urgency of this situation, because the Deh Cho Hall will be shutting down this fall, and all non-governmental organizations will be asked to vacate

the premises. So once again: will the Minister convey to his department and his officials the urgency of addressing the non-governmental organizations' needs in Fort Simpson?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we realize the urgency. The Deh Cho Hall will be coming down, and these three organizations are desperately seeking office space. Certainly that's part of the plan, to have our staff visit the community and work with the Member and also work with the organizations that I've highlighted earlier, and also work with the community. So we're anxious to move forward on this with potential solutions to these issues that we're faced with. Mahsi.

QUESTION 122-16(2) SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Mr. Abernethy: My questions today are for the Premier. In order for the voluntary sector and government to work more effectively together, the responsibility of maintaining a relationship should rest with the Executive. Will the Premier commit to dedicating a Minister at an Executive or cross-government level to be the primary contact for relationship-building and strategic planning with the voluntary sector as a whole?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that right now there is a Minister who has that responsibility and does report back to cabinet as a whole. We do have a ministerial level — that level of contact — working with the organizations.

If the Member's asking about changing it, that's something that in we do our planning around how we work in government. That's something that can be taken into consideration.

Mr. Abernethy: Having a Minister responsible for an individual department such as MACA, even though.... I mean, they have the lead role in sports and recreation. That's not necessarily the most effective way of reaching out across the sector as a whole. There's art; there's health; there's lots of different organizations, including sports — yes, granted — and justice in this sector. We need to have a coordinated approach on dealing and working with this sector. Once again, having a Minister responsible at an Executive level, at the top, would be more effective.

Coming back at you again: would the Premier reconsider his decision and identify a Minister at the Executive level to support and work with the voluntary sector to enhance it as a whole?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, one thing we need to clarify, as a number of organizations were included, as I understand it from the Members, in the volunteer sector and NGOs. We do have a

Minister responsible for the volunteer area who works with them through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, as the Member has pointed out.

NGOs are those that, yes, may have a voluntary board but in fact receive contracts from the Government of the Northwest Territories or the federal government or other organizations. We do have to deal with that in a couple of different ways. Although we continue to work with them through departments, if it's a health issue, our Health Minister would deal with that organization.

Again, on the voluntary side, if the Member and this Assembly agree that we should look at repositioning that — and the Member referred to the Executive in a number of places — it would fall under the Premiership's bailiwick, I guess is the way to put it. We would look at that, but we'd have to look at the balance of the workload as well.

QUESTION 123-16(2) CONTRACTING POLICIES

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, there have been serious concerns raised to me by my constituents about contracting by MACA. I'd like to, without being specific to the project or anything — although it may be, theoretically — explore the policy of the department.

Let's see. How to put this? Taking as an example a bundled water treatment call for proposal — a very large contract, obviously — does MACA have a policy to support Northern contractors over southern contractors when the Northern contract bid is competitive or the low bid and they have a proven track record? Of course, their Northern residency would be beneficial in terms of operational and any servicing requirements.

Hon. Michael McLeod: The policy that we follow and abide by is the Business Incentive Policy. In this case it was applied.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Minister.

Another question along those lines: before such a call for a proposal goes out and is decided, would the Minister's department officials, when discussing such potential work with the communities that might be interested in it, typically refrain from identifying any one company as having *the* solution for the work to be done?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to understand what the Member is asking.

This process that was undertaken was approved by cabinet. It was also presented to the Association of Municipalities, and we got a letter of support from every community involved. I think there has been a

lot of awareness and a lot of support for the process that we've embarked on to try to get these water plants in the communities.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, again, to the Minister.

Just a last question here. If the department has recently worked with a company on other contracts, even — and perhaps especially — if it's a southern contractor, would that contractor be given preference in bidding for new work or in a competition for new work? Would the department favour that company just because they've been working with them recently?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, any time we work with a company or a company has been involved with some of the earlier stages, whether it's a feasibility study or other studies, we ensure that the information that goes out is equal to all parties involved.

In this case, and in most cases, we will enlist the help of a fairness commissioner or somebody of equal stature. We also set up committees or independent bodies or hire independent evaluators to work with us. That usually gives comfort to everybody that this is a fair process.

QUESTION 124-16(2) DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier, and they are in regard to the Deh Cho Bridge project.

At least three working days ago the Premier said he was going to have FMBS pull some numbers together which might give us an idea of what it would cost our government to exit the Deh Cho Bridge agreement. He made reference to having that information "in a couple of days." I'd like to know how close we are. How is the Premier intending to share that information with us?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, if that could work. As the Member said, Friday. No. In fact, I've been having the department try to pull all this stuff together.

There are a number of factors that come in there that are hard to quantify, and that's been some of the difficulty. For example, if we as an Assembly were to decide to shut this down, what kind of domino effect could happen? That's been the problem area of trying to put this together.

I instructed them this morning, as well as through the Executive, to review what we know is on the ground and what our position is, and then just highlight what the other issues may be that have to be considered. I would provide that to the Members through the Chair of Priorities and Planning.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I'd be most interested in knowing when that might happen, because as the Premier knows, we will all be leaving here shortly.

Speaking of leaving here, Friday is February 22. The 22nd was the day by which the legal counsel for the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation was supposed to have "dotted the i's and crossed the t's," as has been referred to a number of times. I'd like to know if the Premier has had any kind of update on the status of that review that's been ongoing. If he wouldn't mind throwing in when we can get that other piece at the same time, that would be great.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, hopefully, with the direction I've given this morning to clarify the problems that were out there in trying to do some of the evaluation, we can get that to Members, I hope, by tomorrow.

The other question on the timelines, as we related, about the 22nd of February. The lawyers have done their work and have gone through that and now are prepared to sign the final schedule on which they were dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, is there some requirement on the part of our government to also sign off on those schedules? Who would be signing on behalf of our government? Is there any way to delay that signing-off until we have received some of this information we're asking for?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the process is laid out that followed through from the concession agreement, the guarantee that's in place, working with the banks and their lawyers, that they've had a secondary review on this.

The signing is to proceed with their final work on it. If the lenders are happy with what's been committed, then it would be proceeded with.

The Department of Transportation representatives would have to be on a number of the file schedules — or files, I guess, is the term — and there may be a few for which we're trying to get that information that would fall under the finance side or the FMB side.

For an actual schedule or timing, a decision doesn't have to be made. Those decisions have already been in place. It is now just confirming and following through with the requirements that are being ironed out.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to be clear. Is there something yet for our government to sign off with respect to these schedules, which are the appendices to the

concession agreement? Do we still have requirements to officially sign something off? If that is the case, who would be signing those off on behalf of our government?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, they are, as I stated, part of the process of finalizing the agreement with the lawyers reviewing it. Signatures would need to be accepted from all the parties involved. The lending organizations, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Department of Transportation, as well as Finance, would be required to sign off a number of the schedules. I'm not sure of the exact amount, but this is the follow-through from what was laid out there. We're following through the process that's already in place.

QUESTION 125-16(2) CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, as MLAs, we represent all the people. I've made reference to subsidies a few times, and how I believe sometimes we unintentionally make people dependent on the government.

I stress that to illustrate my point that there are a lot of people out there who are trying to make a go of it. As a government we should do what we can to help them along. I appreciate the government trying to give out subsidies to help people along, but it has to be something that's fair for everybody.

I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister of EC&E in regard to my Member's statement on the Childcare Subsidy Program. I'd like to ask the Minister if there's a certain amount of dollars that are allocated to each community or each region each year.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi. Mr. Speaker, yes, the Member is referencing subsidies for the communities. We do serve 33 communities on the subsidy of the child care services, early childhood programs and services.

Each community has an opportunity to apply for certain program dollars. They're also entitled to our program dollars. There are federal dollars and Territorial dollars. The communities can apply on top of what we offer as a Territorial government. Mahsi.

Mr. McLeod: I'd like to ask the Minister: if there's no uptake on the child care subsidy in the communities, what happens to that money? Is it lapsed, or does it move on to another community?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Some of the money is based on the enrolment at the centres and facilities. Also, the Member is referring to.... If the money is held back or if there is a surplus, then we have to extend the money to different programs as well,

where it is needed in the community. As I said, we serve 33 communities. We open up for communities that are in need of funding to offset their costs.

Mr. McLeod: I speak specifically to individuals who are out there trying to work, get a job or go to school; or a combination of both, one working and one going to school. A lot of people who try to work have mortgage payments, and they have all of these other payments — federal tax, Territorial tax. I'd like to ask the Minister if there is a cap on the subsidy program, and if that cap is based on the gross or net pay.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we assist individuals in the communities, whether it be the two parents or single parents, based on their needs and their income.

I will have to get back to the Member on the net versus gross. I don't have that information in front of me, but certainly, I can work with the Member on the specific area.

We do try to assist all individuals who are in desperate need of funding to cover their programs in the communities — the child care programs. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: I appreciate the Minister committing to get back to me on the gross or net.

I think "desperate" is the wrong word to be using right now, because there are a lot of people out there who are working; they are not desperate. They would like a subsidy that would help them along so they can see some money at the end of the day.

I notice the applications that they have to fill out to get these programs. There is so much here that by the time that they are all filled out, the child has already graduated from high school and the subsidy isn't needed anymore. I'd like to ask the Minister if there are any plans in the works to review the child care subsidy and make changes to it that are fair to everyone, especially those who are trying to work and contribute.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, there have been some changes to our program. We have increased 30 per cent in the child care program area. We are listening to our Members who raise an issue. Certainly, we will take that into consideration.

With various programs there is always room for improvement, so certainly, we will work with that and how we can expedite the application process.

We have our resource department staff who are more than willing to assist with the clients and parents as well. We will do our part as well. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Before I go on to the next question, colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to your rules of the House concerning food, which I determine to mean gum, candies, whatever. I would ask Members to please abide by your own rules. Thank you, Members.

QUESTION 126-16(2)
CONTRACTS FOR
WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue questions directed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I am very disappointed with his answers, because they were very lacking, to say the least.

Although I can't quote from a letter that hasn't been tabled in the House — as of yet, I stress — when you write a letter and say, "I regret to inform you your proposal wasn't the highest, and by the way, the other proponent was the highest," that then leads one to realize that the project is going to the other group.

Could the Minister explain to me the involvement that this Abbotsford, B.C., company, this southern company...? Can he enlighten this House as to what their involvement was with MACA over these water treatment facilities on these two proposals of "Water Treatment Facility Proposal" — who knows what that means? — and "Community Water System Efficiencies," and why did they do their presentation?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to inform the Member again that he's not correct in assuming that the water plant contract has been awarded. Negotiations are still ongoing. There has been a company that has responded to our request for proposals that has contracted with us prior to this and along the same lines as what we have through our requests for proposals in dealing with water plants.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, the Minister keeps pretending that a contract isn't being awarded — or isn't in the process of being awarded — to this Abbotsford company. The fact is, it's in the process of being done.

Let's put semantics away and say, "Look, just because the t's haven't been crossed and the i's haven't been dotted, the fact is, it is going to this," because it's not going to the Northern firm, which could do this project.

Could the Minister explain to this House, or assure this House — and, certainly, demonstrate to this House — how this Abbotsford, B.C., company didn't play a special role to make sure that when the RFP came out in August of last year, they didn't already have everything all set up so they were the

only obvious choice? Could he demonstrate that to this House?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the only person pretending here is the Member. He's pretending not to hear my answers.

Laughter.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the contract hasn't been awarded. There is a fairness process that was put in place as part of this request for proposals, and we have an independent evaluation team, along with an independent evaluator, that is ensuring a fair process is there. We have provided all the information to all the proponents who took part. We have the Department of Justice, and we have three other departments that are working with us. The process is fair, Mr. Speaker.

However, the contract hasn't been awarded, and it is difficult to speak to this issue.

Mr. Hawkins: I guess if the Minister can give hypothetical answers, you know.... And it kind of puts me in an unfair position, because I can't ask hypothetical questions to get the facts.

If we're going to live in this sort of hypothetical world, are they in negotiations with this Northern company, or are they in negotiations with this Abbotsford, B.C., company for these water treatment plants?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the question, of course, is hypothetical. The Member is asking me for information that may influence the outcome of our negotiations, and I can't respond to that.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, we seem to continue to dance around the fact that when you write a letter and you say, "We regret to inform you, you didn't get it," that leaves us one option: the other group. Unless you're cancelling the whole project, maybe....

Or maybe that's the issue: the Minister has decided to sole-source it to an Abbotsford, B.C., company. Maybe that's the problem. I've been asking the wrong question.

Are you sole-sourcing this project to the Abbotsford, B.C., company, without giving the Northern company — the one that's done these types of jobs for years — a chance to do the job where they would employ local people, keep the money north and....?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question, of course, is no, we're not sole-sourcing.

QUESTION 127-16(2) APPEALS PROCESS FOR HOUSING CLIENTS

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation some questions.

Over the course of time in my term as an MLA, I've been pursuing an appeal within the Housing Corporation. I don't know how much work has been done to date. I'd like to ask the Minister: have they been looking at it, and if they have, how much work has been done with it?

Mahsi.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of this concern, and I have had discussions with the president. As we pull together the LHO chairs, the managers and district staff, as well as headquarters, and reorganize that there are a number of issues that are on our plate, to try to look at improvement, that concern is one of them.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that people are using our programs and services with NWT Housing Corporation. They really don't have an avenue of appeal; in fact, they have to appeal right now to the person who ruled against them in the programs and services that they wanted. What existing avenues do they have currently?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, right now, as Minister, I communicate to this House and to the Member that I did a very steady stream of housing issues. They tend to go to MLAs; they tend to go to other elected officials. One of the areas that we think we can take a page from is income support. There's a local appeal process as well as a Territorial one, so we don't have to break new ground or reinvent the wheel here. It's just a matter of making sure that we have all the checks and balances.

Mr. Menicoche: There's something that's been outstanding for quite some time. Is the Minister looking at instituting something this year? Mahsi.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: We would anticipate something that we could come forward with and share with the committee. We know that once we conclude the May–June session, we're going to be moving quickly into business plans. So this is one of the items on the to-do agenda, and I'd like to get to that in time for that secondary process.

QUESTION 128-16(2) SUPPORTS FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Ms. Bisaro: I'd like to follow up on the statements about the voluntary sector that have been made by my colleagues. I was really pleased to hear the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs state

that we need to take action to ensure that the volunteer sector stays strong. I'd like to ask the Minister: other than the N.W.T. Outstanding Volunteer Awards, what is MACA doing to strengthen the volunteer sector?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we do a lot of work in the area of volunteering and volunteerism. Historically, we have worked very closely with Volunteer NWT. The decision of the federal government to pull the financing has made it very difficult for that organization. They are looking at ways to acquire some support and have had contact with us.

We have had a lot of discussion around that issue, looking at ways to maybe find outside sources or within our own government to help them. But we do, as the Member indicated, provide the volunteer awards program. We also provide through our department the Fire Service Merit Awards. Everybody knows that the firefighters in our communities are one of our key community resources. We also provide training for some of our volunteer organizations and fund some of the training opportunities for the staff. We've been lobbying Statistics Canada to have the N.W.T. included in the national surveys on volunteering. As I indicated earlier, we have provided some funding to Volunteer NWT. to develop their resources to promote volunteering. We've had workshops on volunteering in a lot of communities, and we've done a lot of research into funding opportunities, so there's quite a bit.

We also work closely with other departments, FMBS. We've developed a guide for the program managers within government to further clarify the funding policies for NGOs and other volunteer organizations. And of course, one of our more popular programs is the Youth Ambassador Program for major games. It's been quite a success with Canada Winter Games, and hopefully we're going to see the same results with the Arctic Winter Games.

We also, for the last two years, have been bringing our sports volunteers to be recognized and attend the Chances for Children events, Mr. Speaker. We also have an ongoing communication, as I indicated, with Volunteer NWT.

Ms. Bisaro: I thank the Minister for that summary. I don't mean to lessen the value of any of the things the Minister mentioned, but I don't believe that those are working towards strengthening the sector; I think those are maintaining the sector. I'd like to know whether there are any specific actions the Minister is considering relative to the voluntary sector to help strengthen it.

Hon. Michael McLeod: I think the Member and all Members are aware we're going under review at

this time to see where we can place emphasis on new investments, new initiatives, and also going through analysis of where things can be reduced. It would be difficult for me to say at this point, until those processes are done, whether or not we'd be able to be in a position to put more investments into this area of volunteerism.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has been mentioned previously, the voluntary sector goes beyond the purview of Municipal and Community Affairs. It involves people in the health area; it involves people in the justice area; it involves people that cover all departments within our government. I would like to ask the Minister if he would give me an opinion, in his role as Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, if he doesn't believe that the centralization of the point of contact for the voluntary sector would be a benefit to that sector in them moving forward and accomplishing more for our volunteers.

Hon. Michael McLeod: The Member is asking for my opinion; I'd be glad to share it. In my opinion, anything that would enhance the issue of encouraging volunteerism or providing support to volunteerism, I would be in support of.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to go back to item 7, oral questions.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7 on the Order Paper, oral questions.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker: We will return to oral questions, item 7 on the Order Paper. Mr. Abernethy.

Oral Questions *Reversion*

QUESTION 129-16(2) DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to break from history here, and I'm going to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions on the Deh Cho Bridge, mostly because his department is the one that released the cost-benefit analysis. The discussions on the Deh Cho Bridge have dominated the debate in this House over the last couple of weeks and couple of sessions. These concerns raised seem to be about process rather than the project itself. I sometimes think we've forgotten why we're even considering this project.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation: what direct benefits are there to proceeding with the project and building this bridge at all? Can the

Minister please provide some clarity to me and explain what the benefits are?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the direct benefits of the Deh Cho Bridge are undeniable. The economic advantage of this bridge is in lowering transportation costs. The cost of living is going to be reduced, as one organization, which is the Co-op, has indicated. It will bring down the cost of goods. The benefits to the community of Fort Providence, the Deh Cho communities and of course, the environment.... The environmental direct benefits are that it will reduce the.... If there were a spill on the Mackenzie, that would be reduced quite considerably, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions would help deal with the climate change that we're facing in the North today.

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Speaker, once again to the Minister of Transportation: based on the cost-benefit analysis that recently came out — which we know is an addendum to the larger one that came out in 2002 and needs to be seen as a whole, which is available on the web site — which compares the costs and the benefits.... When you look at that, why did this government proceed with the bridge?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: With the cooperation of the community of Fort Providence.... And of course it's been our own analysis that the decision to proceed had strong benefits to the government and the people of the Northwest Territories. It was a decision that was made and that the 16th Assembly wants to continue, because we see that the benefits of proceeding with this bridge far outweigh the costs in terms of putting the bridge in. This is a good benefit for the people of the Northwest Territories. We're going to get a good deal after 35 years on this project.

Mr. Abernethy: There's been some suggestion that this is not really a P3 project, in that the G.N.W.T. is doing all the work and taking all the risks. What has the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation done to warrant their involvement?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the community of Fort Providence combined alliance prepared the initial proposal to build the Deh Cho Bridge. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation put together a professional team to develop this project. They delivered this project in terms of meeting some of the navigable waters requirements by Transport Canada. There's been consultation and meetings in the communities. There's been the impact review process and the environmental impacts. It also examined the culture and social impacts of this bridge.

The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation lined up the financial backers of this project, and the corporation is working very closely with the department in terms

of putting this project into reality, to have this bridge be a go for the community.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: What about the risks to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation compared to those of the G.N.W.T.? Isn't the G.N.W.T. really guaranteeing this project?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The G.N.W.T. is providing certainty to the lenders. This means that we stand behind the Deh Cho Bridge in terms of ensuring that this bridge is built. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation's rate of return is based on delivering the project as designed, on schedule and on budget.

QUESTION 130-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE
LOAN GUARANTEE

Mrs. Groenewegen: I was previously directing my questions to the Premier on the Deh Cho Bridge. Maybe I should be directing them to the Minister of Transportation.

My questions are with respect to the \$9 million loan guarantee we put in place. Were we privy to what the \$9 million to date was actually spent on? Did we have a role to play in approving what that initial \$9 million to date was spent on?

Hon. Floyd Roland: In the area of the guarantee itself, the guarantee is something that's been in the process, has been updated a number of times, through the work of this government in the sense of the relationship with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. They've been working with the bank.

That guarantee doesn't kick in unless the bank itself calls that loan. For us to have a direct involvement in what they've spent on, what areas they've done, that would be limited. I don't have that information. But we do stand behind that guarantee until it gets called. Thank you.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, this loan guarantee started off at about \$3 million, and it was extended and increased at several different points. I would find it very unusual if a public government could guarantee a loan for something where they did not have any say or control or knowledge of what it was being used for and that they would not be at the table.

Do we want to go from \$3 million to \$6 million to \$9 million? Wouldn't the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation have had to come back to our government and justify an increase in our loan guarantee with what it was that they were spending the money on?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, yes, when they came forward with requests for increases, they did have to justify why we would want to do that and why we would carry it forward to the Assembly for approvals on supplementary requirements.

You can go back to the supplementary appropriations to see when loan guarantees were put in place or increased through operations of the House.

The actual work done was bridge design, looking at those areas. No doubt, lots of lawyers' fees on the negotiations process with banks and so on.

There is a list. We know what they were working on. We were knowledgeable of that. When they came forward for further substantiation or requests for increases, we had to ensure we had the information if we would agree that we would increase that loan guarantee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be interested in knowing who approved the loan guarantees, because let's be very clear: I was never part of a decision to approve a loan guarantee.

Under the Financial Administration Act, when a loan guarantee is put in place or is increased, there is an obligation to notify Members, but I don't ever recall voting on the increase to the loan guarantee. So somebody must have been acting on our behalf in the interests of the government and in the public interest to have approved those. I'd like to know who that was. Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the process of loan guarantees is done through the Financial Management Board, notification to Members. If there's an actual expenditure that occurs as a result of that, that would fall to the supplementary appropriation that comes to this House. I'd have to go back to look, because at one point the interest had to be paid out as part of the process. So I'm not sure if that came to the House or not, but I recall some debate on it. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you. You know, to the public that's listening to this, the semantics here are off. Let's be very clear: there is a vast difference between approving and being advised of or being notified of. I want to tell you that that's all that was going on for us over here: we were notified of it. We did not approve of it. Let's be very clear. I mean, just because we were notified of it doesn't mean we agreed with it.

I'd like the Premier to clearly confirm that, in fact, the FMB had the authority to extend the loan

guarantee and increase it on the grounds of notification to Members only.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct in the fact that any loan guarantee established falls under the authority of the FMB. The process also lays out the notification of Members, and that process is followed.

The reference I made to a potential supplementary appropriation dealt with one piece, a small piece, of that, but all the information would have been made available. I'll have to confirm that. I'm going on memory at this point. Thank you.

QUESTION 131-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE
CONCESSION AGREEMENT

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, continuing on with the feeding frenzy here because there's so much food in the water, because there are so many questions to be asked, I'd like to ask a question about the concession agreement. I've been one of the privileged few to have had the opportunity to see an embargoed copy of it as a Member of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure.

I understand from earlier questions today that the Premier, the Minister of Finance, will be signing the schedules that are attached to the concession agreement by the 22nd of this month. As to an attachment to the concession agreement, though, I haven't seen it. In fact, they haven't been attached to the concession agreement that was made available for me to see.

Given the Premier's claim to transparency and disclosure on this issue and having apparently a spotless record of providing this information, will he commit to showing us these schedules at his earliest possible convenience so that we can see them and it won't be a complete surprise when they finally are made public? Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to clarify. The schedules the Members are talking about as part of the concession agreement are one process. The instruments — I guess that is the proper term — of the lending agency to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation that we are involved with and that the Department of Transportation is involved with are the things that I talked about: the banks needing to proceed with this project and having a timeline of the 22nd. That's the piece that I'm referring to. That is all part of the due process that is already in place. That's about to happen. We're waiting on the lawyers' final work on that area and looking to move forward with this process. One of those would be the final signing of these instruments. Thank you.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, instruments, schedules, declarations, call them what you will: this House would like to see those before they are signed, rather than after.

I'm asking the Premier: will he provide those for our review before they are signed? Thank you very much.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, maybe I'll ask a question back. The fact is that this Assembly feels it hasn't had the opportunity to debate this in its full length. Concession agreements, schedules, projects that we do, whether they're \$4 million, \$40 million or \$80 million contracts for infrastructure we have in our communities, or leases — we have 10-year leases on infrastructure for office spaces, whether in this city or other communities — go through a process but don't get reviewed by committee on a contract-by-contract scenario.

In this case, Members are asking for a line-by-line review. We've provided that information. I can't see doing that. We're already involved, and we're not extending any more commitment than, in fact, just signing off what's already been part of the process and having the banks finally satisfied that this can proceed from their lending the money to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and then allowing the bridge to proceed.

At that stage I'm aware that those documents are in final review now and potentially being sent up sometime tomorrow for review and signature as a final sort of step to this. Now, does committee want the veto on that? I'm not prepared at this point, because it's a normal part of the process, but if committee wants to sit a couple of more days, let's have a debate in this House. Let's finally bring this to closure. I would say that if this Assembly is in agreement with this project, then we can finally conclude this and get on with business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, you know, I wish we were talking about a \$40 million, \$60 million or \$80 million project here, but we're not even talking about a \$160 million project. The latest is \$240 million, what our final costs will be, and those are without any of the liabilities that we are likely to experience.

Mr. Speaker, all Members of this House have been elected by the people, and to me that means the people of the Northwest Territories have invested their trust in me as their representative, and I think that's true for every Member in this House.

Will the Premier start to trust the Members of this House like the people of the Northwest Territories do? Will he give us that trust, show us copies of these and give us our chance to have input into this process, which apparently has been limited from the word go? Thank you very much.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we must be careful what we say in this House. I mean, some Members have come up with their own figure of what this potentially costs. The \$242 million figure is someone else's math work. What we've put on the table is the total amount of \$165 million. The tolls will pay a significant portion of that. As the act itself identified, we would be taking funds from the ice crossing and the ferries going up to close to \$2 million. The FMB of the day agreed to a further extension of \$2.28 million as a ceiling for putting this in, based on the dollar values of when that agreement was put in place.

So we're at the stage where we're at. Apparently, as the Member is using — it's not "apparently." The fact is that we've shared, and this project has undergone significant review from a number of parties. The lending agent itself went and got a review. They're the ones at risk for \$165 million if, in fact, they want to lend this money to this project and to make sure it's a valid project. An independent engineer has been on this file looking at that from another source. Thank you.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not telling the entire story, and he is misleading the House.

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Mrs. Groenewegen on a point of order. What is your point of order?

Point of Order

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is the fact that the Premier is misleading the House. He says that the banks are on the hook for this \$160 million. You know, let's be honest. The Territorial government is on the hook for this, and I have the concession agreement to prove it. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Member has raised a point of order. I'm going to allow some debate on this point of order. To the point of order, the Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this whole scenario I've provided much information to the questions in this House: the dollar values attached, who is at risk, the fact of agreeing with the Members that, as the G.N.W.T., we are in fact backstopping this. But the banks are lending the money. They are at risk of lending the money to a project that is a go or no-go. So that's not misleading the House, Mr. Speaker. That was stating a fact.

There are additional facts to this: that, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, as stated publicly in this House, this process is in place and

that we as the Government of the Northwest Territories — and that's why these questions have come up so often — are going to be a direct linkage or appendage to this project by in fact putting the pieces in place, by the FMB decisions that have been made, by the direction given in the establishment of the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation Act.

Mr. Speaker, I may have to look at the *Hansard* myself to see if the Member is imputing some motive here on my behalf. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: To the point of order, the Hon. Member for Thebacha.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, as I understand our rules of debate, it says under section 23, "In a debate a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member . . . (j) charges another Member with uttering a deliberate falsehood." My understanding is that the terms "You are deliberately misleading the House" constitute accusing the Member of uttering a falsehood. I would suggest that the rule is clear: that is inappropriate and unparliamentary. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: To the point of order, the honourable Member for Weledeh.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation does not have the financial ability to respond should they be called upon by the banks for recovery of the loan for any reason and that the Government of the Northwest Territories would be the responsible party financially to the banks. I believe that's a portion of Mrs. Groenewegen's point of order. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: To the point of order, the honourable Member for Kam Lake.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker. I want to weigh in on this point of order. I believe Mrs. Groenewegen does have a point of order. When the Premier can stand in this House and say that the banks are solely responsible for that \$160 million, it's not true. It's not true, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the Government of the Northwest Territories is indemnifying....

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Roland, you're rising on a point of order? What is it?

Point of Order

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, under 23(j), once again, I've been accused of uttering a falsehood. The Member said that the banks are solely responsible. You can look at *Hansard*. I've not said that. So my point of order is that the

Member is, again, accusing me of lying to this Assembly. In fact, lying to this Assembly is as good as putting my head on a platter.

Mr. Speaker, I want Members to be aware of the insinuations being made here. In fact, adding wording that has not been said and I have not said.... I'm speaking to this piece. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: We have two points of order on the floor now. I am going to allow debate and conclude debate on the original point of order. To the original point of order, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: I thought I heard what I heard. Again, I'll have to read *Hansard* again tomorrow when it comes out to see exactly what it was the Premier had said.

I was watching earlier when the Premier mentioned that.... You know, this might not have been caught in *Hansard*, but he said that I was misleading the House because he pointed at me and said I was responsible for the \$242 million figure.

Interjection.

Mr. Ramsay: Yeah, and I'll throw that out. Do you know where I got that number of \$242 million? I'll tell you where I got that. I got it from research.

Interjection.

Mr. Ramsay: I did the math. It adds up to \$242 million. It's \$4.5 million a year indexed over 35 years. It comes out to an investment of \$242 million. That's the real math. That's the real math, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: I think we've had enough debate on the original point of order.

There's another point of order on the floor, which I will allow a little bit of debate on. To the second point of order.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the issue of the point of order. We're not arguing now, at this point, about the bridge. We're arguing about what's happened in this House in terms of twice now, the Premier has been accused of uttering falsehoods or lying.

Our rules are very clear. Clause 23: "In debate, a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member...charges another Member with uttering a deliberate falsehood."

It has happened twice, Mr. Speaker. That is the issue. What is acceptable? That is what the ruling has to be. I think we should focus on that issue. We're not here to debate the bridge now. We're debating whether it's acceptable to stand in this

House and accuse the Premier twice of lying. That's the issue that the Speaker has to rule on.

Mr. Speaker: To Mr. Roland's point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, the Members on the opposite side are putting words.... They are adding words. They are embellishing this. They are using things like "head on a platter," "lying." I never said lying.

I stood on a point of order to the fact that the Premier was offering.... He was misleading the House with the information he was giving. So if they want to describe that in whatever way they want to, that is what I said. And that is what I will set out to prove.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to.... I don't recall the exact words that were used, so I am going to take this under advisement, and I will come back on both points of order. I will come back to rule at a later date on both points of order.

Oral Questions *Continued*

QUESTION 132-16(2) DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Ramsay: I'll ask some questions of the Minister of Transportation, given the sensitivity on this question of the Deh Cho Bridge.

I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation: how much money has the Department of Transportation spent in terms of contractors and consultants on the Deh Cho Bridge project over the last five years?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I would have to check with my department for the exact details in terms of the contribution of the department, as has been asked by the Member on this specific topic here.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I can advise the Minister that it is well over a million dollars that we have spent on consultants and contractors to work on the file of the Deh Cho Bridge project.

I am wondering if the Minister can supply the House with the reason why the Government of the Northwest Territories would bear the full cost of consultants and contractors looking at the Deh Cho Bridge project when the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation should be responsible for that level of work.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, I'll have to look at this and go back to my department to see what other departments were involved, where the work was done, and get back to

the Member. I would be happy to sit down with the Member and go through with a fine-toothed comb in terms of the numbers.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, one question that hasn't been answered in all of this is how much staff time the Department of Transportation has put into the Deh Cho Bridge project at the expense of other projects around the Territory.

I'd like to ask the Minister to commit to getting this House a detailed analysis of how much staff time has been spent on the Deh Cho Bridge project.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I will get that detail and bring it back to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Before I go on to the next Member, the original line of questioning was with Mr. Bromley, who had two supplementary questions left. Do you have further supplementaries, Mr. Bromley?

Mr. Bromley: No further supplementaries.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 133-16(2) RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR WCB CHAIR

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister Responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board.

There was a process that was advertised in the paper last summer. It was in the papers for about three months. It advertised to find an appropriate applicant for the chairman position of the Workers' Compensation Board.

I believe there were several applications that were filed: one from Nunavut, six from the Northwest Territories, and, I believe, three of them were former deputy ministers of this government.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that due process was not followed. Also, the Minister, in making a decision to extend the appointment of the existing chairman, may have breached the N.W.T. Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, where it is clearly stated that a member of the board cannot exceed a term of six years. By extending the appointment under the advertisement that was made for a three-year appointment for the chair of this board — by making that appointment — the breach has taken place.

I'd like to ask the Minister: of the seven applicants who filed, were there any interviews done with those applicants by way of coming up with a short-

list, in interviewing those applicants, to see who was the best candidate for that job?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister charged with the WCB by the Premier, I was aware of the circumstances surrounding the appointment process that the Member for Mackenzie Delta refers to.

Late in the 15th Assembly, the process was initiated. I know, from being at the table, there were significant concerns by the Regular Members that the government in the dying days would make an appointment of this nature without allowing sufficient input from the Regular Members' side. There was a request to government to delay the appointment of the chair. The government of the day agreed to do that.

There were a number of applicants, as the Member indicated. But as Minister, I came in with new legislation and a relatively new president. I made the decision that it would be in the best interests of the Workers' Compensation Board and this government and, recognizing the strong support that the chair had among the Regular Members, that it would be best to reappoint Mr. Rodgers, which I did. His term will comply with the six years he is entitled to sit under the current legislation.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister again: were there interviews done with the seven candidates that filed their names for that position? Were there screenings of those applications and interviews of any potential candidates?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I reviewed all those files personally. I had my own opinions as Minister of what the appropriate action should be, and I made the ministerial decision, a choice which I took to cabinet — the information item to reappoint Mr. Rodgers. And that is, in fact, what has been done.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the extent of the appointment, I understand that the way it was advertised, the term of the appointment was supposedly for a three-year term, as it was advertised in the newspapers. So by making an appointment which exceeds the six years — which is basically 2009, which is a year from now — it would have exceeded that appointment. So what's the term limit of the appointment, knowing it will exceed the six years?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the term of the current chair will not exceed the six years that he's eligible to sit under the current legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister give me a breakdown on exactly what were the costs for this government and the Workers' Compensation Board to advertise for those positions, and also the time it took in regard to staff time in regard to the applications that were filed and in reading and accepting those applications? What was the cost?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out, as well, that Mr. Rodgers, who is eminently qualified, in my opinion, and a good representative in that capacity and a Northerner, was in fact one of the applicants.

I will commit to find out or get the information that the Member has requested.

QUESTION 134-16(2)
CONTRACTS FOR
WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say I was done with MACA on this matter. Unfortunately, the answers are still very disappointing. There's just continual doublespeak on the result and on where this project is going.

Mr. Speaker, I have a list here of contracts, and the Abbotsford company, the B.C. company I keep referring to — I'm not using their name; I know how that makes people edgy here, so I'm avoiding their actual specific name — did give a proposal for \$22,500, and it was a contract to develop a proposal for a water facility.

So could the MACA Minister explain to this House — in good conscience and clarity — of course, how this demonstrates that they did not have an unfair or competitive advantage ahead of any other group applying in this RFP process for the water treatment plant project?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, all the work that was done leading up to this contract, going to a request for proposals, was made available to all the proponents. In addition, we put in place a two-stage process to ensure due diligence. We had the use of an external party to chair the evaluation on both the request for qualifications and the request for proposals. That position would equate to what would be referred to as a fairness commissioner. Mr. Speaker, we also involved FMBS and Public Works, and we sought legal advice from the Department of Justice.

Mr. Hawkins: Well, Mr. Speaker, that was the best answer I've heard all day from this Minister on this project. I'm really glad to hear that maybe he's coming around to wanting to actually discuss this.

So, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that I want to make absolutely clear, even to the Member on this side of the House for Mackenzie Delta, that I'm not against

the project in any way; it's the process, Mr. Speaker.

I still have concerns that the process is not fair, because I would be surprised that anyone applying through this RFP process was made aware that "By the way, one of your competitors actually wrote all the documentation for this RFP."

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hear today how this Minister will assure this House on transparency and fairness. Will he, before officially awarding this contract, allow and set up some process to ensure that it is completely fair, unfettered by that Abbotsford, B.C., contractor, with a fair process to everyone? Will he assure this House that he will go through that, hire someone to go through these clients to make sure they did not have an unfair, uncompetitive advantage ahead of the Northern group based in Inuvik?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it's not a matter of coming around to discuss and provide information. This contract procurement is still in the process. I'm very reluctant to speak to something that has ongoing negotiations.

We've done exactly as the Member suggested: we have hired an outside party to ensure that fairness of procedure and practice is followed. I would be glad to offer that to the Member once the contract is awarded, to provide a full briefing so that he can see how this contract unfolded and how it was evaluated. We have a process where I have to respond and go to my cabinet colleagues before any decisions are made. So I think all the different questions that were in the one question have been answered.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, these are financially tight times, as everyone is extremely well aware. I just want to be clear for the record, here. The Abbotsford company doing these water treatment plant projects: were they the cheaper, bottom-line dollar company, or was the Northern firm working out of Inuvik with the Yellowknife group the cheaper one?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the Member is asking as to the contract details, and I can't provide that at this time.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I'll respect that, because his letter, that I'm not allowed to quote and which will be tabled later, will help clarify that question officially.

So my last question for the Minister is around the context of what if this Northern firm isn't hypothetically the one we're negotiating with, although everyone knows it's not the group we're negotiating with. What's to assure us that some

undue process wasn't happening here, and is the Minister prepared to reimburse that Northern company that spent all that time trying to build a proposal that was actually unofficially awarded already?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the Member is asking me. I'm not clear on the question. All I can say is that this process has a number of checks and balances put in place so we ensure that there's fairness and so that we can explain the fairness.

Obviously, the Member has been contacted by one of the proponents. We have not even debriefed any of the companies yet. I would ask that the process continue to move forward, that we talk to the company who has obviously contacted the Member and show where maybe the proposal was not quite up to what was expected or where he could improve, or whatever the case may be. To talk about compensation at this point is not something I want to enter into.

QUESTION 135-16(2)
FUTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Abernethy: My questions are for the Premier, and I'm going back to talk about the bridge. As I mentioned in my previous question, there's been a lot of talk about the bridge, and it seems it just keeps going and going. Following the experiences that we've gone through here, would this government consider entering into future private partner arrangements?

Mr. Speaker: I am going to rule that question out of order. That's pretty hypothetical.

QUESTION 136-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I do have a bridge question. It's not quite as exciting as the other Members have portrayed, but I do have some questions on process and inclusion on the project.

Mr. Speaker, a constituent came to me the other day and wanted to be assured on a couple of matters, and the fact is they were all dollar-related issues. And again, for the record, was the ramping-up portion of the bridge project included in the overall tender? We know what the cost of the actual bridge is. I want to know about the earthworks and the work included for bringing the road right up to the bridge. I want to make sure that's included.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I didn't get who you were addressing your question to.

Mr. Hawkins: The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I want to let the people know that the cost is all in one price, in terms of what we have indicated over a number of days in the House, in terms of the cost of building the Deh Cho Bridge.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know how much federal money has been sought after in this particular project — the Deh Cho Bridge project, that is. How much has been found today for this project, and what is this Minister doing to get more federal money for this project? I'm speaking specifically to federal money raised, which department it's come from, and is he hammering on the door of the federal Minister?

Mr. Speaker: I will allow the Minister to answer. There are three questions there, so I will take that as three supplementary questions.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, along with this government, has requested \$50 million from the federal government. We haven't yet received a response from the federal government. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation has been working with the Department of Indian Affairs in terms of the \$5 million equity that has been outlined with the Department of Indian Affairs, and they are working through a process of how much they can obtain of the \$5 million. That is still ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, this government, all Northerners continue working with the aboriginal governments, with communities in terms of building infrastructure down in the Mackenzie Valley, right across the Northwest Territories in terms of having the federal government own up to their responsibilities of putting in significant infrastructure right across the Territories. I'd be very happy to work with committee in terms of some of these projects that they've identified over the last couple of weeks in terms of the infrastructure needs in their communities.

QUESTION 137-16(2)
CONTRACT FOR
AKLAVIK WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, my question again is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I continue to hear him making commitments to the Member from Yellowknife Centre, yet this project you're talking about is in the Mackenzie Delta. It's going to affect the people in Aklavik. It's the community of Aklavik that should be consulted, not someone from Yellowknife Centre.

I'd like to ask the Minister: before you commit to consulting anyone, do you consult with the hamlet of Aklavik, the MLA for Mackenzie Delta and the people in Aklavik if there are any changes and any effects of this project by any way by this

government? I'd like to directly ask the Minister: will you consult the communities affected first, before you consult anybody on any changes to this project?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we have been consulting with everybody involved. For a number of years now, the concept of vulnerable water, vulnerable projects and one contract was something we wanted to do. We've spoken with the Association of Communities; we've spoken with the local government administrators of the Northwest Territories; we've spoken with every community that's involved in this proposal. We will continue to do so.

I by no means want to have the Members expect that I would speak to one before the other. If there is going to be a briefing on what has transpired here, I'll offer it to all the Members, and I will make sure the communities are informed of what is happening. We don't anticipate making any changes at this point, as the Member has pointed out.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the department has had the full support of myself as the MLA, has full support from the hamlet of Aklavik and the people of Aklavik to get on with this. We've continued to support this project on the understanding of where this project is at, but if there is going to be any delay, or basically any innuendoes of cancelling this project or redoing the whole project, we're not in support of that.

I'd like to, again, ask the Minister that every effort be made to fast-track this project, get that water treatment in place. The community needs this piece of infrastructure. We've been waiting for two years now because of cost overruns and delays. It's two years past the date we were told we were going to get it.

I'd like to ask the Minister again, knowing that he has support of the MLA and the community: let's get on with it.

Hon. Michael McLeod: I'm trying to get on with it. We are quite excited about this new concept of bundling projects. We think we have to be creative and innovative as we move forward with some of our challenges facing some of our communities in terms of providing infrastructure. Designing, implementing, operating and all those things are some things that are challenging every community in terms of capacity and getting these projects underway.

This is a new way of doing business. I can understand some Members being concerned. However, negotiations are ongoing. The project hasn't been signed off yet; we haven't made the final decision. I need to take that to the next step. Whether that goes forward or not, I can't say where

that'll end up at this point, but I will commit to sharing that information as much as we can with all the Members and the communities.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the economic benefit of this project to the community is enormous. Whenever projects are bid in our communities, the benefit that flows to the local contractors for site work and labour work — in most cases that's all we see anyhow, but for us that's a boost in our economy.

Again, the construction contractors in this community are waiting for this project to take place. They've been waiting for some time. Again, I keep telling them all, "It's coming; it's coming." I'd like to ensure that the Minister makes sure that we do stick on track, try to get this project on the ground this summer. It's a crucial piece of infrastructure that we need in our communities.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Once again, I can certainly relate to the Member's messages and some of his recommendations. We have had all the communities make those points and reaffirm those points on a number of occasions. We'll do what we can. We are quite concerned about where we are with replacing water plants. This is a possible remedy to that, though. We'll follow it up.

QUESTION 138-16(2)
POLICY FOR
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the vagueness and hypothetical nature of my previous question. I've tried to reword the question so it's clear and that it's actually a question as opposed to a hypothetical question.

The concerns raised about the Deh Cho Bridge seem to all be about process more than the project itself. Before entering into future partnership arrangements, will the Premier commit to developing a policy and process for dealing with these types of projects in order to ensure transparency and accountability?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Definitely, after going through this process, I think the Government of the Northwest Territories.... If we're going to venture out beyond the typical tender or a fee process we normally go through, we will have to come up with a specific policy for dealing with projects of this nature.

For example, I've talked about the Mackenzie Valley Highway. There's hydro potential in the North. None of those would be able to be done within our existing confines. Realizing what we've had to deal with through this process, I would absolutely agree. We need to develop an absolutely clear process so everybody knows what happens at what stage of events.

QUESTION 139-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, in a previous answer to a question, the Premier basically threw out the challenge to have an open debate about the Deh Cho Bridge project. That's like inviting us to a duel, you know, with no gun.

We're absolutely bound by confidentiality; we can't say anything. Here we are now — the poor suckers who got to read the concession agreement — and we're sitting here trying to ask questions in the public interest, but we are bound by confidentiality because of the restrictions that were put on us. We cannot be transparent and open with the people of the Northwest Territories, who are extremely interested in this project.

The Premier challenges us to an open debate. How does he propose we could have an open debate when even we, as Members of this House, couldn't get information on this until after every significant date had passed? And yet we want the public to partake and watch us in an open debate? How does the Premier propose such a thing could happen when we can't get copies of the schedule? Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, for the process of clarity, for the 16th Legislative Assembly, my offer is to debate the fact that we support the Deh Cho Bridge proceeding.

I'm not willing to debate schedule by schedule. We've never done that with any other contract in the Government of the Northwest Territories — at least, that I recall in my days — on something like that.

I've sat down with committee. I've provided them with all the information that has been requested. Yes, there are some outstanding schedules. Those lists of schedules that were outstanding were provided to the Members as well.

Part of the duties we have — as we heard earlier, regarding another bundled project within the Government of the Northwest Territories — is if we're going to come to a very public forum and debate what business is put on the line, then what business would be ready to put its numbers on the table, knowing that it could be undermined by the next proposal that comes forward?

One of the issues, or primary functions, of government is the way we do business. The fact is, in a consensus-style government, when you talk to other jurisdictions — the budget process, the contracting issues — the opposition may raise an issue, but all they can do is make an argument that it was a bad decision, because the majority rules in all cases.

We know a majority doesn't rule. That's why, in this style of government, we share all the information we can, and that does, by fact of consensus, put all Members under the confidentiality of the rules we operate with. If we want to stick to that system of governance, then we must honour the processes that are in place.

I'm trying to do my part with this whole process, so I offered up the opportunity: as the 16th Legislative Assembly, do we support this project or not? I'm not ready to go and debate line by line, as two of the Members would like to have done in this Assembly.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, it is unfathomable that this Premier can say we should have a debate on one simple question alone: do we support this project or not? How could we possibly say whether we support the project or not if we did not have access to the details of it? That's like saying, "I'll buy a house, and I won't look at it or inspect it, and I won't understand any of the terms of the financing, but I'll just...." It is "Do I want a house, or don't I want a house?" That's how simply he's putting the question.

And to the fact that, yes, we do have the information — yes, we do have it now, after the fact. After the concession agreement is signed, yes, now we have it. After it's too late to turn back, yes, now we have the cost-benefit analysis. The Premier admitted they went and signed the concession agreement without the benefit of the cost-benefit analysis that was updated.

Is the Premier suggesting that we could actually have a reasonable discussion about whether we support the bridge or not without the relevant facts related to the financing and all risks in this?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the facts have been out on the table for, I would say — at least the latest increases — close to a year.

During the last government, when the project that we've heard so much about.... When the act was put in place and talked about a \$55 million to \$70 million project, it is now identified, and was identified in the 15th Assembly, as \$165 million.

The government's fiscal piece of that is the money from the ferries and ice crossing. In fact, the additional money required was made public — the \$2.28 million — before any agreements were signed. Those fundamental pieces are there, have been public, and have been questioned in this House.

If the Member wants to debate, "Well, okay, let's try to renegotiate the percentage the bank will charge us," that's another factor that is part of a deal. But the key principles, the fundamentals, of this project are laid bare, I would say.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I am an elected Member of this House. I've been here since the 14th Assembly. If I am not aware of the fact.... And it was — let's be honest — two weeks ago tomorrow that we actually got a copy of the concession agreement. This is a \$160 million project. I didn't know, until we got the concession agreement two weeks ago, that our government was in fact indemnifying, guaranteeing — call it whatever you want — a \$160 million loan. I didn't know that. I'm a Member of this Legislative Assembly and I didn't know. How could the public possibly say whether or not they support this project?

To the point that everything has been completely laid out there: will the Premier agree and concede that this information, which is extremely significant, has never been made public — not to the public, let alone the Members of this Assembly — until two weeks ago?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, she was waving a piece of paper there. I don't know what I would be agreeing to, if that's a briefing note from Research or an active part of the concession agreement, which would be problematic.

The fact is, the fundamentals that the Government of the Northwest Territories needs to be concerned about, and is concerned about.... That's why we have entered into this long process of ensuring and double-checking. In fact, the lending organizations themselves have followed through this. An independent engineer.... We had an opinion lawyer on the actual process of how our FAA worked and so on and so forth.

The process has been there. The critical numbers we know about. The \$165 million has been known about. Tolls will pay a part of that. We will pay the other part. That's been known. And we've also known that it is set at a rate that would grow according to, I believe, the 2005 dollar value escalated at that point, going forward. So that's forced growth as we deal with it in every other business that we do.

To the simple fact: the concession agreement has been made public, or given to Members, after they requested it from myself, as Premier of the 16th Legislative Assembly. I've honoured that commitment. But the fundamentals of that project have been public from well before the 16th Assembly election.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, in view of the many pressing needs of the people of the Northwest Territories for everything from better education, to homes and houses in our communities, to health services — we have no

doctors going into Nunakput, we heard today — in view of all those pressing needs, does the Premier not think that he has a duty to very clearly tell people, before we commit to it, that this government was entering into an obligation and a liability for \$165 million?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Government of the Northwest Territories would backstop this project has been known from the early days of the fact that the act was being discussed. That is why an act was put in place, because under existing processes, it would be very difficult to deal with a project of this nature. The fact that we're trying to get P3 money from the federal government, to try to help this project along....

We realize, and I would be negligent in my duty if, looking at the numbers, standing up and giving the message to the people of the Territories, "We're going to have to live within our means." Look at this project. Those numbers have been available. We know that it's in the neighbourhood of \$4 million, when you take the ferry crossing, ice crossing, and the additional amount that was made public, to carry on above and beyond the tolls that are established. That is something that would be looked at.

The fact is that the majority of vehicles coming across that bridge would be from industry, and they would be paying their share through this process. If we didn't have this process, then we would be looking at trying to fund it internally from what we have. In that case, we would have to compete with the rest of the projects in the Territories. Thank you.

QUESTION 140-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to further question the Minister of Transportation on some of the items he raised in his comments to me.

I think he said the Deh Cho Bridge organization at Fort Providence was chasing \$50 million as one of the potential sources of revenue. I'd first like to get some clarification on that. When shall we get some feedback if this is going to be a reality, and when was this applied for?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is the \$50 million request to the federal government was put in during the 15th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, my constituent raised a concern about an infusion of federal cash, as I've highlighted already, and it sounds like some work is being done. I certainly look forward to it being successful.

The other issue that they raised — which I think is a very good one — is how is this going to play out on

the tolls? Are we expecting an adjustment in the potential tolls being under \$7 at this point, with the cost of the bridge? Does it have an effect on the tolls if we do get the \$50 million applied to the greater cost of the bridge? What is going to be the adjustment on the tolls, and what are the tolls today?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, should we get a favourable response from the federal government in terms of the \$50 million that has been requested by the Deh Cho corporation, this would certainly significantly lower our toll fees; it would significantly lower our contribution to the bridge; and it will certainly have an effect in terms of the basic toll fees, which are under \$7.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, a number of us — although, obviously the Premier knows very well, not all of us — are in favour of the bridge on this side. I am certainly in favour of it, and that hasn't changed since I came back to this House.

The constituent that I am raising this point for is definitely in favour of the bridge as well, but they are concerned about the bread-and-butter issues of this bridge.

As I have always understood it, the tolls are set in such a way that according to local industry, it is going to cost about \$250 for a truck to cross this bridge. How will that affect your milk and your eggs? That's the real issue. Regular folks care about bread-and-butter issues.

I want some assurance from this Minister that the tolls are on track. Can he make sure that they are still at the original price, which was just under \$7 per ton?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the bread-and-butter issues will certainly go down, in terms of this bridge being put in. We will have a number of factors to be considered, and I would let the Member know that once the dust has settled on this whole issue, in terms of sitting down and going through the exact numbers.... If I quote a number here, it may be taken and used in future discussions. I want to say to the Member and the rest of the House that the numbers that we have looked at.... I want to give assurance to his constituent that certainly, the whole goal is to bring the cost of living down, through this project.

As the Premier has indicated, the cost of the tolls would be looked upon by other resource developments happening in the North Slave Region.

I want to say that in terms of a project of this magnitude, we certainly rely heavily on the federal government. The community of Fort Providence and this government are going after funding in

terms of putting key infrastructure in the Northwest Territories to reduce the cost of living in the Northwest Territories. That is where we will continue pushing on the bigger picture of bringing in some good infrastructure. That will bring the cost of living down for all people of the Northwest Territories.

QUESTION 141-16(2)
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to ask another question, but I'll have to ask one more question here.

What evidence has the Minister of Transportation got at his disposal that is going to indicate to him that the cost of living will not go up with the building of the Deh Cho Bridge at Fort Providence?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the outcome of the Co-op study here in Yellowknife has shown that the cost of living will go down in Yellowknife.

Now, I will be happy to sit down with the Member and any other Members of the House to show this study, as done by the Co-op, is an analysis in terms of the cost of living if we should — and when — get the bridge built across the Mackenzie River.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, that Co-op study, the one that was done with local retailers, that was in 2002–2003. A lot has changed since then, Mr. Speaker. The price of gas has gone up tremendously. People can't afford to heat their homes here in Yellowknife.

Everything that comes across that bridge, Mr. Speaker, is going to cost more. Why is it going to cost more? Because there's going to be a toll put on transportation or transport trucks that are going across that bridge, and the cost is going to be passed on to consumers here in Yellowknife, in Behchoko, and in the rest of the North Slave Region.

And nobody in the last government and nobody in this government has shown me one iota of proof that proves me wrong, Mr. Speaker — that the cost of living here is not going to go up. I think they should come clean on that evidence too, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. When can they give us that?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the costs are going up every day as we have this discussion. From 50 years ago, this bridge was deemed at \$6 million for the Northwest Territories. It cost too much. And today, here, we're talking about over \$160 million.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to work with the Members here in terms of the price, in terms of the cost of

living. I would like to work further with the department in terms of working with other departments, other agencies, other organizations, in terms of showing that the cost of living is going to come down. The Member's pointed out that the price of fuel is going up, is increasing on a weekly basis. That's the high cost of doing business here.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to work with the Members here and to work with my department to see if some of the latest reports in terms of indications show that once the bridge is built, the cost of living would be going down.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, the last government showed a blatant disregard for residents here in Yellowknife and in the North Slave Region by not going out to stakeholders that were going to be impacted by the construction of this bridge project. This government is doing the same thing. It's a blatant disregard for people when you don't provide the evidence that is going to indicate the cost of living is not going to go up.

Again, I'm going to ask the Minister: has he got any proof or evidence outside of this study that was done five years ago that indicates that the cost of living in the North Slave Region is not going to go up? Where is that evidence, Mr. Speaker? The cost-benefit analysis they provided us with suggests the cost benefits are going to go down by \$80 million. Where's the other evidence?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, industry today has shown that once you start hauling freight and fuel over to this side, it costs us more money to store it. It costs us more money to have the freight stored at the different locations of the retailers in Yellowknife and also in Behchoko.

Mr. Speaker, the government put more money into tolls in terms of bringing the costs down. There is evidence that the cost of living will be going down once we have this bridge built.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, well, if the Minister is adamant that's the case, how come the last government and how come this government isn't going back out to stakeholders and trying to find out exactly what the building of the Deh Cho Bridge will do to the cost of living here in the North Slave Region? How come they haven't gone out and done that and talked to stakeholders, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: You can't expect the Minister to answer for the last government, but on the 16th Assembly, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the bridge corporation will be going out to the stakeholders, will be going out to the public in Behchoko, Yellowknife, Fort Providence, Hay River — wherever they need to be, and they'll go and have discussions with the people. They'll be talking to certain key stakeholders to say that this is what is going to benefit the people in the Northwest Territories. I have been speaking with the bridge corporation, and that's the plan — to go out and talk to the stakeholders and continue on with discussions.

This bridge is going to be built, and there are going to be benefits. I think that's something we have to look at long term. I think the bridge corporation has already made some remarks in terms of a commitment to talk to the stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker: Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions.

Returns to Written Questions

QUESTION 1-16(2)

G.N.W.T. PUBLIC SERVICE/NWT POWER CORPORATION SALARIES AND BONUSES

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question 1-16(2) asked by Mr. Abernethy on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, to Hon. Robert R. McLeod, Minister of Human Resources, regarding the Government of the Northwest Territories Public Service and NWT Power Corporation bonuses and salaries.

Mr. Speaker: Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents.

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled *Annual Report of Official Languages, 2006–2007*.

Document 25-16(2), *Annual Report of Official Languages, 2006–2007*, tabled.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled *Northwest Territories Community Futures Program Annual Report to March 31, 2007*.

Document 26-16(2), *Northwest Territories Community Futures Program Annual Report to March 31, 2007*, tabled.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I have two documents to table. The first is entitled List of Inter-

Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

Document 27-16(2), List of Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2007, to December 31, 2007, tabled.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled *Northwest Territories NWT Liquor Commission and Liquor Licensing Board, 53rd Annual Report, 2006-2007*.

Document 28-16(2), *Northwest Territories NWT Liquor Commission and Liquor Licensing Board, 53rd Annual Report, 2006-2007*, tabled.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table an information package sent to me by Open Doors Society with regard to a request of the government to help them relocate, as well as support letters from various organizations in Fort Simpson.

Document 29-16(2), Information Package Regarding Open Doors Society Re-Location, tabled.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I have three documents that I would like to table.

The first document is a letter from Municipal and Community Affairs to Gallant Construction. It's referring to the water treatment proposal stuff I talked about today.

The second document I would like to table is a letter from Gallant to Hon. Michael McLeod. It's again in reference to the water treatment proposal stuff I talked about today.

Document 30-16(2), Letters Regarding RFP for Community Water Treatment Plants, tabled.

The third item I would like to table is a list of consulting contracts outside the G.N.W.T. It is too lengthy to go into.

Document 31-16(2), List of Consulting Contracts Outside the N.W.T., tabled.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I rise as an MLA. I would like to table a letter from Mayor Martselos from Fort Smith to Mr. Hawkins, indicating his negative comments have offended the people of Fort Smith and asking him for an apology and inviting him to Fort Smith to meet with the town council.

Document 32-16(2), Letter from Mayor Martselos of Fort Smith to Robert Hawkins, Regarding Aurora College, Thebacha Campus, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions.

Motions

MOTION 5-16(2)
RECONSIDERATION OF
POWER RATE STRUCTURE,
MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker:

WHEREAS electric power is an essential service;

AND WHEREAS power rates across the Northwest Territories are presently established on a community-by-community basis in accordance with Public Utilities Board direction set in the mid-1990s;

AND WHEREAS the current structure results in small communities that depend on diesel-generated power paying exorbitant and unstable rates;

AND WHEREAS power rates are one of the main drivers for the high cost of living in small communities, and discourage local economic development;

AND WHEREAS residents of these communities are doubly burdened because they must also indirectly pay the high power costs passed on to them by businesses such as grocery stores;

AND WHEREAS the current Territorial Power Subsidy Program is not adequate or sustainable for these communities;

AND WHEREAS the complexity of the existing rate structure increases regulatory costs, which are also passed on to consumers;

AND WHEREAS the current rate structure does not allow upfront capital costs for small projects, such as micro-hydro, to be spread over the system, making investment in more environmentally sustainable energy generation difficult to put in place;

AND WHEREAS the 16th Legislative Assembly has agreed that one of its priorities is to pursue initiatives to reduce the cost of living, and in particular energy costs, in support of the goal of sustainable, vibrant and safe communities;

AND WHEREAS other Canadian jurisdictions have implemented levelized power rate zones in place of community-by-community rates;

AND WHEREAS legislation in both the Yukon and Nunavut allows the territorial governments to provide direction to the utilities boards;

NOW THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the hon. Member for Nahendeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Government initiate the necessary policy changes, and bring forward the necessary legislative amendments, to make possible the consideration of

levelized power rates for the Northwest Territories at the time of the NWT Power Corporation's next General Rate Application;

AND FURTHER, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that these legislative amendments include, if necessary, changes to the Public Utilities Act which would give the Government authority to provide direction to the Public Utilities Board;

AND FURTHER, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Government instruct the NWT Power Corporation to base its next General Rate Application on a levelized rate structure;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly recommends the Government provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

Before I allow debate on the motion, the Chair is going to call a short break.

The House took a short recess.

Mr. Speaker: I call the House back to order. Before the break there was a motion put on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the motion considering the possibility of levelized rates in the Northwest Territories, I think it's long overdue in realizing the costs to this government: the cost of administering the Territorial subsidy program, the housing subsidy for power, the cost to proceed with the general rate applications. We're looking in the range of some \$60 million if you add it all up. I think that, as a government, we realize the implications that it has and the possibility of re-profiling those dollars to really deal with the cost of living and bring down the cost of energy in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the cost to this government by way of reviewing rate applications and filing rate applications. You're filing some 28 applications in regard to PUB hearings. Twenty-eight applications. Through this process you are possibly looking at three applications: one for diesel communities, one for gas communities and one for hydro communities. Looking at the cost of that to this government right now, it costs in the range of \$2 million to \$3 million just to go through the application process of filing a general rate application.

I think we have to look at this in the confines of how we ourselves as government can improve the cost of living in communities but also realizing the savings that we could put in place as a government by these different initiatives.

In regard to the statement made by the Minister of Energy yesterday, this is exactly where this motion will take us. I think that by taking that direction and realizing the importance of that, we have to realize we cannot seriously function in the Northwest Territories with these rates.

The biggest benefactors of these changes will be the communities. The high costs of these rates, regardless of whether you bring in the subsidy — the subsidy will still have to remain. But I think it's important to realize that in doing a rough adjustment, just going back to the application that was filed in regard to one rate zone, at that time they were looking at a rate system for hydro communities, diesel communities and gas communities of 24 cents per kilowatt throughout the whole Northwest Territories. That was based on a one-rate-zone application.

Looking at these statistics, talking to people within the Power Corporation, they figure that the cost to implement levelized rates in diesel communities is somewhere in the 30-cent range. Look at the power rates using kopalite, for instance: \$2.65. I met with the Arctic Co-operatives Limited and discussed this issue with them. The biggest cost driver for them to deliver their products in their communities is the cost of energy. Most communities spend in excess of, in some cases, \$15,000 to \$20,000 a month to basically provide power. I know that McPherson, for instance — I had a co-op there — they are in the hole some \$200,000 because they just can't have enough revenues coming in for the high cost they pay for the power.

Yet, through this process that we're talking about implementing, there was discussion about implementing a subsidy by way of a commercial subsidy, which would have cost us an additional \$5 million to what we're already paying. I think it's important that we take that into account. I think it's important that through the whole idea of finding ways of stimulating our communities, stimulating our economies, it will do a lot more to stimulate the economy by bringing down those energy costs to the construction industry, to the general stores, to the co-ops, to the business community in our communities. Basically, this will fill in for that subsidy. It will make their businesses sustainable in these communities and also make developing small businesses and looking at initiatives in those communities more viable than it is right now.

That is an incentive, as government is realizing. We have a lot of discussion with regard to employment/unemployment statistics, small communities, large communities. More importantly, I think it's realizing the importance that this will have. I know there are concerns in regard to looking at a system that is going to be fair. But, again, we have to start somewhere. I believe that through this motion, through the Minister's

statement yesterday in the House, it will eventually get us there.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to read for the record a decision that was made by the Public Utilities Board in Decision 5-95. It clearly states that the board is deeply concerned about the affordability of power rates in the Northwest Territories. The board fully recognizes the potential impact on diesel communities to have power rates which reflect costs. The board believes it is the responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories to set policy with respect to matters of social engineering. The board anticipates it must consider the public's interest in formulating its decision. However, the board does not believe that it should decide the extent to which one group or the other has to pay for these subsidies.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to state in closing up that it's the board that recognizes this by way of the Public Utilities Board, and it's the government that has to set the policy direction, either by way of legislation or by way of policy. This motion directs the government to seriously consider that.

Mr. Speaker, I do look forward to debate on this motion and also ask for the support of the Members of this House so we can proceed and deal with a direction we set as the 16th Assembly to look at energy costs and bring down the high cost of energy in a lot of our small communities.

Mr. Speaker: To the motion.

Mr. Abernethy: I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Motion 5-16(2) be amended as follows:

By inserting the words "communities that rely on diesel-generated power in" in paragraph 12 immediately after the words "consideration of levelized power rates for";

AND FURTHER:

By inserting the words "for communities that rely on diesel-generated power" in paragraph 14 immediately after the words "on a levelized rate structure."

Mr. Speaker: Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the amendment. Question is being called.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: To the motion as amended.

Mr. Menicoche: Once again, we're urging government to levelize our electricity rates in the North. Once again, we're asking government that... Electrical power's an essential service. That's something that none of our communities can get by without. We've got many, many remote

communities that operate on diesel-generated services and our community-rate-based structure. There's no equity in that for our communities, Mr. Speaker. We're expecting small communities such as Nahanni Butte, Colville Lake, Jean Marie to pay for the O&M and infrastructure of our power systems in those communities.

We cannot continue to allow that to happen. Any time one household attempts to save power by generating their own power or finding alternate means, that means everybody else has to pay. The way the structure's set now, the Power Corp has to recover all O&M costs. As ridiculous as it may sound, if there's only one household attached to that power-grid system, he's paying for the whole operating and maintenance cost of that diesel system in that community, Mr. Speaker. That's incredible. I don't see how we've done it for so long, especially in this day and age. There's just no room for that.

In my election campaign — in both of them — the one-rate power zone is still a priority in my communities. This motion, of course, speaks to levelizing the rates in the diesel communities, which I'll certainly support. It's one small step in making life a lot easier, one small step in making the cost of living a lot cheaper in our small and remote communities, which diesel generation affects. I certainly support it.

Over time we've always been finding that government has always said... It seems like that's the only system they know, so they will continue doing it this way. We know through research and asking questions that all the jurisdictions in Canada operate on levelized rate zones.

Some of them maintain their one-way zones, like in Alberta. Northern Alberta doesn't pay any less or any more than southern Alberta for their power rates. But in other communities — in other districts like Saskatchewan — the Northern communities do have a different rate zone. But it's for the diesel communities and they all pay the same rates.

That's something we should be gravitating toward. I've always believed that we're government and we listen to the people, and if the people want levelized rate zones, then I believe that's the direction in which government should be moving.

We're governing the people, and we should be listening to them if the people want levelized rate zones. Not to mention that 30 cents per kilowatt-hour that my honourable colleague put out there. That goes a long way in stimulating and having more disposable income in the pockets of our people and our businesses that are out there suffering.

I too have many, many businesses in my communities that are struggling because of the

higher rate zones in our communities, as well as the riders that are there. The rate riders are there because costs are rising, but there again, it has a ripple effect. It means the costs are rising for our small businesses and our people as well.

But as government, we have a role to play. We have a role in helping our communities, our businesses and our people. Hopefully, the government will really consider this motion this time. We've done many in the past, and if nothing gets done, we're going to have many more to come.

Eventually, government is going to have to listen to the people and to Members from this side of the House. I've always said the government has to take the cotton balls out of their ears and put it in their mouths so they can really listen to what we and the people are saying.

With that, I am going to support this motion, and I urge other Members to support this motion, and I urge the government to listen. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: To the motion as amended.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I too am very concerned about the high cost of power in our small communities.

I think I have a record of dedicating a lot of my time, personal energy and interest in working with small communities to try to address this issue in creative ways.

Currently, we do subsidize residential and commercial use of power in all our communities, diesel-generated communities especially, to the rate of the first 700 kilowatt-hours per month, and so on, for residents.

I believe that the average residential use remains at or below that figure, and in fact, energy efficiency has helped residents to remain below that level, especially now, with the rebates, the various incentives and education for more energy-efficient appliances and so on. I'm optimistic that can continue, and continue to help our residents in small communities.

I am concerned that a levelized rate structure will hide the real costs in the communities and hinder efforts to replace those high-cost diesel-generated power systems with cheaper and more responsible alternative-energy systems. Hopefully, that can be mitigated, and if we do go to a levelized rate, I want to retain the knowledge of what the real costs are so that we continue to focus our efforts on replacing those systems with other systems that are cheaper and better.

It's a very complicated and complex system, the whole business of electrical rates. I noticed that we have 19 diesel-powered communities. Current rates

are from 61 cents to \$2.34 per kilowatt-hour. Therefore, I assume that the costs, once levelized, would be something around 80-plus cents. That means, for a number of communities, and particularly the larger communities, the rates will go up — significantly, in some cases — so I'm hoping all those communities are in line and in support of this before we go forward.

I am also concerned about one of the side-effects, and that is the attempt to use energy more efficiently. There has already been, for example, a call from the community of Whati, where there is a system to replace hot water heaters with more efficient hot water heaters, but there has already been a call saying, "Can we drop this program if we're going to go to a levelized rate structure?" I think we need to be cognizant of that possibility as we move forward, and not sort of do in the programs that we already have going.

Finally, I suspect, because of our small communities, we have a larger number of government institutions than there are commercial customers. Those government institutions are paying often a high rate and helping. It's sort of an indirect subsidy for keeping rates reasonable. I'm concerned that because they're a larger part of that, if we levelize, they will actually be the big winners in this. If we do go forward again, we need to be sure that we're not shifting costs from government to the commercial users and so on. As I say, it gets to be quite a complex situation. I am totally committed to protecting our consumers and our public, especially in our small communities.

Finally, again I think I see a creative way to address the very high power rates in our small communities. I would like to see us move forward with systems where the power is generated locally from local resources and using local labour and building up our capacity at the same time. I totally believe that's doable, and I want to see some creativity, a commitment from this government to creative solutions, on that standpoint. We'd have true savings to our small-community residents — savings where we'd also contribute to the local economic development and skill development and so on, as well as, of course, environmental benefits along the way. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion as amended.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Mr. Krutko for bringing up Motion 5. I know this has been a concern of the diesel communities for some time now. The rates for power in their communities are structured on a community-by-community basis. I also empathize with the cumbersome process when there is a general re-application and the extreme amount of study and work that it takes just

to keep the community-by-community-based rates current.

Hay River is not a community that is serviced by diesel anymore so, as Members of this House who are from communities that are on hydro, we're being called upon to support something for diesel communities. I hope Mr. Krutko has some sense of how those communities would feel about a levelized rate, because I personally don't have a sense of how those communities would feel about it. As Mr. Bromley said, about 50 per cent of those communities would actually see a rate increase, and about 50 per cent would see a decrease. That's not anything that I particularly have knowledge about. I want to state that right from the outset.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the cost of living in the Northwest Territories. Certainly, with the unpredictable rising costs of fuel and with these stand-alone rate structures, it is, I'm certain, a very big concern for those communities that are on diesel-generated power as to what their costs will go to.

In the past the PUB has come back with some comments on the idea of the social engineering of power rates. I'm paraphrasing, but they have stated something to the effect that they're there to put the rate zones in place and make sure that the consumers are being protected. However, if the Government of the Northwest Territories wants to apply a social levelizing to those for fairness purposes, that is entirely within the purview of this government to do that. Certainly, through the territorial support program, the subsidy is exactly what we have done over the years.

Right now in the communities outside of Yellowknife, the first 700 kilowatts of power that's consumed is levelized to the Yellowknife rate on the basis that it will be paid for out of the Territorial support subsidy program. Then the business community — small business at least — does have an opportunity to apply for a commercial power subsidy through that same subsidy program.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that even going a step further than what the levelling of the rates has indicated, I think it is also time for this government to review the possibility of looking at that cap of 700 kilowatt hours and looking at the size of homes that people have now that are more reflective of the quality of life that people want to enjoy in the communities — the modern conveniences which are now in homes which all consume energy. Certainly, there are many appliances on the market now that consume less energy, but the sheer volume of electric appliances and conveniences in the home, the sheer number of them, has actually increased. I don't think it would hurt to take a look

at that cap of 700 kilowatt hours per household and see if that is sufficient.

To the issue of the small business subsidy, I think that this government should look at applying a subsidy at source as opposed to expecting people to apply for it after the fact. I think that would take a great deal of pressure off the small business community, and the economic development of our smaller communities will not be impeded by exorbitant and untenable power rates, which right now essentially they are getting very little support for.

Mr. Speaker, I want to note that this motion is relevant to the communities that have power that is generated by diesel. This does not speak to those communities like Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Hay River, Yellowknife, Behchoko — and I am sure there are others — and Dettah that are on hydro. This is the Member's attempt to bring forward a suggestion to the government to look at the viability and the benefit of the diesel communities having a harmonized or levelized rate. To the extent of that work being undertaken, this government should take this very seriously.

I feel very confident to support this motion and would encourage the government to respond favourably to looking at this. If we are serious about identifying the costs of living in the North as a priority of the 16th Assembly, this is a very good place to start.

So with that Mr. Speaker, I'd just say that I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion as amended.

Mr. Hawkins: My choice today will be to support this motion, to let my colleagues know that though sometimes I don't agree with all of their initiatives, I do support their aspirations. So, Mr. Speaker, I won't be walking over to hug that Member, but on the record, he should know that he has my support on this issue.

I do have some concerns. I am worried about the rollout of it. But certainly we will have to deal with the details when they come forward. I have always supported the initiative of trying to find ways to decrease the cost of community living. What that means, as Mrs. Groenewegen has mentioned about raising the rates as we subsidize community fees from 700 kilowatt hours to 800, to be more responsible, to be more reflective of the times, or even making adjustments to commercial industry that can help deliver cheaper costs for things like food and whatnot.... I am in support of this motion, and I just express caution on how we go forward on this, only because I am concerned about the rollout of this. But for the intent, I am 100 per cent on.

Hon. Bob McLeod: With regard to the motion, I would like to update the Members on what the Government of the Northwest Territories will be doing. The Government of the Northwest Territories intends to undertake a review of the electricity rates, regulation and subsidy programs. Cabinet recently authorized the establishment of the ministerial energy coordinating committee to ensure that the energy priorities identified by the 16th Legislative Assembly are coordinated across government. This committee is comprised of the Ministers of Industry, Tourism and Investment; Environment and Natural Resources; and the Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

Undertaking a review of electricity rates, regulation and subsidy programs will be a high priority of the ministerial energy coordinating committee. While the Government of the Northwest Territories has made many investments in such areas as energy conservation and efficiency and the application of alternative energy, it is important that administrative and regulatory systems are reviewed as well. For example, businesses in our remote communities have a difficult time competing and providing goods and services at affordable prices due to the high cost of power.

The proposed electricity review will examine this area closely to determine options for reducing the high cost of doing business in N.W.T. communities. With a complex system, including separate rate zones for each community, there are likely opportunities for change. This is consistent with recent Government of Northwest Territories efforts to refocus operations, ensuring that programs and services reflect the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly. The ministerial energy coordinating committee intends to consult closely with Members of the Legislative Assembly on this important and complex initiative, and we look forward to your active involvement and input.

An electricity review working committee has been established to undertake the review of the electricity regulations, rates, power subsidy programs in the N.W.T. The review process and the terms of reference for the working committee will be reviewed by the Deputy Minister of the energy coordinating committee and will be forwarded to the ministerial energy coordinating committee for approval. The committee membership is composed of Industry, Tourism and Investment; Financial Management Board Secretariat; and Department of Finance, with the head of the NWT Power Corporation acting as a technical advisor to the committee.

The current, draft objectives of the committee are to:

- 1) Examine the N.W.T. Public Utilities Board Act and the associated regulatory system for establishing electricity rates and develop options aimed at reducing complexity and administrative costs;
- 2) Examine other jurisdictions to consider governance models that will provide fair rates and interests processes and oversight tools; maintain an appropriate level of procedural fairness, impartiality, transparency and accountability without creating unnecessary complexity;
- 3) Examine the current approach of community-based electricity rates and develop alternative approaches to rate setting aimed at reducing overall system complexity and costs;
- 4) Examine the Government of Northwest Territories commercial and Territorial power subsidy programs, analyze their effectiveness in ensuring that N.W.T. residents and businesses have access to affordable power, and develop options for change as required;
- 5) Examine the various public policy issues that will arise during this review, including issues related to the role of the Government of Northwest Territories in the provision and regulation of electricity in the Northwest Territories, and provide a critical analysis and future policy options that consider the approach in other jurisdictions as well as the unique nature of N.W.T. markets.

The current proposed schedule includes a technical review and analysis, in consultation with internal and key stakeholders, until June 2008. A public discussion paper will be prepared for cabinet's consideration in September 2008, with public consultations occurring throughout the fall of 2008. This will lead to a detailed report for cabinet's consideration in 2009.

With this information, this will help make an informed vote on the motion.

Mr. Speaker: I will allow the Member for Mackenzie Delta to close debate.... The hon. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, on the motion as amended.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the first day of session I spoke to the extremely high power rates residents of Inuvik were facing. And we're a gas community — supposedly a gas community. Power rates are affecting everything in Inuvik. The recreation facilities are being affected; the goods and services that are sold are being affected. Our power rates have gone up. We have the gas field 20 kilometres

from town. We still pay less than they do in a place like Norman Wells. If we want to levelize, we can levelize the gas communities: Inuvik and Norman Wells. We'll get good rates for both communities, I'm sure.

But the cost of power, electricity, has been a concern. I had to do some research and ask some questions, because I wasn't sure how this was going to affect Inuvik. Inuvik is a gas community, so it wouldn't affect us that much. I would like to see.... You look at the power rates that are paid across the Northwest Territories — and I understand some are hydro communities, and they have a lot lower rates than some; I see some where they pay \$2 — the prices are just unreal across the board. I understand that the Power Corp needs to make a return on their investment.

We talk about energy-efficient appliances all the time. We try to educate people as to converting to energy-efficient appliances, and they've taken our direction. A lot of them have moved over to more energy-efficient appliances. Then power goes up, in my opinion to compensate for less power being used. I have an issue with that, and I think it's happened. I look at the documentation we get, and you see the diesel riders, the shortfall riders, and I was just noticing another one: Rider 1. It doesn't even say what it's for; it just says Rider 1. We've got a whole posse of riders out there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would support this motion. I had some questions first, and I was okay with the answers I was given. But if this is an opportunity to lower the cost of living in the communities across the Territories, then it's something that I'm all for and I think we should all be for, because everything that goes on in communities is affected by power. The higher the rate, the more that people have to pay.

You get places like Inuvik, for example, and if one of the big stores were to get off the power grid and pull in their own generator, that would drive everybody else's prices up. So this is something that we have to look at. Personally, I would like to see one rate zone right across the Northwest Territories. But there will be some resistance to that....

Interjection.

Mr. McLeod: Already, see? And rightfully so, I suppose.

Then I hear of a project called the Talston hydro project. Who is that going to benefit? The people of Ulukhaktok, the people of Inuvik? No, it's not. That's something that I wouldn't be able to support. I'll support anything that has a positive impact on most of the people that we represent. The people up in the northern part of the Northwest Territories seem to be paying the highest rates of anything that

goes on. We have to try and be in this forum and do what's fair for the people across the Northwest Territories, because that's what they expect us to do. The power rates went up in Inuvik, and I heard it from everybody. I heard it from citizens; I heard it from businesses. It just affects everything.

I have a list here of the diesel communities. There are 19 of them. I don't see Inuvik on the list, so I am going to support this motion. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The mover of the motion for concluding remarks, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I would like to thank my colleagues for their comments in regard to the motion. I'd like to thank the Minister for making us aware of what is happening in regard to the Minister's energy coordinating committee.

But I think we also have to realize that I read a decision that was made by the Public Utilities Board in 1995. It is 12 years later, and we are still talking about this issue. So I think it is important that we act now. By the Minister's direction and the committee work on this motion, I believe it will get us to where we want to go. Hopefully, we will have it completed before our four-year term is up in this 16th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make everybody aware of what Minister Bob McLeod touched on. I think the biggest beneficiary of this is going to be our business community and the socio-economic viability of our communities. And that alone has a price tag. As I stated, we're spending in excess of some \$14 million on subsidies by way of the Territorial Power Support Program, the Housing Corporation subsidy by way of \$4 million. The cost of this government to file some 28 applications every time there's a PUB process.

I think it's important that, as government, through those savings.... I know my colleague Mr. Bromley touched on exactly what are we doing to try to find new ways of generating energy initiatives. If everybody were on hydro it would solve the problem. Realistically, that's not going to happen in regards to Kugluktuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuk or even in the communities in the valley unless we do something by way of a hydro project.

I know we've invested \$1 million to look into hydro projects in regard to Whati or Lutselk'e. That's the start we have to move on. In order to do more of those, we have to re-invest the money that we're spending right now by way of Territorial Support Program, the money that we spend in regards to the social housing subsidy, by way of power subsidies. The amount of time and money that's been consumed to file these applications every two or four years is a very costly endeavour.

It is important that we look at that. We've already done some of that by way of looking at what's happening in the hydro communities, heating public buildings to using hydro surplus heat.

I, for one, feel that this motion will eventually kick-start the process, and we will be able to move forward. With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members to support this motion. Also, at this time I'd ask for a recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker: The Member has asked for a recorded vote. I would ask all Members in favour of the amended motion to please stand.

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. R. McLeod, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro.

Mr. Speaker: I'll ask those opposing the amended motion to please stand. I'll ask all those abstaining from the motion to please stand.

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Roland, Mr. M. McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. B. McLeod.

Mr. Speaker: Results of the vote: 11 for, zero against, 7 abstaining.

Motion as amended carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2), 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. In consideration in the Committee of the Whole we have Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2).

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 1-16(2) SESSIONAL STATEMENT

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 9-16(2) PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDY SURVEY RESULTS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to ask what is the wish of the committee?

Interjections.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the consideration of Minister's Statement

1-16(2) and Minister's Statement 9-16(2) is concluded?

Some honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister's Statement 1-16(2) and Minister's Statement 9-16(2) are concluded. Therefore, what's the wish of the committee?

Mrs. Groenewegen: I move that we report progress.

Motion carried.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The committee has been considering Minister's Statement 1-16(2) and Minister's Statement 9-16(2). I would like to report that Minister's Statement 1-16(2) and Minister's Statement 9-16(2) are concluded. I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

Mr. Speaker: Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Secunder, Mr. Hawkins.

Motion carried.

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

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1-16(2)
INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008-2009

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

Mr. Speaker: Bill 1 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 1 read a third time.

BILL 3-16(2)
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Range Lake, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, be read for the third time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 3 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 3 read a third time.

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

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning tomorrow at 7:30 a.m.

Orders of the Day

Orders of the Day for Thursday, February 21, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 5) Returns to Oral Questions
- 6) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 7) Acknowledgements
- 8) Oral Questions
- 9) Written Questions
- 10) Returns to Written Questions
- 11) Replies to Opening Address
- 12) Petitions
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
 - Motion 6-16(2): Access Roads to Gravel Sources (Krutko)
 - Motion 7-16(2): Extended Adjournment of the House to May 22, 2008 (Bisaro)
- 18) First Reading of Bills
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- 21) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22) Third Reading of Bills
- 23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 21, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 5:53 p.m.