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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Tuesday, June 17, 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 1:33 p.m.

**Prayer**

Prayer.

**Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The lead Minister of the Strategic Initiative Committee on Building Our Future, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 70-16(2)  
BUILDING OUR FUTURE

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take the opportunity today as the lead Minister of the Building Our Future Strategic Initiative Committee to provide an update on the planned actions of this committee.

As you know, the Building Our Future initiative is one of five strategic initiatives that form the backbone of our government's strategic approach. This initiative focuses on our future by making significant investments in prevention and long-term social well-being of the population of the Northwest Territories. These investments build on our significant base of programs and services that support the well-being of our residents.

The six actions planned under these initiatives are to expand programming for our children and youth, encourage healthy choices and address addictions, implement phase 2 of the Framework for Action on Family Violence, strengthen continuum of care for seniors, enhance support for the voluntary sector and increase safety and security. These actions will contribute to several goals identified by Members of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly but will focus on specific goals of healthy, educated people and sustainable, vibrant, safe communities.

Expanding programming for children and youth is a key part of this initiative. Under this action we will invest in early childhood development programs to ensure that children get a healthy start in culturally relevant programs and get ready for the transition

to school years. The \$1 million investment included in the 2008–09 budget builds on our investment in early childhood development to more than \$6 million annually.

We will also build on the success of last year's pilot project to establish a funding program to operate youth centres, and we'll continue to support youth programs. We intend to re-profile funding to add \$150,000 to youth contribution funding in 2008–09 and to fund two regional youth adviser positions to work with schools, community governments, the Sport and Recreation Council and other stakeholders.

Our plans also include enhancing the Teacher Education Program to allow for community-based delivery throughout all regions in the Northwest Territories. This builds on the recently piloted Teacher Education Access Program in the Tlicho region.

As part of our Building Our Future Strategic Initiative we'll also support the expansion of respite services, which will provide an essential break to parents and caregivers of special-needs children. Currently these services are available in Yellowknife, N'dilo and Dettah through an open referral process. This activity identifies the investments that will support these services beyond Yellowknife.

To encourage healthy choices and address addictions, the government will carry out health promotion and prevention activities through the Healthy Choices Framework. This framework involves a five-year plan to develop and deliver coordinated programs, interventions and public messaging on physical activity, healthy eating, mental health, addictions, tobacco harm reduction and cessation, injury prevention and high-risk sexual behaviours.

We also plan to focus on after-care services for individuals being treated for alcohol and drug addiction. Continued development and delivery of culturally appropriate treatment options will be an important element of this work. Our investments in this area will build on the more than \$20 million our government spends each year for promotion,

awareness and treatment services related to mental health and addictions.

Developing the Framework for Action on Family Violence, phase 2, is an important collaboration between the non-government organizations and the government. The Building Our Future Strategic Initiative includes implementing actions from this framework which will enhance community services and stabilize the existing system of shelters. The demand for home and community care is growing due to aging populations, continued movement from facility-based to home- and community-based care, and continued changes in the approach to hospital care, such as the increased outpatient procedures and earlier discharges.

The Strengthen the Continuum of Care for Seniors action includes expanding community and home care services throughout the Territories and developing the training capacity to meet the increased demand for these services. The income threshold for the seniors home heating subsidy will be increased for 2008–2009, which will further support seniors living independently. Other investments planned for this area will support operations of the new territorial dementia facility and the territorial supported-living campus.

The government is committed to supporting the volunteer sector. There are many parts to this sector, including people who volunteer, for example, as coaches, fundraisers and firefighters; those who serve on boards as volunteers and oversee the operation of a society; and those who work with NGOs that provide services in our communities on behalf of the government. Given this range, it makes sense that there need to be many points within the government that work to support this sector. The existing Volunteer Support Initiative sets the stage for further collaboration amongst the departments. In addition to working closely with many support and volunteer organizations, MACA programs support training for all volunteer organizations, and recognize the efforts of volunteers in all sectors of society.

The Financial Management Board Secretariat leads work on a funding framework; and Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; and Justice fund and support a wide range of NGOs that provide direct services or advocacy. The 2008–2009 budget started a process to strengthen our communities to this sector, and we are working on a new NGO funding policy. Actions under phase 2 of the Framework for Action on Family Violence, started in 2008–2009, provide targeted support for this important sector. We are working on approaches to better promote and support our volunteers.

While these provide a good start, the Building Our Future Strategic Initiative Committee will be working on further actions in this area, and we have identified funding to hold a forum with volunteer organizations in 2008–2009 to discuss further actions.

Finally, we will take steps as part of the strategic initiative to increase safety and security in our communities. Investments planned under this action include enhancing police services and taking steps to reduce alcohol- and drug-related crime. We'll be making funding available to address the pressures felt by communities which are providing ambulance and highway rescue programs while we continue to develop a legislative and service delivery model. We recognize that more work is needed as part of this action to address the chronic offenders and enhance emergency services in our communities. These areas will need our attention as we develop further investments as part of the strategic initiative.

The Building Our Future Strategic Initiative Committee faces the challenge of developing actions in an area that has many demands and priorities, all of which are critically important. We need to ensure our actions are guided by an overarching framework for change that helps us achieve our vision of "strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories."

I look forward to continuing to work together with Members and my fellow Cabinet colleagues as we continue to work to build our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 71-16(2) SPECIES AT RISK ACT

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, protecting species at risk is a major priority for the people of the Northwest Territories. In September 2006 the Department of Environment and Natural Resources released a public consultation document outlining the major elements proposed for NWT species-at-risk legislation. The proposed Species at Risk Act is a result of collaboration with land claim organizations during the drafting process. It was created to promote the effective management of species and prevent them from becoming at-risk in the NWT. The draft also ensures residents are involved in decisions regarding the management, protection and conservation of species at risk.

The success of this draft sets the stage for the development of the Northwest Territories Wildlife Act and speaks to the issue of northern control over northern resources. Northerners need to be involved in the decision-making processes. Decisions concerning the North should be made by Northerners with the North in mind.

The proposed act is guided by the knowledge that wild species are important to residents and should be managed wisely. It also recognizes that all residents in the Northwest Territories have a responsibility to prevent species from becoming at-risk.

The draft legislation builds on our unique wildlife co-management processes, and recognizes the roles and responsibilities established under land claim agreements. It also recognizes the importance of traditional and local knowledge in managing species at risk and that responsibility for conservation and recovery of species at risk in the NWT is shared between wildlife co-management boards, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Tlicho Government and the Government of Canada.

Under the act, conservation measures to protect, manage and recover species at risk will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure they are appropriate to the species. Regulations under the proposed act could require actions be taken to conserve a species or prohibit activities that may adversely affect the species.

Regulations could also regulate, restrict or prohibit killing, harming, harassing, taking, buying, selling, trading or possessing species at risk. In some cases there may be habitats that are essential to the survival and recovery of a species at risk. In most cases habitats will be designated under the Species at Risk Act, and no person would be allowed to destroy any part of the designated habitat.

The draft act also fulfills a number of GNWT commitments under the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, a national program to protect all species in Canada from becoming extinct as a result of human activity. It is our intention to introduce legislation in the fall session.

Mr. Speaker, protection is a joint responsibility. As stewards of our environment I encourage all residents to review this document and discuss it in their communities. At the appropriate time today I will be tabling the proposed legislation.

Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister

responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 72-16(2)  
MOBILE TRADES LABORATORY OPENING  
IN THE BEAUFORT-DELTA

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. April 15 marked the official opening of the Mobile Trades Lab in Inuvik. Many of us here today were present at the opening and had the opportunity to tour the facility. It is an impressive unit — a great example of how innovation and open-minded thinking can allow us to maximize opportunities for Northerners. The opening of this lab was cause for celebration in the Beaufort-Delta region and for all the partners involved in the project.

Earlier in this session I spoke about a partnership approach to building the Aurora College residence in Inuvik. The Mobile Trades Lab is yet another example of how a partnership is leading to great things in this region. The lab became a reality due to community commitment and action.

Mr. Speaker, funding was provided by a broad group of partners, including the Government of Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs; Gwich'in Tribal Council; Inuvialuit Regional Corporation; the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce; Aurora College; and GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The demand for educated tradespeople in the Northwest Territories continues to grow. We also hear from our industry partners that they need Northerners with basic skills and who are ready for work. One of the great selling points of trades is the opportunity for exciting, hands-on work, and direct exposure to this type of work through projects like this mobile training unit is one of the best ways to get Northerners interested.

Aurora College will be offering pre-trades training at the new Mobile Trades Lab in the 2008–2009 academic year. Aurora College is working on a plan that would see the mobile lab travel to other communities in the Beaufort-Delta, allowing more Northerners to get a taste of the trades. In this way, the Mobile Trades Lab has the potential to be a model for the delivery of trades training right across the North.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Ministers' statements. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 73-16(2)  
HONOURING FRED CARMICHAEL

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would first like to take this opportunity to

congratulate the new president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Mr. Richard Nerysoo, and the returning vice-president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Ms. Mary Ann Ross, on their elections yesterday. The Government of the Northwest Territories looks forward to working with them on issues of common concern.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the accomplishments of a great leader who has inspired Northerners with his passion for over 50 years. Although his term as president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council has ended, anyone who knows Fred Carmichael will agree that using the word "retirement" would be inaccurate.

I have known Fred for a number of years. His career spans a broad range of pursuits, from business to politics. His achievements in each of these areas are equally impressive.

In 2006 Fred received the National Aboriginal Business Award, and in 2007 he won a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for politics. He has been and will continue to be a passionate and tireless worker in the service of his people, a dedicated activist, a man of quiet vision and honesty and immense integrity.

As a concerned community member and pilot, Fred has been on countless searches where his knowledge of the land and people has helped in many successful rescues. There are many residents of the Beaufort-Delta who are with us today because of heroic efforts in many medevacs and searches.

For over 40 years Fred flew trappers, hunters, tourists, students and community members, and I would bet there are few lakes, rivers and stretches of flat ground in the Beaufort-Delta that have not seen the landing gear of Fred's planes.

As the first aboriginal commercial pilot in the Northwest Territories, Fred's contribution to modern aviation history in the North is well known. He is one of the great northern bush pilots. Through his various air service companies Fred has been instrumental in training young pilots, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal. As a successful businessman Fred has contributed immensely to his community and territorial economic development.

As the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council for nine years, and more recently as chair of the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, Fred continues to make important contributions to the political, social and economic progress of his people and all residents of the Northwest Territories. Fred's efforts in ensuring aboriginal leadership and participation in all aspects of the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline project have been unwavering and have inspired

confidence and a new sense of optimism among aboriginal people in the North. Simply put, Fred has had a career that mirrors the pride, dignity and heritage of his family and his people.

Fred is also committed to the well-being of his people and all Northerners. This April, under Fred's leadership and vision, the Gwich'in opened the Sunrise Wellness Centre, which will serve Northerners on their healing journey.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, please join me in thanking Fred Carmichael for his outstanding contributions to the political, social and economic development of the Northwest Territories, and wishing him the best of luck in his new endeavours. Thank you.

Applause.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL SPORT CIRCLE OF THE WESTERN ARCTIC

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a youngster growing up, I played all kinds of sports: hockey, soccer. Now I coach. Sport is a big part of my life. Now I'm a stick boy for my two sons, Matthew and Mitchell, which I enjoy.

Today I would like to recognize what I call the new Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic. Since the sport circle started, it struggled as a new sport organization, never really receiving the same level of support and recognition of the other non-government sport and recreation associations. However, with new staff members Jan Larsson and Greg Hopf, the sport circle is becoming more prominent in the communities, and once again is sending a team to the North American Indigenous Games later this year.

Unfortunately, support of Team NWT for the 2006 NAIG games was reallocated to another event, and many youth were very disappointed. This is one example I spoke about in regard to the level of support. You would never see funding for the Arctic Winter Games or the Canada Summer Games team taken away and reallocated to other, smaller regional games.

However, the sport circle has regrouped, refocused, and is now gearing up for the biggest NWT NAIG team ever. Congratulations to Jan and Greg, who have been visiting our communities and doing all they can to raise the profile of the sport circle to the level it should be. In spite of limited support they continue to deliver many positive programs for



youth, instilling hope and dreams along the way. The sport circle is lucky to have these dedicated, passionate and caring individuals.

In my riding, 27 athletes and participants from all four communities that I represent are on the Team NWT going to B.C. in August. This last winter, Mr. Speaker, there were over 60 participants.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

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

Team NWT is going to B.C. in August. During the last winter, Mr. Speaker, 60 participants from the four Nunakput communities that I represent participated in the Aboriginal Sport Circle events and programs. These are very good numbers, especially with Nunakput being the furthest riding from downtown Yellowknife. This shows the efforts of the new Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, the sport circle is delivering many positive programs and events to many aboriginal youth who need positive alternatives. This government needs to recognize this and to start providing Aboriginal Sport Circle with the same level of support that it gives any other territorial sporting organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
HAY RIVER'S RELAY FOR LIFE  
WALK FOR CANCER

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to congratulate the residents of Hay River and the organizers of what I believe has been the largest fundraiser ever to take place in Hay River. I'm referring to the Relay for Life, which was held in many communities across Canada June 13.

The 12-hour walk for cancer was a celebration of survival and a tribute to the lives of loved ones who have been touched by cancer. There were 38 teams involved, with four out-of-town teams from Fort Smith, Kakisa, Yellowknife and Fort Providence.

Over the past few weeks people raised money by having garage sales, bake sales, dances, silent auctions, bottle drives, penny drives and by selling cancer bracelets and getting pledges, and the list goes on.

Hundreds of people gathered on the track of the Diamond Jenness School last Friday night. They brought their lawn chairs and sleeping bags and pitched their tents for the night. People had their heads shaved for donations; teams sold items such as food, balloons, plants; and you could even buy a ticket to win a pair of diamond earrings.

The walk started with a victory walk of 29 Hay River cancer survivors plus one cancer survivor from each of central Alberta and Yellowknife. Each team had a walker constantly on the track from 7 in the evening until 7 in the morning. At midnight 755 candles were lit in memory of the friends and family who had lost their fight with cancer, and in honour of those who are still fighting this disease. This ceremony was very moving, and more than a few tears were shed.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise that although unofficial, the donation to the Canadian Cancer Society from Hay River, at last count, was at \$195,000 yesterday, and money is still coming in.

Applause.

They should reach the \$200,000 mark. It was predicted that for a community the size of Hay River, they might have raised \$66,000. In terms of community size this donation is unparalleled across Alberta. Hay River raised more in the Relay for Life than did Edmonton, Calgary or Fort McMurray. As you can see, they went above and beyond their wildest expectations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Hay River Lions Club and the numerous volunteers who rose to the challenge of organizing this event. I would like to mention a few people who really made this possible through their efforts: Shari Burnstad, Shirley Sloat, Diana Field, Melvin Larocque, Ronnie Shaw, Diana Ehman and Pat Burnstad.

Many thanks to the 38 teams that participated in the relay, and a heartfelt "thank you" to the people of Hay River who contributed in so many ways to reaching this incredible goal and this outstanding success in the fight against cancer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
LACK OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Health care in small communities is somewhere between none

and non-existent. Basically, in most cases you don't have elder care; you don't have home care; you don't have mental health workers or alcohol/drug workers. You're lucky to see a doctor once a month or to visit a family physician — a doctor or a nurse — or in most cases, to have a family dentist.

Mr. Speaker, it comes down to a question of the disparity between the larger centres in regard to care facilities and walk-in clinics; being able to have dental care in clinics; but more importantly, having elder care at 24-hour care facilities.

There's talk of a new dementia centre and more clinics in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, in most communities you're lucky to see a doctor once a month, if the weather is clear and the doctors are available. The same thing applies in regard to physicians and being able to see a nurse in the community, which is scheduled for once a month. Again, if you're lucky, they can find a nurse to provide that service.

Mr. Speaker, health care is an essential service that we cannot take for granted. To be able to see a doctor or nurse once a month is unacceptable in this day and age in regard to health care services for all residents of the Northwest Territories. We cannot have a two-part system determined by where you live, with services that people take for granted when in other communities there is no such service.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's time that this government did everything it can to ensure that everybody is treated fairly, and more importantly, that we receive the basic health care services that all Canadians expect.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services questions on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
ABORIGINAL AND LONG-TERM  
NORTHERNERS

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken a few times in this Assembly on aboriginal employment within the GNWT. It came to mind again the other day when I heard from a constituent, a young man who's going to college this fall. He was looking for a summer job and was told that the department wasn't hiring. He finds out a little while later that somebody from the south was hired.

Mr. Speaker, this is just another example of young aboriginal people being put on the back burner again.

**Some Honourable Members:** Shame!

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I'm frustrated, just totally frustrated, with some of the treatment of aboriginal employees within the GNWT.

Another example, in my mind, is this whole "potentially affected employee" exercise that we just went through. The task of identifying employees, in my opinion, was made at some of the regional levels. Who are they going to identify? I believe they identified a lot of the aboriginal employees, and I think statistics show it and prove it.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen qualifications tailored to hire certain individuals from down south. This is a small percentage of people; not everyone is like that, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of people who have moved north, made the North their home and are still here today. But there is a percentage out there that still continues to do this.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not radical by any means, but I am extremely concerned with the battles that we still have to fight.

In an Assembly where 11 of the 19 Members are aboriginal and the other eight Members are lifelong Northerners who have adopted the North, made it their home and are contributing to the well-being and growth of the Northwest Territories, this is something that we should not condone and allow to happen on our watch. As aboriginals we have to protect the people who put us here.

Mr. Speaker, Fred Carmichael spent many years trying to do what was best for the aboriginal people across the Northwest Territories. As younger leaders we have to carry on the cause of ensuring aboriginals and lifelong Northerners are the major beneficiaries of anything, any resources, any employment that goes on in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, that's our cause, and I think we should carry that on. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
EXEMPTION FROM  
THE GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about an issue that I have raised in this House before and one that over the past three years just has not seen any advancement. That issue, Mr. Speaker, is the exemption from paying

the GST for the Northwest Territories and our two sister territories of Nunavut and the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be lobbying the federal government with a collective voice. The population of all three territories combined is only 85,000, about the same size as a city such as Red Deer. It would certainly not impact the federal government's bottom line much if they took a serious look at exempting the three northern territories from paying the GST.

Mr. Speaker, if the federal government is serious about Arctic sovereignty, social development, capacity building and the health and well-being of people in the three territories, then they must find ways to ensure that we can attract doctors, teachers, nurses and others to the North to live here and raise families in our communities, and that those who are here today will have some incentive to stay.

Mr. Speaker, last winter I heard from constituents about high fuel costs and that people were struggling to pay for home heating fuel. This is in families, Mr. Speaker, where both the husband and wife are working full time. The price of oil continues to rise almost on a daily basis. This, Mr. Speaker, is a very, very scary proposition for many families and homeowners across northern Canada, where it is winter seven to nine months of the year.

As a starting point our government should be looking at supporting the Yukon government's move to lobby the federal government to remove the GST on home heating fuel, power generation and the transportation of essential goods north of 60.

In a press release last month the Yukon government said it would approach Nunavut and the Northwest Territories to join them in lobbying Ottawa for tax relief in these important areas. Mr. Speaker, we are set to leave here in two days, and I'm wondering why our government hasn't put forward a motion similar to the one put forward by the Yukon government.

Costs are rising daily in our communities. Our constituents need to have faith that we, as legislators, will do everything in our power to mitigate costs for our residents. A GST exemption on home heating fuel, power and transportation of essential goods would certainly be a great place to start, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

## MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EQUAL AND SHARED PARENTING

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly live in interesting times. These are the days of two incomes and increasing rates of divorce. These are the days of large, beautiful houses yet increasing numbers of broken homes. These are the days when many families are crumbling, and children are being raised by one parent.

According to this Assembly's strategic plan, our vision is to have strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous NWT. Within that vision we share a goal of working with families, communities and schools to improve the physical and mental well-being of our youth.

With the increasing rates of divorce resulting in a larger number of single-parent homes, children are the real victims. Within our legal and social services systems we should be promoting equal and shared parenting, unless one or both parents are clearly shown to be unfit. We should be promoting the involvement of both mothers and fathers in all programs we provide to divorced parents, as it is good for the children.

Studies show that children benefit from a positive connection with both parents. They are less likely to live in poverty and more likely to do better in school. They are more likely to have supportive relationships with both parents and with extended family members, and they are less likely to have stressed-out single parents — often the mother, who, in our current system, is usually the primary caregiver.

In cases of divorce we should be promoting positive involvement of fathers with their children, because it's good for mothers. In our changing society more mothers with young children work outside the home, more families live far away from close relatives, and many people now live among strangers in communities away from home and the support that once existed.

Children who have loving relationships with both parents — fathers and mothers — in situations of divorce have more confidence and are happier than children without equal contact with both parents. When parents can learn to put their personal conflicts aside and have a more businesslike approach, the children learn about conflict resolution, problem solving and respect.

When it comes to children we must always remember that a dad is a boy's first hero and the first man that a girl loves, and a mother is a girl's

first role model and the first woman that a boy loves and respects.

In order to meet our mandate and improve the physical and mental well-being of our youth, this government must ensure that all of our programs and services — primarily the areas of justice and social services — are focused on uniting families, whether parents are happily married or divorced.

For the sake of the children, this government must stop paying lip service and must demonstrate that we are committed to equal and shared parenting unless one or both parents are clearly shown to be unfit.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I'll be asking the Premier some questions on this topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT HOME RULE MOVEMENT

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A basic theme in the history of Ireland through the centuries of English dominance was the desire for control over its domestic affairs. Home rule constantly refers to the demands for greater self-government within a central government.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has been struggling with the federal government to complete the full transfer of decision-making powers since the '70s. We keep insisting on the need for greater local control and accountability by Northerners for decisions that will affect our future.

Early on we made some progress with devolution of education and health and social services, for example. Unfortunately, devolution stalled when we started talking about legislative powers and responsibilities for land and resources. Interestingly enough, these are the areas that would allow the GNWT to make money, to generate revenues from the many riches that our territory has to offer. This leaves a bitter taste. We are allowed to be responsible for what costs money, but we are not allowed control over our revenues.

Mr. Speaker, does this sound like a history chapter from a hundred years ago? It is upsetting that this is not history from the past. We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and still negotiating our rights to take care of our own affairs.

Mr. Speaker, it was this look at history that inspired my idea of the NWT home rule movement. Enough of the tyranny that belongs in the past. We have proven that we need to end this begging. We have

provided plenty of proof that we are able to take care of our own affairs.

The example of Newfoundland and Labrador, under the committed leadership of their Premier, Danny Williams, has demonstrated that it can be done. The pressure of a home rule movement may convince the federal government to devolve complete legislative jurisdiction and powers to the GNWT.

It is time that this House takes care of its own affairs. If this House had any courage, we would pass our own legislation that recognizes our rights as full partners in the Confederation of Canada. The NWT is not a second-class province, Mr. Speaker. I am committed to getting this done and working to a full devolution agreement. I hope our Premier is too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS AND OVERCROWDING IN YELLOWKNIFE

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Homelessness permeates all of our communities. It comes in two forms: the problem of those who have no home at all and the problem of overcrowding in many homes. Not surprisingly, the largest number of homeless people is in Yellowknife, our largest community. Many of these people have come to Yellowknife from our smaller communities in search of services or jobs only to discover that they can't afford the housing once they get here.

The Finance Minister's Budget Address spoke often about economic development but did not once reference the negative aspects of that development, particularly housing. An economic boom brings new workers and their families to communities. These new workers need a place to live. If the supply of housing is limited, housing costs go up, often beyond the ability of people to pay the increased rent or purchase price for a home. As prices go up, the vacancy rates fall. Yellowknife's vacancy rate right now is less than 1 per cent.

Limited housing options mean displaced individuals and families who have nowhere to turn when they're down and out. Where can the following people go: women and children needing a shelter; a resident whose home has been destroyed by fire; a youth escaping an abusive home; a teenager on her own with an unplanned pregnancy.

In October of 2005 the report Homelessness in the NWT: Recommendations to Improve the GNWT Response was issued. In January 2007 the GNWT replied with the report Framework for the GNWT Response to Homelessness. In summarizing the 2005 report, the 2007 response outlines the concept of continuum of housing; identifies goals, principles, commitments, the needs of NGOs; and lists the four next steps. Has any progress been made on these four actions? Does the Minister responsible for the homeless have a plan and a budget to expand the housing continuum? Did Health and Social Services and the NWT Housing Corporation produce a Housing Needs Survey in 2007? Did Health and Social Services establish a Territorial Homelessness Emergency Funding Advisory Panel? Did the GNWT Social Program departments collaborate to improve coordination and reduce program conflicts in relation to homelessness? The 2008–2009 budget has minimal funding for the issue of homelessness. Is it a priority for this government?

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the homeless at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECLASSIFICATION OF LAKES AS MINE DUMP SITES

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lakes across Canada, including the Northwest Territories, face being turned into mine dump sites under federal legislation. CBC reports that 16 Canadian lakes are slated to be officially but quietly reclassified as toxic dump sites for mines. This process amounts to a hidden subsidy to mining companies, allowing them to get around laws against the destruction of fish habitats.

Under the Fisheries Act it's illegal to put harmful substances into fish-bearing waters. But under a little known subsection known as Schedule 2 of the Mining Effluent Regulations, federal bureaucrats can redefine lakes as tailings impoundment areas. This means mining companies don't need to build containment ponds for toxic mine tailings.

Elizabeth Gardner, vice-president for technical affairs for the Mining Association of Canada, said that lakes are often the best way for mine tailings to be contained. But Catherine Coumans, spokeswoman for the environmental group MiningWatch, said the federal government is making it too easy. Using the obscure Schedule 2 regulations, they quietly reclassify lakes and other waters as tailings dumps. By being put under Schedule 2 of this regulation, something that used

to be a lake or even a river is no longer a lake or a river. It's a tailings impoundment area. It's a waste disposal site. It's an industrial waste dump. Coumans said the procedure amounts to a subsidy to the industry that enables mines to get around the Fisheries Act. What Canadians need to know is that from March 2008 to March 2009, eight lakes are subject to being put on Schedule 2, which is just about every mine that is going ahead this year. Winter Lake in the Northwest Territories, as many of us know, is being considered. This is not just one lake at a time. This is a trend. It's open season on Canadian waters. This is a precedent-setting decision by the federal government to start using fish-bearing habitat as a waste management area.

With climate change and rapidly increasing fuel costs, food supplies are becoming scarcer and costlier. We in the North rely on our caribou, our moose, our sea mammals and especially our fish. All are under siege.

I ask this government to engage in the active protection and true valuing of our land and water. Let's guide our federal government to a position of sustainability.

Thank you. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING CONCERNS IN TU NEDHE

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, I spoke a number of times about the various issues regarding housing in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e. Today I'd like to summarize issues surrounding this important topic.

During my short tenure as MLA issues surrounding housing have been raised time and time again. Also, I have heard many of my colleagues raise the housing issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's pretty safe to say there is room for improvement on many fronts within the whole housing area. Coincidentally, the findings in the Auditor General's report confirm that, yes, there are a number of problems with the NWT Housing Corporation and the way the housing programs are being delivered. However, I think that with this government we have a real opportunity to effectively address many of these issues or at least to establish a concrete work plan to address these problems. I believe this has already started, with the release of the Housing Corporation's Framework for Action 2008–2011 and, more recently, the approval of a committee motion to reallocate funds to new construction to much-needed repair programs.

The amalgamation of the previous 14 housing programs into the current four programs, and the transfer of public housing programs from the Housing Corporation to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, certainly caused a number of new issues, mainly because of learning curves that go along with substantial changes seen with these programs.

However, Mr. Speaker, I have hope that this government and the Ordinary MLAs working together should and will resolve many of these housing issues, and that we will soon begin to see positive changes for the people of the NWT.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY COST OVERRUNS

**Mr. Menicoche:** Mr. Speaker, our Health and Social Services authorities have been getting heightened profile and press coverage because of cost overruns, and I, too, am concerned. Firstly though, I want to commend all our hard-working staff — the doctors, the nurses and the many health professionals who serve us in our communities throughout the North. I also wish to extend my appreciation to the Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority in my riding for their due diligence and hard work.

I do also recognize that differences exist and that each authority may have other unique challenges. I'm not intending to pit one authority against another but to point out that we do have successes and I do not wish to paint all our authorities with the same brush.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that government has guidelines and procedures and many checklists that should have alarmed us that an organization of ours was facing financial difficulty, yet we've done nothing. I have not heard any good answers about how we're going to help and assist beyond the \$17 million bailout option. What message are we giving to our other organizations that are well run? We have to break our cycle of hand-out mentality, and demand accountability.

So, Government, I lend my voice to the need to fully assess what is happening with our authorities and to provide this side of the House with your plan to follow your guidelines and to get our health authorities back on track.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize a class from Sissons. It is the grade 5 middle French immersion class, and the students here today have come to watch our session. Their names are Taylor Clark, Caeley Cluderay, Ali Fleming, Jay Fleming, Sterling Ingraham, Anna Koldewey, Katie Lapka, Rylie McGuire, Liam McKay, Cassidy Menard, Nancy Ngo, Tisha Organ, Nathan Round, Kristy Taggard, and their teacher, who I believe has to go now — she's waited very patiently — is Monique Marinier. I appreciate them staying and watching our Members' statements.

**Mr. Krutko:** It gives me great pleasure to recognize a relative of mine in the gallery, Mr. James Cardinal from Tsiigehtchic. I wish James all the best, and welcome to the House.

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

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

#### Oral Questions

##### QUESTION 350-16(2) LACK OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It's with regard to my Member's statement. The question is: why is there such a disparity with regard to programs and services in the larger centres and the smaller communities?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's passion and commitment to enhance everything that is or is not in small communities, but that is quite a general statement. Under the integrated service delivery model that we follow in the Territories, all residents are entitled to have access to Health and Social Services programs. All the authorities do their best every day to make those programs accessible to everyone in the Territories.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, one of the priorities of this government is to have safe and vibrant communities. I think one of the fundamental bases

of any community is to have health care, a good education system, and good programs and services. I think it's important that we see the disparity between our small communities and larger communities because of the social conditions that they're in. Not having access to health care is definitely one of them.

I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it that this disparity exists, when most communities don't have to worry about access to health care? They take it for granted.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is well aware that we do have different categories of services that are available in communities, but every community in the Territories has access to programs as they need them. I think the community of Fort McPherson, for example, is quite fortunate in having a stable nurse-in-charge and long-term staff who work there. The same is the case for Aklavik. For the community of Tsiighehtchic, while they may not have a number of health care professionals and social service professionals residing in the community, they do have access to care in the Inuvik facility by medical travel or whatever services they may require. It's a constant challenge for us, but I do believe that we have a program that we can be proud of and that we need to continue to work from.

**Mr. Krutko:** I don't think we should be proud of a system where you don't have front-line workers in communities — from nurses to basically having the basic services.

I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it we don't even have nurses in our community?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Communities of different sizes have different PYs allocated, whether it's for nursing or any other services. We do have a constant challenge of vacancy rates and being able to recruit and retain, so we do work constantly on making sure that every community, no matter the size, has the level of service that people require.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if she can verify or get information in regard to the health of communities based on the lack of programs and services. What's the mental, emotional and physical health of those people in those communities, compared to other communities that have those services?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I just reviewed and approved a document that's been produced by the Department of Health that gives a very good indication as to why the residents of the Territories visit health centres and access Health and Social

Services care. I expect to have that published and tabled in the House. I think that would give us a good starting point to have further discussion on that. I agree with the Member that we need to continue to work on this challenge. I look forward to doing more work with the Member. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 351-16(2)  
ABORIGINAL SPORT CIRCLE  
OF THE WESTERN ARCTIC

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Speaker, today I spoke about the Aboriginal Sport Circle and all the good work that they've been doing. I'd like to follow up with some questions to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

I spoke about the need to recognize and provide similar levels of support for the Aboriginal Sport Circle. Can the Minister tell me what kind of funding arrangement is currently in place for the sport circle?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, this government spends approximately \$5 million in the area of sport and recreation. That's including the support we provide to our five non-governmental organizations that work with the NWT Council of Sport and Recreation partners, and they allocate the funding. It is part of their mandate to coordinate a system that recognizes their priorities and to provide direction. We also expect them to provide the resources fairly. On top of the support that's provided by Sport and Rec, we as government also work with the Aboriginal Sport Circle to provide funding to go to the North American Indigenous Games, this time in B.C.

**Mr. Jacobson:** With all the great programs and events, the Aboriginal Sport Circle has demonstrated it can deliver much-needed programming to territorial youth. Will the Minister commit to recognizing the increase of core funding to the Aboriginal Sport Circle?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** I thought I was pretty clear that the core funding does not come directly from us. It does come from the NWT Council of Sport and Recreation partners.

**Mr. Jacobson:** With the North American Indigenous Games held every two years and, more importantly, with programs and events happening every day in our communities, will the Minister

commit to work with the sport circle staff to start increasing core funding as soon as possible?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, we've had a very good relationship with all the sport organizations, including the Aboriginal Sport Circle. We meet with them on a very regular basis. They have some new staff. They've taken a new approach and set some new directions that we're quite excited and pleased to see. We meet with them. I met with them, in fact, yesterday. They're doing a very good job on the North American Indigenous Games. They have relayed to us their concerns as to core funding, and we will continue to support them.

We have, in the last while, lobbied the federal government to provide increased funding to the Aboriginal Sport Circle on a national basis. We were also successful this year in lobbying the federal government to provide travel dollars to the North American Indigenous Games. The Northwest Territories is getting \$144,000 of that money. I think it's a challenge that we're all continuing to work towards, but we're finding small pots of money, and we'll continue to work with this council.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 352-16(2)  
HOMELESSNESS AND OVERCROWDING  
IN YELLOWKNIFE

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I referenced in my Member's statement a report on homelessness. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the homeless what programs and services exist to assist homeless people to find appropriate housing with the support services they need.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for the homeless, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We do have coordination between the departments of Health and Social Services, NWT Housing Corporation and ourselves, and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We do have programs with the Small Communities Homelessness Fund towards homelessness and also homelessness support projects, so there are plenty available for these individuals at the community level. Also, when they're outside their community, there's assistance for them to go back to their own communities.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that information. I recognize that those programs do perform some service, but individuals who are

homeless and need some place to turn.... Can the Minister advise where a particular individual or a family might go when they are desperately in need of housing?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, the homeless in the communities can turn to various avenues, whether it's the social workers who work seven days a week, 24 hours a day, on call. We do have some facilities in communities — in Yellowknife the new Bailey House is going up, the Sally Ann, the SideDoor — and there are homelessness shelters here as well. These are the avenues that individuals can turn to. There are income support areas, but more so, it's the social service workers that are on call. Those are the avenues they can turn to as well.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that we do have some avenues that people can take advantage of when they are desperate.

You referenced a number of facilities and a number of options, but in particular women do not have a facility, especially here in Yellowknife. I'd like to know if the Minister can advise what plans exist to expand the funding that's available to communities to provide for homeless people.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to provide the services and programs that I highlighted. We are in the process of meeting, as the social envelope Ministers — myself as Education, Culture and Employment Minister, Minister Lee and also Minister Miltenberger — on this particular subject that the Member is referring to: homelessness and the programs and services that we provide, how we can enhance those areas, where can we make changes, and how can we improve certain programs. We will be discussing those key areas once we meet. We were talking about possibly sitting down and dealing with those issues in, I believe, the next couple of weeks. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** I thank the Minister for that information. It's gratifying to hear that the social programs Ministers are working together, and they are looking to expand the services or programs that would be available to homeless people.

He suggested they're going to meet within the next couple of weeks. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could advise the time frame for when he can report back to this Assembly.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, once we meet as a social envelope committee, I can certainly share that information with the Member and also the Members of the Social Programs



Committee. Certainly, after we meet, we can do up a summary report of what has taken place.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 353-16(2)  
NWT HOME RULE MOVEMENT

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my Member's statement I talked about home rule as an initiative that could be launched by this territory to demonstrate that our rightful place deserves to be taken within Canada.

My questions go to the Premier of this House. Would the Premier move forward on an initiative that demonstrates that the territorial government is in charge of its own affairs by moving forward on home rule legislation?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with this home rule concept the Member has raised. In our jurisdiction, as we've been working through the process with the federal government and with aboriginal governments and organizations trying to bring more authority here, what we have started doing in this Assembly is, in fact, occupying some of the areas that some would say have legislated authority within the federal government. We believe we have the moral authority to govern in certain areas, and that's why, for example, the Managing This Land Strategic Initiative will play a very important role as we progress down this path of devolution resource-revenue sharing.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Moral authority doesn't bring home the money, I'm sorry to say. The fact is that we need to go beyond moral authority to be in charge of our land, our water and our regulatory system. That's what I'm talking about.

Would the Premier consider looking at a home rule act that prescribes that the territorial government is in charge of these lands with a relationship built with aboriginal governments? We could use that to build a case with the Prime Minister and the other provinces that we deserve the same rights as the provinces have in Canada. Would he do that?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** This causes me to think of the movie *Braveheart*. Maybe we have a new Member with a nickname here.

The fact is that we have engaged with the federal government and aboriginal governments and organizations to go down the path of devolution resource-revenue sharing. We continue to do that.

We continue to work with the federal government to secure the resources, to keep them in the North, and we will look at other alternatives if that process doesn't work. The new relationship we're starting to establish — or enhancing the relationships — with aboriginal governments is that we are meeting with them four times a year and bilaterally once a year with each of their groups of leaders within their regions. We're enhancing that process to try and strengthen our position to come with a position from the North and have the federal government engage.

We know the federal government is prepared to move on this. It's a matter of what's the best solution. The fact is that we also know that the federal government is not prepared to treat us differently than other jurisdictions, that being provinces. What we're starting to work on is coming up with the fact that there needs to be recognition of some differences within the Northwest Territories and territories overall.

**Mr. Hawkins:** We don't need to recognize any differences, because this territory should have equal standing with every other province, and anyone who's negotiating down from that would be selling us out. The fact is that the best solution would be an act to describe our position in Canada which is full partnership. When John A. Macdonald went out with his crew to negotiate with Britain about Canada having its own autonomy, it didn't take 30 or 40 years like this devolution agreement. Even those folks who signed the Constitution and were branded as traitors in the United States were later regaled as heroes. It's time we carve our place in history.

Would this Premier carve our place in history by launching an act that demonstrates that our ability and our position in Canada needs to be a partnership by legislation that demonstrates home rule can be achieved?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** In the area of new legislation one of the things we have to do as a government is look at the area of authority that we have when it comes to legislation. We have to also recognize the Constitution of Canada and the process involved to have our jurisdiction status changed. As well, we know that sometimes we have to be careful what we ask for. If we ask for status, for example, to be equal to a province, there are some other issues we will have to deal with as residents of the Northwest Territories. So it's more than just saying, "Stand up and enact something." In fact, we must do the proper research and see what the best avenue is to take.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The courage of Danny Williams, the Premier of

Newfoundland, is legendary. That's what I'm looking for. I'm looking for that courage. I'm looking for the lion to find his heart, to get out there and claw away at that federal government, saying, "We deserve our right and place in Canada." I'm just talking about a constitution that demonstrates....

**Mr. Speaker:** Question, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Would the Premier take steps to work toward enacting a home-rule law? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, for a lot of years we worked in partnership in the North, coming up with a process that we're familiar with and understand, working with the federal government to draw down authority to the Government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal governments and organizations across the territory. We will continue with that work. If Members feel there are other options out there, we'd be prepared to look at those.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 354-16(2)  
IMPACT OF PAYROLL TAX ON THE  
COST OF LIVING

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier and relate to the issue of cost of living in the Northwest Territories. I know that perhaps we were a little critical about not enough revenue options in the budget, but we don't want revenue options for this government that hit directly at the pocketbooks of Northerners. One thing that does that right now, which is on our books, is the payroll tax. During the election campaign — I haven't had a chance to raise this in the House yet — I had a lot of people talk to me about that payroll tax, how it went from 1 per cent to 2 per cent and how the rebate related to that did not go up accordingly. We enjoy a fairly favourable personal tax rate. We enjoy the northern residents tax deduction, which has just gone up recently. But this payroll tax at 2 per cent without a corresponding rebate is hitting Northerners hard.

I'd like to ask the Premier: when was the last time the payroll tax was reviewed, and is it something that we could look at to alleviate the cost of living for Northerners?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we initially sat down, we looked at a number of tax options that were available to us. The payroll tax is one factor. On the other side, as the Member has

mentioned, the cost of living tax credit is also available to Northerners. There was some adjustment a number of years ago, in line with the changes. We'd be prepared, as we're talking about launching a discussion paper on tax options in the Northwest Territories.... We're going to Members with that and then going out to the public for some discussion and debate around those issues. We could include this area into that work.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier has set up strategic initiative committees, and one of them is tasked with looking at issues related to the cost of living. Is this something that could be assigned to this committee, as well, in looking at the cost of living in the Northwest Territories in light of taxes?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, the tax options we work with, as at this point, stay with the Department of Finance, under the revenue-generating capacity that it has, and our relationship with the federal government and so on. I think we could still work through that scenario, working with Members and deciding where we can go — whether we strike, as we did, for example, on the climate change work. Coming together with some Members, looking at taking that discussion paper out, is an option we can look at.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, after we charge employees in the Northwest Territories a 2 per cent payroll tax and then we give a rebate to people and we also pay for the administration of the tax, what do we end up netting from the payroll tax, approximately, in round figures?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, the initial payroll tax was established at 1 per cent. Once you paid out the cost of living tax credit to Northerners, the net was very small indeed. Going to 2 per cent has netted the Government of the Northwest Territories more revenue on the general revenue side, and as we would highlight in our budget — I don't have the specific numbers at this time, but we'll get that — I know it has increased. There is a more substantial amount that does remain with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in summary, then, and to be very specific: are we being told today that the Premier will look at a review of the payroll tax of 2 per cent?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** In the context of looking at our tax options available to us as Northerners, looking at the other side of it, the equation on the cost of living as well as the tax rebate that we do have, I'm prepared to put that in as part of the

discussion as we go forward as the Government of the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 355-16(2)  
EXEMPTION FROM THE GOODS  
AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier. It gets back to my Member's statement.

It was over three years ago that I first raised the issue of tax exemption of the GST for the three northern territories with the previous government. I know some Cabinet Ministers were around and remember that discussion I had with then-Premier Handley.

I'd like to begin by saying that early last month the Yukon government passed a motion in the House by unanimous vote that their government would lobby the federal government to remove the GST on home-heating fuel, power generation and on the transportation of essential goods north of 60 degrees.

I'm just wondering where our government is at, considering that we're talking about the cost of living and that it's going to be one of the biggest issues, especially come winter when people are paying exorbitant prices for home-heating fuel. I'm wondering where that is on the government's agenda. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had discussions with Premier Fentie of the Yukon, looking at this initiative. In fact, at the time I attended the Western Premiers' Conference, he attended the Finance Ministers' meeting in Ottawa. We had discussions about carrying the message from both parts. We are engaged with the Yukon government, through our staff, to look at options that could be available to us. I'm aware, from the meeting in Ottawa with Finance Ministers, that other jurisdictions are, as well, interested in looking at what options may be available to them around the GST.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Premier is familiar with the situation. He has had a discussion with Premier Fentie. As I mentioned, we're here for another two days. Would his government be willing to come forward with a motion similar to the one passed by the Yukon government so that we, the Members of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, can lend our support to the

efforts of the Premier and Premier Fentie and Premier Okalik? I think that adds to their arsenal when they do go to Ottawa and try to fight for tax exemption on those important issues. Mahsi.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If this Assembly feels a motion is needed in this area, we would be glad to work with Members to come up with a joint initiative. We are at the table working with the Yukon, looking at how we can work jointly with them in advancing this. As well, at the Northern Premiers' Conference we will once again be having discussions with northern Premiers. I'm sure Premier Fentie will be looking to address this as well.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 356-16(2)  
POOR CONDITION OF LIARD HIGHWAY

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Hon. Norman Yakeleya, Minister of Transportation.

I hear with great interest that Highway No. 7 is still having its share of problems. That's the section between Fort Simpson and Fort Liard. The conditions are still muddy, and the road is closed once again. This is really, really causing a lot of grief to constituents, especially those in Fort Liard. I know that the Minister committed to reconstruction and fixing of the drainage surface and great improvement. I'd just like to know what has been done in the planning stages so far, because I'm thinking that if they're going to do that work, perhaps they should begin building that bypass road to provide uninterrupted access.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The challenge of Highway No. 1 has certainly been a very frustrating point in our work on Highway No. 7 with our department and our contractors. Work is being done in terms of Highway No. 7 reconstruction. We are digging up that part of the section. What we want to do is take part of the section, dig it up, put the proper basing in there to rebase the road, and then reconstruct it to a passable section of road. We are looking at options in terms of how we can keep traffic moving between Fort Liard and the other communities, so we will take the Member's suggestion. If it gets really bad, then we would have to look at a bypass to keep the traffic flowing for the people in Fort Liard.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister to reach out

and grab all the resources he has, put them together and then build our road.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know how much work has been done to date. It's apparent to constituents that it looks like nothing is being done, but I'd like to know: have tenders been provided? Who is going to do the work? When, at the bare minimum, can they build a bypass road past these muddy sections that are causing the most interruption?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, if I were to reach out, I would have other MLAs question me.

Mr. Speaker, we have looked at the road. We have a plan in place. Again, with the weather being on our side, Mother Nature plays a big part in terms of how much work we can get done. We want to do rebasing of that section. We are looking at it. I will instruct my officials to come back and look at the options. This is going to cause us a lot of hiccups during this season. We would have to look at a bypass that would at least be less disruptive to the travelling public of Nahendeh. I will get back and keep the Member informed. However, the contractors and our staff in that section are working extra hard. We're working to see how soon we can get this road back into standard operational travelling condition.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Once again, the bypass road has got to be part of the reconstruction plans. I would like to know when they will be building and constructing the bypass road. Failing that, Mr. Speaker, can we get a bridge?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, we'll have to wait for the bridge.

I will call my officials this afternoon, and we will, hopefully, have some discussions on the bypass road and see what type of work is being done so far. If a bypass road is something that we have to do, we will do it for the travelling public. However, I would like to first speak to my officials, and I will keep the Member informed in terms of the options that he's talked about today.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to reiterate one more time the frustration of the travelling public and the people of my communities at having the road closed.

Once again, can the Minister tell me when he can start building the road? I think we can still move gravel, even if the conditions are rainy, up to the muddy sections there. Thank you.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** I understand the frustration from Liard residents and people in Fort

Simpson about the road closure. I understand completely, because I come from a region that doesn't have a road. I know the frustration the residents are talking about. I would share my frustrations with the Member here. We are moving on this road. We are looking at what we can do. We are looking at how we can get this road back into drivable condition.

We did have a road that was transferred by the federal government to this government. The standards weren't up to par, so we are reconstructing roads right across the North to bring them to meet the National Standards Safety Code and have the safety of our public on these roads as a first priority. I will get back and I will speak with the Member after the House in terms of the details of action. I wouldn't mind taking him to Highway No. 7 here and looking at how we can do this road to satisfy his people.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

QUESTION 357-16(2)  
PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER  
TRAINING PROGRAM

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was reviewing senior management within the GNWT, I noticed that 15 per cent were aboriginal, and this was after 20 years of Affirmative Action. I was appalled at the numbers that I've seen. I use the word "appalled" because it sounds better than "totally disgusted."

A few years ago they had the Public Service Career Training Program, which helped some of these people who had experience but lacked some technical skills. This helped them work their way up the ladder. It was a good program. My understanding is that it had a fairly good success rate. The program is no longer in existence.

I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister of Human Resources. I'd like to ask him why the decision was made to cancel the program. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that it was a decision made at the time of division, at which time there was legislation that prevented the Legislature from going into a deficit position. At that time it was one of the reductions. There was a small portion that was left over that went into Education for training.

**Mr. McLeod:** I'm not quite sure if I understand the answer, but since division our public service has grown quite a bit more than we had when Nunavut was still a part of the Northwest Territories.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he is aware of where that direction came from to cancel that program. Was it a decision made by the Legislative Assembly?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** As part of a budget reduction exercise, it was a proposal that was put forward as part of the transition planning process from one government to the next incoming government. It was a proposal that was accepted and passed by the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that. We have a lot of good, hard-working aboriginals out there who want the opportunity to move up based on the merit of their work. Some of them can go to school, but a lot of them, like I said before, with experience to do the work, just need a little more training. By training them, I think this government would realize savings by not having to pay SFA if they're going to school. They'd be taking the training and doing the work at the same time.

I'd like to ask the Minister what opportunities there are today for aboriginal employees of the government who wish to gain more training without having to go to school and to be able to work their way up the ladder.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** The government still has programs that are available to be accessed. One is the Management Assignment Program, which has an intake of, I believe, 20 people per year, and I think it had taken input in until last year. Anybody who applies or whose name is put forward has to be assessed with regard to the skills they have. Then, basically, they obtain experience through transfer assignments and work assignments of that ilk.

Also, senior managers or departments have the ability to identify aboriginal people who have the potential to move up, and they can develop a training plan for them so that they can go out to university and get their graduate degree or what have you. These are the kinds of things that are usually negotiated at the deputy minister level. Other than that, they can take training, and the government will reimburse them when they successfully complete the course.

**Mr. McLeod:** I said that I'd never endorse the practice of hiring aboriginals just to fill a quota, but there are many good, qualified and willing people out there. The Minister spoke of the transfer assignments. I think that's just another way of getting specific people into specific positions. I don't

think it's designed for aboriginals. I may pose that as a written question.

I'd like to ask the Minister if Affirmative Action applies to the MAP program.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** The Affirmative Action Policy applies to the MAP program, but generally, it's application-based. If an aboriginal person doesn't apply, then they don't have an opportunity to be selected.

I should point out that our government is looking at a number of different ways to try to address the problem. One is the employment equity program, whereby we would target specific groups and sectors to increase the number of aboriginal people. Also, we're reviewing the Public Service Career Training Program, which was cut some years ago, to see if it could still apply.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 358-16(2)  
STRATEGY TO ADDRESS  
DECLINING CMHC FUNDING

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I spoke about housing issues in the Northwest Territories. I have questions for the Minister of housing.

Has the Minister given direction to the Housing Corporation to establish a long-term plan that specifically addresses the issue of the CMHC's declining fund?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, that's an issue of some complexity. We have engaged with the other provinces and territories. We passed a motion in this House recently for support and encouragement to the federal government. We're going to work collectively with the other provinces and territories to encourage the federal government and Minister Solberg, and we acknowledged that in our Framework for Action. As we move forward with the business-planning process, we're going to have to keep working on the political pressure to elevate this to the national table. The Ministers of Finance and the Premiers have also picked up the issue of housing as a critical national one for us. We have taken that offensive to address that issue.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister kind of answered my second question, about what the federal commitment has been so far, but I'm

curious. I'm assuming that the decline is going to happen. I'm assuming that CMHC is not going to come back with long-term O&M dollars. My question is: has the Minister given direction to the Housing Corporation to address this issue of the CMHC declining fund?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, the intention is not to throw in the towel in terms of negotiations with and encouragement of the federal government. We're convinced that sooner or later they're going to have to recognize that they have a national crisis on their hands which they have to play a role in. In the meantime, as we go to our Framework for Action plan and our annual business-planning process, the issue of declining funding is going to become more and more evident, I believe, starting in 2010–2011.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he has considered looking at or reviewing the total allocation system to put efforts where the needs are greatest, not by numbers but by percentage of core need.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, we do a version of that already. There is a needs survey going to be taking place in 2009. As I've indicated to the Members of this House, there are issues where we need to review how we do business. We have to keep allocating and growing our resources, which are becoming more and more scarce. We're going to have to look at how we do that so we get to the areas of highest need.

That's an issue, I think, that is going to bear discussion as we move forward with the business-planning process.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a housing industry. I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister is willing to work with the industry, where an industry is available, toward lowering the need across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, we're interested in working with all the components of the northern housing construction sector. We're interested in building the most fuel-efficient, energy-efficient houses we can to cut our costs and to lower the cost of construction.

There are significant challenges before us, but very clearly, the more we can work with northern industry, the better. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 359-16(2)  
RECLASSIFICATION OF LAKES AS  
MINE DUMP SITES

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement I mentioned the short-sighted policy of turning fish-bearing lakes into mine tailings dumps. I'm wondering if the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources is aware of this and, if he is, if he's trying to influence the federal government on this policy. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I watched a news article on CBC last night, where that issue came up, with some concern. They were talking about a lake, I believe, in northern B.C., right in the middle of some aboriginal land. They indicated that this is a practice across the North, so I have added that to my list of things that I want to check with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Very clearly, for us as a government it's not going to be a practice that we're going to be supporting, given our concern with water. The water strategy that we're going to be tabling in this House is going to, hopefully, allow us to better address those types of issues.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, this sort of policy is obviously short-sighted. It ignores the fact that we're having a lot of problems with our food and water but especially with our water. How can we be treating pristine examples that we have here, these resources, in this manner?

I'm interested in what the holistic approach, the broad strategy, of this government is to address the whole way we are treating the environment and how we're going to pull ourselves into the New Age.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** We're doing a number of very critical policy pieces. We're working to bring into this House tomorrow a framework document that's going to lay out a plan for a water strategy.

Very shortly thereafter we want to bring forward a land-use framework that's going to, as well, allow us to better deal with the issue of resource development — how, where, when — for maximum benefit for Northerners.

We have also set up a joint committee on climate change that's going to allow us to look at the Energy Strategy and the Greenhouse Gas Strategy to see what we can do better. We're working with the Energy Committee to look at biomass and the Hydro Strategy.

We have a number of initiatives across the whole spectrum of this area that are going to allow us to move forward, we believe.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, clearly we have many governments in the North. If people have been following the water conferences that have been happening in Fort Smith and Fort St. John and so on, there is major interest and major concern, especially in the area of water.

How are we going to ensure that all these responsibilities...? It's getting to be a complex system out there, where there are various mandates and so on. Who is going to play a lead role in getting all these people together and on one page to effect the systemic change that we need to address these issues?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made it clear from the start of this Assembly that while the federal government has a significant amount of legal authority, we believe we have a significant amount of political and moral authority to move to occupy the field. We're doing things like Species at Risk. We are going to bring forward the water strategy framework and the land-use framework. We want to build a strong northern voice on those issues, and we want to be ready to make all these northern decisions in the North for Northerners.

I would suggest to you that at this point the work we're doing is going to, hopefully, bring forward a position that will allow us to consolidate all those voices to make one strong northern voice.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It all sounds delightful. I'm wondering how soon this can get off the ground and if there's a way we can be sure that this side of the House will have lots of input into that process.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Bromley is eight months into his term, and he is already sounding somewhat jaded and cynical. We'll have to work with him to make sure that that enthusiasm stays strong and that he will recognize that the work we're doing — the climate change committee, of which he's going to be a member; the water strategy framework coming forward in this House; the land-use planning framework; all the work that has to be done with the energy coordinating committee — are all pieces we're all going to be engaged in. I believe Mr. Bromley will leave here in four years being able to point to some very proud accomplishments that he's helped achieve in this Assembly.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 360-16(2)  
EQUAL AND SHARED PARENTING

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are actually to the Premier. I would ask the Minister responsible for the Department of Justice or the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, but I think my questions combine both of those departments.

Today I made a statement about equal and shared parenting. Within the GNWT I think it's important that we support equal and shared parenting. It's in the best interests of the children, which is a clear tie to our strategic plan. First, I'll focus a little bit on justice and then focus on health.

First, on justice. Within the current court system around divorce of parents it's very adversarial, very confrontational. It's in our best interests as a territory to support mediation and avenues within the justice system to encourage parents to talk rather than go through the process.

I was wondering if I can get the Premier to commit to work with the Department of Justice and have the Department of Justice and the Department of Health work together on a process that supports equal and shared parenting, especially around the court system and the divorce process.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, the best scenario would be that divorce didn't happen and that families stayed together. Unfortunately, as the Member has pointed out, the realities are that there are divorces. The nature of divorce within families can be very difficult indeed and test all family members, especially the children. We have to recognize this first, I guess.

After that the recognition is with the judicial system. We as the Government of the Northwest Territories and Members of this Assembly will enact laws that become the practice, but it is the judicial branch that will in fact enforce and lay down the law, in that sense, and how it is interpreted. We feel, through the Department of Justice, that our legislation in place today doesn't set a bias, but when you do hear most of the news out there, as the Member has pointed out, there is rarely discussion about men in family situations and what happens. We are prepared to sit down and look at avenues, as a Legislature, as to what can be done in light of trends in Canada. Just for the record, as we reviewed our family law statutes, there is no

wording or anything that is slanted or gender-biased in any way.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Speaker, this is why I was asking the Premier. I agree with what he has said. At the same time, I think it would be important for this government to work on having parents who are going through crisis and divorce avoid the court system completely. This is where the justice system can actually come in by requiring that parents who are going through divorce go through mediation. This is why I suggested that the Premier provide the answer rather than Health and Social Services or Justice. I believe it's going to take real collaboration and partnership for those two organizations to work together to offer parents mediation before they go into the court system, which is what the court system is today.

I was wondering, again, if I can get a commitment from the Premier to work with the Department of Health and Social Services and work with the Department of Justice to establish a clear mediation process that will encourage parents to find reasonable solutions and maintain equal and shared custody in the best interests of our youth.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, in light of the new direction we've been taking as the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly to break down the barriers and stovepipes between departments and work together to try and enhance the family and the situations that families fall under, that is something we would support. Yes, I know the departments of Justice and Health and Social Services work together. This will be another area that they can, as they have in the past, look to see how they can continue to offer a service to all family members to ensure that we have a fair system.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

### Written Questions

#### QUESTION 27-16(2) TRANSFER ASSIGNMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources.

- 1) What number of transfer assignment opportunities existed within the GNWT over the past two years?
- 2) What number of aboriginal employees were transferred?
- 3) What number of aboriginal employees were transferred into management positions?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

#### QUESTION 28-16(2) FRAMEWORK FOR GNWT RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Our Next Steps section of the January 2007 report Framework for the GNWT Response to Homelessness lists four items.

- 1) Will the department advise of its plan and the budget developed to support additional options in the housing continuum?
- 2) Will the Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT Housing Corporation release the results of the 2007 housing needs survey questionnaire?
- 3) In "Our Next Steps" of the Framework for the GNWT Response to Homelessness there was to be a territorial homelessness emergency funding advisory panel established. Was this panel indeed established? How many people were helped by this panel?
- 4) Can the Minister responsible for homelessness advise the action taken by the social programs departments to improve coordination and reduce program conflicts in relation to homelessness?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

#### QUESTION 29-16(2) UNFUNDED PROGRAMS AND POSITIONS AT STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, my written questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

- 1) How many unfunded programs currently exist at Stanton Territorial Hospital? How much do these cost per year?
- 2) How many unfunded positions currently exist at Stanton Territorial Hospital? How much do these positions cost per year?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

#### QUESTION 30-16(2) SPORT, RECREATION AND YOUTH DIVISION TRAVEL SUMMARY

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Hon. Michael McLeod, Minister of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.



- 1) Can the Minister provide any information regarding any and all MACA Sport, Recreation and Youth staff travel outside of the NWT for the fiscal years 2005–2006, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008?
- 2) Also, please provide the following additional information:
  - a) purpose of the trips;
  - b) role of MACA on these travels;
  - c) names of staff who travelled and their positions;
  - d) cost of each of the trips; and
  - e) reports submitted to MACA as a result of the travels.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 31-16(2)  
FUNDING PROVIDED TO SPORT  
AND RECREATION PARTNERS

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. Again to the Hon. Michael McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

- 1) What is the amount of MACA funding allocated in each of the following fiscal years 2006–2007, 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 to the following sport and recreation partners:
  - a) Sport North;
  - b) NWT Parks and Recreation Association;
  - c) Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic;
  - d) Mackenzie Recreation Association; and
  - e) Beaufort-Delta Sport and Recreation Association?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

### Tabling of Documents

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Proposed Species at Risk Act, Consultation Document, June 2008.

Document 63-16(2), Proposed Species at Risk Act, Consultation Document, June 2008, tabled.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 Report: Year to Date for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2008.

Document 64-16(2), GNWT Contracts Over \$5,000 Report: Year to Date for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2008, tabled.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I'd like to table a letter. It is to the honourable Minister responsible for Education, Jackson Lafferty, dated May 14, 2008. It's a letter sent by the chair of the Yellowknife Catholic Schools, Mary Vane, regarding their opposition to the deletion of the Alberta Achievement Testing Program.

Document 65-16(2), Letter to Minister of Education Opposing the Deletion of the Alberta Achievement Tests, tabled.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 12-16(2)  
SUPPORT FOR THE  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**Mr. Hawkins:** I give notice that on Thursday, June 19, 2008, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend that the government cease considering the elimination of the Business Incentive Policy, and further, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend that the government consider and undertake public discussion on options to revise the policy to better direct it to the benefit of businesses who file their taxes in the North.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MOTION 13-16(2)  
SUPPORT FOR AMENDMENTS TO  
FEDERAL DIVORCE ACT

**Mr. Ramsay:** I give notice that on Thursday, June 19, 2008, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that this Assembly signify their support for amendments to the federal Divorce Act to protect the rights of both parents to be involved in parenting the children, and further, that the content

and result of these proceedings be forwarded to the federal Minister of Justice and the Member of Parliament for Western Arctic for their consideration.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MOTION 14-16(2)  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE TO OCTOBER 1, 2008

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 19, 2008, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on June 19, 2008, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, October 1, 2008, and further, that any time prior to October 1, 2008, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 13  
AN ACT TO AMEND  
THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill includes a number of amendments to update the discipline process in the Legal Profession Act, including amendments that would:

- require that at least one layperson serve on the Law Society's Discipline Committee and on any committee of inquiry set up to hear a discipline matter;
- provide that certain complaints may be referred to mediation;
- empower the chairperson of the discipline committee to designate a member of the

committee to conduct an investigation into the conduct of a lawyer or student-at-law;

- clarify the powers of a sole inquirer and committee of inquiry;
- allow a sole inquirer or committee of inquiry to impose conditions on the practice of a lawyer or student-at-law, in addition to other remedies;
- allow for the suspension or termination of the right of a lawyer or student-at-law to practise law if his or her membership is suspended or terminated in another jurisdiction; and
- provide for the automatic suspension of the right of a lawyer or student-at-law to practise law if he or she is serving a term of imprisonment or is on parole.

The bill also includes an amendment granting the Executive of the Law Society the authority to set out the circumstances under which a student-at-law may appear before various levels of court; an amendment to provide more protection of privileged information used in a disciplinary procedure; and various amendments to simplify terminology and improve organization.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 13 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

BILL 14  
AN ACT TO AMEND  
THE INCOME TAX ACT

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends provisions in the Income Tax Act to make them consistent with parallel provisions of the Income Tax Act of Canada that relate to charitable donation and medical expense tax credits, to returns assessments, to withholding and payment and to tax avoidance.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 14 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 15  
AN ACT TO AMEND  
THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act to permit the Minister to appoint the chairperson of the governance council to a term not exceeding three years, and to reappoint that person so long as the reappointment does not result in a period of consecutive service exceeding six years. The length of service that the appointee previously had as a director of the governance council does not limit the term of his or her appointment as chairperson.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 15 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

BILL 16  
WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS ACT,  
2008–2009

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 16, Write-off of Debts Act, 2008–2009, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the write-off of debts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 16 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 16, Write-Off of Debts Act, 2008–2009, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

BILL 17  
FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2008–2009

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 17, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the forgiveness of debt in accordance with the Financial Administration Act.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 17 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 17, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 5 on our agenda, which is recognition of visitors in the gallery.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Recognition of  
Visitors in the Gallery  
(Reversion)**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I'd just like to recognize my two boys, Matthew and Mitchell, in the House today.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 8, Bill 12; Committee Reports 2-16(2), 3-16(2); Tabled Document 37-16(2); Minister's Statement 62-16(2).

By the authority given me as Speaker by Motion 10-16(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the hour of daily adjournment to consider business before the House, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have several items to deal with: Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 8, Bill 12; Committee Report 2-16(2), Committee Report 3-16(2); Tabled Document 37-16(2); Minister's Statement 62-16(2).

What is the wish of the committee?  
Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to consider Tabled

Document 37-16(2), the Main Estimates '08–09, Volumes 1 and 2. Then we would like to go to Bill 8, the Appropriation Act, 2008–2009, then to the committee report on official languages, and then the rest, in order, as time permits today.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we'll take a short break.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

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

Prior to the break we agreed to continue. First, we'll deal with Tabled Document 37-16(2), Main Estimates 2008–2009. The next item we'll deal with is Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008–2009. The third item is Committee Report 3-16(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner.

TABLED DOCUMENT 37-16(2)  
MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009,  
VOLUMES 1 AND 2

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** At this time I'd like to ask Mr. Roland if he will be bringing in witnesses.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** No, I will not need witnesses at this point.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** With that, Mr. Premier, I understand that you wish to make a statement at this time.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Over the past few weeks a number of motions have been passed during Committee of the Whole review of the 2008–2009 Main Estimates. In response to these motions and after discussions with the Members of this House, I would like to state that the government is prepared to make the following adjustments.

With respect to the Department of Justice:

- 1) the closure and of the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik will be deferred;
- 2) a reduced staff model will be implemented, incorporating 14.5 positions, plus relief workers when required;
- 3) \$613,000 will be added to the budget;

4) \$91,000 and four positions will be added to the budget for court worker positions in Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson, Yellowknife and Fort Smith;

5) \$161,000 and one position will be added back to the budget for the legal counsel position in Yellowknife to support devolution negotiations;

6) \$742,000 and eight positions will be added back to the budget for court officer positions — two in Hay River, two in Inuvik and four in Yellowknife; and

7) \$250,000 will be added to the capital expenditures budget to complete a program and facility review of women's correctional programming prior to further decisions on the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik.

With respect to the NWT Housing Corporation:

- 1) a commitment has already been provided to reallocate \$1.292 million from the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan to the Homeownership Repair Program to bring expenditures up to the 2007–2008 levels.

With respect to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment:

- 1) \$100,000 will be added to the budget for contribution funding to the Diavik Community Advisory Board.

With respect to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources:

- 1) \$108,000 will be reallocated from within the Wildlife activity for the two part-time renewable resource officer positions in Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour;
- 2) the Bear Fence program — one position will be added to the budget; and
- 3) the proposed move of staff to the Shell Lake facility will proceed, but the department will ensure that a storefront operation is maintained in Inuvik to ensure that residents have access to services; there are no changes to funding or positions associated with this issue.

With respect to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs:

- 1) \$250,000 from the Community Initiatives Program will be re-profiled to retain the youth programs officer position in the Deh Cho region and a similar position in the North to work with the Sport and Recreation Council on youth-related activities;

- 2) \$150,000 from the Community Initiatives Program will be re-profiled to retain youth contribution funding; and
- 3) \$50,000 will be reallocated from existing resources for a volunteer forum.

With respect to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment:

- 1) \$200,000 will be added to the budget to increase the income threshold to the Senior Home Heating Subsidy Program by \$10,000.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the Oral Health Surgery Program that was discussed by the Minister of Health and Social Services will be re-established at the Hay River Health Authority to deal with the backlog of youth dental surgery.

Mr. Chairman, I propose to follow through with these commitments in the Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, which will be introduced into this House within the next day or two. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. With that, can I get your attention to consider those departments that have been previously deferred. Should we proceed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The first department that we'll list is the Department of Justice, on page 7-7, Volume 1 of the Main Estimates: Operations Expenditure Summary, Department Summary, Amended Table: \$90.873 million.

Department of Justice, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary, Amended Table: \$90.873 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the operations expenditure for Justice is now concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** So we can move to page 6-11, Volume 2 of the Main Estimates, Infrastructure, Investment Expenditure. This is the Department Summary, Department of Justice, page 6-11, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Services to the Public, Total Department: \$1.307 million.

Department of Justice, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Services to the Public, Total Department: \$1.307 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Department of Justice, Total Department As Amended: \$1.307 million.

Department of Justice, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Services to the Public, Total Department As Amended: \$1.307 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of Justice estimates is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We'll now move to the Department of Health and Social Services, page 6-7, with regard to the Main Estimates. Health and Social Services, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$309.822 million.

Department of Health and Social Services, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$309.822 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Can we turn to page 5-9 of Volume 2 of the Main Estimates, Infrastructure Investment Expenditure. Department of Health, page 5-9. Community Health Programs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan: \$32.414 million.

Department of Health and Social Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Community Health Programs, Total Department: \$32.414 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that consideration of Department of Health and Social Services is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Now we'll turn to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, page 8-7. Operations Expenditure Summary, Department Summary: \$293.914 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$293.914 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the consideration of estimates for the department is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF  
INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We'll now move to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, page 10-7, 1. Page 10-7, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$45.593 million.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$45.593 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Moving to Environment and Natural Resources, page 11-7, Operations Expenditure Summary, Environment and Natural Resources, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$56.942 million.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$56.942 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the consideration of Department of Environment and Natural Resources is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. The last department is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, found on page 4-7. Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$114.782 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$114.782 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that consideration of the estimates of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is concluded?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that we've concluded the department estimates of Volume 1 and Volume 2? Does the

committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 37-16(2)?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Consideration of Tabled Document 37-16(2) is now concluded.

BILL 8  
APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008–2009

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Move to tab 8 in regard to the Corporation Act, 2007–2008, Bill 8. We'll defer the Preamble and go to the Schedule, which is on page 3. Schedule 1, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures, Total Appropriation for Operations Expenditures: \$1,215,869,000.

Okay. Let's do this again. Total Appropriation, Operations Expenditures, \$1,216,972,000.

Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008–2009, Schedule, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures, Total Appropriation for Operations Expenditures: \$1,215,869,000, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mrs. Groenewegen.

COMMITTEE MOTION 65-16(2)  
TO AMEND THE SCHEDULE TO BILL 8:  
APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008–2009  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Schedule to Bill 8 be amended to:

- a) decrease by \$1,103,000 the appropriation amount set out in Part 1, item 7, "Justice," by:
  - i. striking out "89,752,000" and substituting "88,649,000" in the column entitled "Operations Excluding Amortization," and
  - ii. striking out "91,976,000", and substituting "90,873,000" in the column entitled "Appropriation by Item";
- b) decrease by \$1,103,000 the amount set out in Part 1 as "Total Appropriation for Operations Expenditures," by striking out "\$1,216,972,000" and substituting "\$1,215,869,000";
- c) decrease by \$320,000 the appropriation amount set out in Part 2, item 17, "Justice," by striking out "1,690,000" and substituting "1,370,000";
- d) decrease by \$1,500,000 the appropriation amount set out in Part 2, item 20, "Industry, Tourism and Investment," by striking out "3,828,000" and substituting "2,328,000";
- e) decrease by \$1,820,000 the amount set out in Part 2 as "Total Appropriation for Capital Investment Expenditures," by striking out

"\$142,262,000" and substituting "\$140,442,000"; and

- f) decrease by \$2,923,000 the amount set out at the end of the Schedule as "Total Appropriation," by striking out "\$1,359,234,000" and substituting "\$1,356,311,000."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thanks for your patience, Mrs. Groenewegen. On the sixth line under "striking out '89,752,000' and substituting '88,649,000,'" we thought we heard you say \$86 million. So just for verification, could you repeat that section?

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. By striking out "89,752,000" and substituting "88,649,000" in the column entitled "Operations Excluding Amortization."

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Motion is in order. To the motion? Question's been called.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** To the Schedule as amended? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

Schedule as amended approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we can go back to page 1 of Bill 8, clause-by-clause. We'll defer the Preamble.

Clauses 1 and 2 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 3, Mrs. Groenewegen.

COMMITTEE MOTION 66-16(2)  
TO AMEND SUB-CLAUSE 3(2) OF  
BILL 8: APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008-2009  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that sub-clause 3(2) of Bill 8 be amended by striking out "\$1,359,234,000" and substituting "\$1,356,311,000." Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Motion is in order. Motion is being distributed.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 3 as amended.

Clause 3 as amended approved.

Clauses 4 through 7 inclusive approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** To the Preamble.

Preamble approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Bill as a whole as amended.

Bill 8 as a whole as amended approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree that Bill 8 is ready for third reading as amended?

Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008-2009, as amended approved for third reading.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to move that at this time we report progress. Thank you.

Motion carried.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

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

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Tabled Document 37-16(2), Main Estimates 2008-2009, Volume 1 and Volume 2; and Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008-2009.

I would like to report progress, with two motions being adopted — Tabled Document 37-16(2) is concluded and Bill 8, as amended, is ready for third reading.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Motion carried.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008-2009.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Speaker:** You may proceed with third reading of Bill 8, Mr. Roland.

### Third Reading of Bills

#### BILL 8 APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008–2009

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008–2009, be read for the third time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion's on the floor. The motion's in order. To the motion, the honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 8 has been in the works. This has been the budget session. We've been here for several weeks now. It's been a long road on this budget. A budget in a year subsequent to an election is always a challenging one, because the normal cycle of the planning that goes into a budget is interrupted. There were days when it really taxed all of us and called for all of us to put our best efforts forward to arrive at something that we could support.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting third reading of Bill 8. I was one of the ones who did not support it at second reading. So that begs the question: what's changed?

What's changed for me, Mr. Speaker, is that today we have a product before us that shows that every Member of this Legislature has a part to play in putting together a budget like this. There were things that made this budget particularly challenging, besides the fact that it did follow on the heels of an election. We were looking at changing the way we do things. This budget contained reductions. It contained reinvestment.

I'm happy today to say that we have a budget here that does reflect our input. Not everything that all Members of the House wanted to see in here is in this budget. I do look forward to the business plans, which are coming up so soon in the fall. There will be a lot of opportunity, going forward, for all Members of this House once again to work together, to work with Ministers, to work with their departments to again bring the input and the voices of the constituents we represent to a process that will result in a document that we can all say that we were proud to have a part in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting this bill in the third reading.

I, for one, feel, as a Member who's been here for 12 years, that this is probably the first time I saw this House really cooperatively work together. We realized we had our differences but also tried to find solutions for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories. We also realized that we have to be flexible on both sides. We knew that we didn't get everything we wanted, but again, there's still a process that's going to take place this fall by way of our business-planning process.

I think, also, that consensus government is an avenue for us to all realize that we're here representing the people of the Northwest Territories. It doesn't matter which side of the House you sit on. I think it's important that we've shown that we can work together.

We still have a couple of years ahead of us. We have some major challenges that we're going to have to deal with. With open minds, and people who show respect for each other and are willing to listen and to make an attempt to find a better solution than what we had in front of us when we got here some three weeks ago, I think we ended up with a better product than we started with.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, we were able to show that we can work out our differences. We can find solutions by talking and working together. As Members on this side, one of the avenues we have is by way of motions and deletions. At the end of it all, we've got a better budget for it. It might not be perfect, but at least it's something we can all work with, realizing we are going forward to another process in the fall.

With that, I'd like to thank all Members of this House for making that attempt to work through this process. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. The honourable Minister for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** I got promoted on top of that.

**An Honourable Member:** Too much in one day.

**Mr. McLeod:** Too much in one day. I'll move over there later.

Mr. Speaker, the Book of Proverbs says that a wise man will listen and increase his learning, and a man of understanding will attain unto wise counsel. I think that's exactly what happened here. When we first had second reading on this Bill, I stood up and said that of anybody in this Assembly who should vote no, it should be me. But I voted yes at the time, because I believed that we'd have an opportunity to make some change.



As a couple of Members said, we didn't get everything we wanted, and Cabinet didn't get everything they wanted, but I think this is a perfect example of this Assembly working together. I admire the resolve of the Regular Members, who pretty well stuck together. We had our differences, but Regular Members pretty well stuck together throughout this whole thing and came to Cabinet with a common front and a united front. I think that had a lot to do with the fact that we were able to get a lot of the changes that we required. It's a good day for consensus government, an extremely good day.

I commend Cabinet for listening to what Regular Members had to say, not only just listening and paying us lip service but actually acting on it. It goes to the Members' conduct guidelines that we all signed. I think this goes a long way to showing that we have the ability to have our disagreements, but at the end of the day, we try to come forward with a product that's best for the people in the NWT, because that's what we're here to do.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote in favour of third reading, because Inuvik has benefited from this whole process, and we just hope that we can keep up the good work. A good lesson for Cabinet in the future is that it's much easier when you work with the people on this side and give us a product that we can all agree to. Then we won't have as much trouble in the future. It was an interesting process to be a part of. I'm glad I was a part of it. I've seen a lot of good fights from a lot of good people in this Assembly, and I really admire that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I encourage you all to bear with me. I've got a few pages here to go through. Today is the final day of Bill 8, the Appropriation Act of 2008–2009. There's been a significant amount of debate on this bill, inside and outside of this House. We have heard a significant amount of talk from the Union of Northern Workers, who have continually stressed that for years the GNWT has underestimated its budget surpluses and has overestimated its expenses. Further, they stress that a job-cuts budget is a bad budget. They clearly want the Regular Members to vote this budget down.

Clearly, the Union of Northern Workers has been very strong in their message, and unfortunately, Cabinet has been a little on the weaker side. Cabinet should have put together a comprehensive communications plan prior to announcing the fiscal realities of this government's planned direction. Instead, they allowed the information to enter into

the public forum with no concrete plan and had to respond to or react, rather than announce their own plan. Obviously, this is not a good way to communicate a complicated message in already muddied or agitated waters. I hope that these and any subsequent Cabinet Ministers have learned from this process and understand the value of clear, concise messaging. People of the NWT who are beneficiaries of programs and services, as well as the employees of the GNWT, provided our most valuable asset and clearly deserve better.

When the fiscal realities of the GNWT first became public, many of the 11 Regular Members expressed concerns about potential elimination. Many of us had been around in 1996, when the GNWT went through a similar process, and can clearly state that 1996 was a failure. Departments that were amalgamated, such as Economic Development and Tourism and Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, have once again split up; and those departments that were decentralized, such as Personnel, have now re-formed in a single, centralized department. Further, the mass exodus of employees from the GNWT and the NWT turned out to hurt the entire industry, as federal transfer payments reduced noticeably in subsequent years. Public service position numbers have climbed steadily since 1996, and any cost savings that were intended had completely reversed themselves by 2007. In short, 1996 was bad, and we certainly can't relive the same mistakes.

Within this House the 11 Regular Members have continually expressed some dissatisfaction with the budget process as a whole. We have felt that we were not actively engaged or involved in the design of this budget or in the setting of the individual priorities suggested through the five strategic investment committees. Clearly, given that these committees are responsible for setting the strategic direction or strategic reinvestments, we as Regular Members should have been equal partners. Cabinet coming to us after they made up their minds and telling us what they plan to do is clearly notification, but it is definitely not engagement or involvement. Strategic reinvestment is the direction and job of all 19 Members, not seven. By excluding Regular Members from the process, Cabinet is officially reducing and minimizing the role of the 11 Regular Members. That's not appropriate.

The fiscal challenges faced by this government are a reality. We have traditionally spent more than we bring in. Where our revenues have grown at a fairly constant 3.5 per cent, our expenditures have increased by around 5 to 6 per cent annually. Fortunately, in previous years the government has been able to obtain additional one-time funding to cover the difference. However, it is bad practice to assume that the government always will. We definitely need to get our house in order.

The Premier has indicated that we need to find \$135 million over two years in order to assist us in getting our house in order and reinvesting in the priority areas suggested to us by constituents during the October 2007 election. Of the \$135 million, \$60 million was targeted for reductions, whereas \$75 million was targeted for reinvestment in this government's strategic plan — specifically, new initiatives identified by our constituents and incorporated into this government's strategic plan. Therefore, the government is really only asking for \$60 million decreased to the annual budget and realized over two years, or roughly a 5 per cent reduction to the budget as a whole. Therefore, before forced growth we targeted about 3.5 per cent a year. This would match our expenditures to revenues.

As a Regular Member I did share my colleagues' concerns about potential loss of jobs. In fact, I went on the record in February requesting that Cabinet pursue all options to streamline government and find efficiencies within government before looking at job cuts, and that any job cut should be absolutely a last resort. Being a realist, I knew that some positions would be affected. I was hoping that the majority of them would be vacant positions, excluding those vacant positions in Health and Social Services, which shouldn't be cut.

I appreciate the Premier's message that this is a refocused government and a change in how we do business. There is entirely too much self-protection and empire building within the departments, boards and agencies. All of the departments, boards and agencies are supposed to be on the same team, working for the good of all residents. Unfortunately, they are often more concerned with staking their individual ground and spending at all costs, without thinking about the big picture and the benefits for people that could be attained should they decide to work together.

I do have to acknowledge that I, along with the other ten Members, did have a role in the timing of this budget. To his credit the Premier and Finance Minister did originally request additional time to complete this budget. He wanted to have the official budget session in October, which he believed would provide Cabinet's key bureaucrats with ample time to conduct a thorough review of the departments and identify areas for reduction, which would minimize job cuts. Further, this time would allow Cabinet to work with Regular Members in a more meaningful way and allow greater levels of interaction and consensus.

When we received the proposal, we believed it to be unreasonable for the people of the NWT to wait one full year for this Legislature's first budget. We further believed that eight months would provide civil service with enough time to conduct the necessary reviews. In the end, with no guarantees

that the budget would have been any different if we'd waited 12 months, there's certainly evidence that waiting would have at least improved the process we've gone through, which may have resulted in a different budget.

Today we are voting on the budget, but how to vote? There is clearly, as demonstrated by the UNW, a portion of the population that definitely wants the budget to fail. At the same time, there are those who clearly want it to pass. I've received a number of e-mails and phone calls and have talked to people on the street who want it to pass and those who want it to fail. Also, I have always said that when making any decision as a Member of this Legislature, I'll make my decision based on what is in the best interests of the people of the NWT. What I feel I must do, in order to make an appropriate decision, is get past all the rhetoric and focus on the facts and details of the budget itself.

I've read the UNW's report on the financial situation of the GNWT, and I understand their point of view. However, I do believe that getting the government's house in order is an absolute necessity. This government bleeds out money on a daily basis. There are redundancies within the system, and traditionally we've had more growth in expenditures than growth in revenue. We need to bring this in line.

I do agree that job cuts are not the best way to streamline government; however, some cuts are a reality. Based on budget discussions, apparently 237 jobs were identified to be eliminated. Of these, 80 are vacant and a large number of positions are sunseting, which basically means that they would have been deleted regardless of this process. In total the government has identified 104 affected employees. Of these, 30 or more have already been placed into new positions or they've accepted early retirement, leaving 70 incumbents that still need to be placed or provided with layoffs in the 2008–2009 fiscal year. At the same time, 124 positions are being created as part of either forced growth or new initiatives as identified through strategic initiative committees.

Finally, as we have heard today, Cabinet has accepted a large number of recommendations that we have made over the last four weeks, resulting in a return of around 30 positions, the majority of which have incumbents in them. As a result, the true number of employees remaining to be either laid off or placed drops to around 40 employees, with a total of 207 positions being eliminated.

I remain worried about the future of these affected employees. However, should this budget pass, I'm confident that the majority of those who want to continue working for this government will be placed. Should this budget pass, I will have concerns about future layoffs. Coming up is 2009–2010, and there

are likely to be some additional layoffs at that time. We've already been informed about a number that will occur at Arctic airports through the fiscal year, and we have made a number of recommendations to Cabinet to consider their current path. Based on Cabinet's comments today, I hope and feel that they will review our motions with an open mind.

I talked earlier about Cabinet messaging around the fiscal realities of this budget. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage this government to invest a little bit more time and effort into communicating their future budget plans. Messaging around this budget and these reductions was very minimal, and in my opinion it caused the entire process significant confusion and damage. Clear messaging would have helped all parties involved, including the public, to better understand the reasons and the rationale for the government's direction. I guarantee better communication will have positive results. Consider it.

As discussed earlier, I've had concerns about the process we've been following with respect to the budget. Prior to the Premier's Budget Address I was quite frustrated and felt that my input and the input of my colleagues on this side of the House was not valued or considered to the degree that it should have been. However, coming into this session, 11 Regular Members have been united and strong. We've remained committed to the process and have worked extremely well together to get our message across to Cabinet. I believe that they have heard us. The evidence is clear. As of today Cabinet has officially acknowledged this by returning over 30 positions that were previously erased back into the public service. Further, they have acknowledged a number of our recommendations with a focus on the next fiscal year, and I am optimistic that they will attempt to work with us to attain a consensus during the business planning process and prior to the introduction of the 2009–2010 budget. This has been, at times, a painful process; however, we have managed to work our way through it. I'm confident that both sides have learned from it. I'm confident that we, as 19 Members, will find a way to move forward and retain the ability to reach consensus as part of this consensus government.

Ultimately, the most important part of this entire process is the budget itself. As indicated previously, to go forward, I must believe that it is a good budget, that it is in the best interests of the people of the NWT. I must not get hung up on the rhetoric, and I must focus on the people. In review and discussion of the budget over the last couple of weeks, I believe that it's not the best budget that we could be presented with. However, with the changes agreed to by the Premier today, it's not a bad budget; in fact, it's all right. Overall, we're talking about an investment of operations expenditures of around \$1.217 billion and over

\$179 million in infrastructure expenditures and contributions. Overall, this is an increase of over \$64 million in operations expenditures and \$34 million in infrastructure from the previous Main Estimates.

Included in this budget are a significant number of reinvestments that we should all be proud of: increased support for arts and culture; increased support to tourism; investment of \$25 million in health infrastructure; enhancing police services; advancing devolution discussions; expanding early childhood development programs; support for our official languages; additional support to apprentices; and many, many more.

At the end of the day, with the additions the Premier announced this afternoon resulting from motions made in this House, I am confident that this is a good budget — not a great budget but a good budget. When you factor in that this government has been in a holding pattern, in a no-go-anywhere position, standing still, for the last eight months and not moving forward with business, I believe that it is in the best interest of the citizens of this territory if I support this budget. So I'll be supporting this budget.

In moving forward with the business-planning process in October and future budget discussions, I hope that all of us here, including Cabinet, remember these four weeks and the value that clear communication, active involvement of all 19 Members and the principles of consensus government can have in attaining a reasonable and appropriate conclusion in the best interests of all Northerners.

In closing, I'd like to thank Cabinet for listening to us and meeting us halfway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion, the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what else can be added to Mr. Abernethy's statement. It was all-encompassing.

I would like to talk about two aspects of this experience that I've had. One has to do with process; the other has to do with the product. As for the process I've said a number of times that I felt that there was a piece missing in the process and the development of this budget. All Members developed goals and objectives in December of last year. Then Regular Members trusted Cabinet to go away and develop a budget. We expected — I expected, at least — that the concept, the big picture, would come back to us as Regular Members and that we would be asked for our input. That step was missed.

We came back to detail, and the detail was not what we expected, and the detail was not to our liking. We didn't feel — and again, I particularly didn't feel — that we had an opportunity for input into the main concept, into the general plan for this particular budget. The reductions were pretty alarming.

As for the process, I have to comment on the notification to affected employees. I think we could debate until the cows come home whether or not early notification of employees was a good or a bad thing. I think, depending upon who you ask, you'll get one opinion of yes, and the second person will say no. But it's done, and we have to just let it go. However, I can't let go of the fact that we have notified employees for the '09–10 year that they are potentially affected. I have to say that I think that was just wrong, and it shouldn't have been done.

Throughout this process there were a number of times when notice to Members was particular lacking. I have to reference the letters that went to affected employees before Members were notified that their constituents were going to be affected. There was notification to mayors and chiefs and councils prior to Members on this side of the House being notified of that sort of information.

All of this is water under the bridge, and we have to move on. We're at the end of this process, and there's no point in crying over spilt milk.

To the product, I think it's no surprise to anyone that this side of the House, me included, didn't like the product that we received. I felt that the reductions lacked justification. I felt that some of the layoffs were poorly planned or not planned for at all. I didn't feel ownership in the budget. Again, it goes back to the fact that I didn't have an opportunity for input. I didn't agree with many of the principles that were underlying the budget that we received and the product that we saw.

This is my first experience with budget debate, and I can't say that it was always a pleasant experience. But the end product proved to me that consensus government is alive and well. Many constituents confessed to me over the last several months that they wondered whether or not consensus government was alive. There was a lot of backing-and-forthing. Once we did get into the detail and made some suggestions, Cabinet did come back with some agreement to some of our suggestions. We then went through another set of backing-and-forthing, and there were concessions made on both sides of the House. I think now we have a product that all 19 of us can accept. That product does involve layoffs, but I have always maintained that in order to match our revenues and our expenditures, some layoffs are necessary. That's an unfortunate fact.

I didn't vote at second reading for several reasons. One of them was because I didn't support the principle of the bill. I didn't feel that the product that we had was a good one, but I also wanted to get the documents into debate. I wanted to get it to debate, so I didn't vote for it and I didn't vote against it. Those are my main reasons. I'm very glad that I had the chance to do that. I think that all Members throughout this process have managed to keep an open mind most times. I think a few of us were closed, more than once, but I think we showed trust in the process, and I think we showed trust in each other. At this point, with the additions that will come in the supplementary appropriation, which is coming before us shortly, I can support the bill as amended. I will be supporting and voting in favour of this particular bill.

I'm not necessarily looking forward to business plans in the fall. I think it's probably going to be another onerous process. I am looking forward to an opportunity to have input before we get to detail. As has been expressed already, Cabinet will recognize that communication needs to be early and often. We do want to have input into what's going on. We want to produce the best product possible for the NWT and for our residents.

I'd also like to thank Members on this side of the House for working together. It was a most incredible experience. I want to thank Members on the other side of the House for being open and being receptive. I think we do have a product which may not be perfect, but it's one that I can certainly agree with, and I think it will certainly do us until we get the next one, which will be better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion, the honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Stephen King began one of his books by saying, "He wasn't a good boy, but he wasn't a bad boy either." So what we have is.... That's how I'd like to talk about the budget: it's not a bad budget, but it's not a good budget either.

It took a lot of hard work to get to where we are today. It took the power of the 11. It had a big impact, working with Cabinet, because when we first started the process so many months ago, we had our input, and for whatever reason it didn't seem like we had our footprint. I mentioned it several times that it didn't have the impact that our constituents wanted. They came to us with their letters of job losses and so on. So we came back here. We went to Cabinet, and we met with them. At that time our esteemed Premier said, "No." He said, "No changes to the budget. We're holding the line. This must be done." That kind of shocked us and took us for a loop because we're talking about

consensus-style government. We worked hard as the 11. We stood up many times, united, and we showed government that consensus style government means involving everybody, the majority of the views. We were very pleased, actually, to see about a week ago or so that the government said, "Oh, yeah, we're now negotiating a budget."

That speaks to where we should be at all times: looking at the resources, what we can do for the communities, the regions and, indeed, our staff, too, who are the backbone of our organization. Those are the people who we must take care of. I do concur that within the process, we have our input early.

I would be remiss, of course, not to mention the hard work of the Union of Northern Workers and their supporters and how involved they got in our budget process. They involved the communities, they reached out to us politicians, and above all they represented their constituents to the best of their ability. I'd like to say, as well, that I hope we've done the same as politicians.

For us, in the many debates we've had over the past four weeks.... We got to be a thorn in the side of government, and we kept needling them. In fact, I think Mr. Premier said at one point, "Look, we don't want to move to old-style politics," when we were doing tit-for-tat or trading. I don't know what that is. Old-style politics — I don't go back that far. For me, Mr. Speaker, it's not old-style politics to take care of the regions and the communities; it's consensus-style politics. We're all representatives for the many different areas.

I do want to say that the road was daunting. It looked hard. It was very, very much uphill. When I left here and went home to my community, I got all phone calls, letters, e-mails and petitions that said, "Look, this is happening." It also seemed impossible.

We came back here, all 19 of us, about four weeks ago, and the gloves were on, Mr. Speaker. The gloves were on, and the fight was on. It was not only with government but in the committee too. We had many fights, and they worked out. That's how you challenge yourself, and that's how you build the intestinal fortitude to speak up for yourself and for your people and, at the same time, remain united and do the best thing you can for our people for whom we serve — the reason why we are here.

Once again, I would like to thank my constituency, all the communities, Grannies from Nahendeh who signed the petitions that I brought here to the House. Our communities spoke for consensus-style government. The people spoke, Mr. Speaker. It is a democracy and not an autocracy. That was one of the key things. The impact is huge in our small communities, even more so in the small and remote

communities. Loss of one job is huge. When that capacity, when that skill level leaves a small community, it is just irreplaceable.

When it all began, people came to me and they said, "Well, are you going to vote no? Are you going to kill the budget?" I said, "Well, I'm going to vote no if I cannot save any jobs." That's what I did, right off the bat: I voted no. I told my people that's what I would do. "But I can't promise.... I'll fight hard. I'll fight like hell," is the word I used. I did that. I came here and I fought like crazy. In fact, I was telling government, Mr. Premier and the Cabinet Ministers that I was on a hunger strike. That's the way I used that. And it worked. Look at me now.

Laughter

I'm happy to say I can probably eat the budget that's there. I can swallow the budget that is before us. That's going towards where I'm going to stand today. I'm going to stand with the budget. I'm confident and comfortable that I fought hard. I represented my people. I, too, didn't get everything that I wanted for my constituency and my people. There's still a net loss of jobs. But the key people that are there are being re-profiled. They are good, hard-working people, and they deserve the positions in the communities that they wish to work in.

As well, I'd like to commend our Chair of the Priorities and Planning Committee. Somebody called her a coach. The Chair, Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, she's done well. Having to sit with 11 people from different backgrounds and different opinions.... Well, I used to be Chair in the former Assembly, and I know how hard it is to work with 11 people. Getting 11 people to agree is a huge, huge challenge. But she did it. She took 11 people with diametrically opposed views, which is something else, and was able to unite us, not only once but many, many times, in order to make an impact — as I think I told one of the Ministers — to help government make decisions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say that today I will be voting in favour of this budget. I'll look forward to the business plans that are coming up in the fall time. I can tell the people of the North that I will be working just as hard to make the next budget work for our people, our communities and our region. With that, mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion, the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, will be supporting the budget. I supported the budget on second reading, and I support the budget here. I felt it was a budget that, because of the way the budget process went, gave us an opportunity to see all

aspects of the government, all aspects of every department. We had an opportunity to have an impact and some influence on all aspects of this budget in all the departments.

Initially, when we had voted on the budget to go to second reading, I voted for the budget then. I was confident that the Members of this House could work together to come up with a product that would be something that would be acceptable to this House and something that would positively impact the people of the Northwest Territories and, definitely, positively impact the people of my riding of Tu Nedhe.

I feel like this is a budget that was put out to the MLAs on this side of the House. I felt like the MLAs on this side of the House worked on trying to build a foundation for this budget. As with anything else you build, a good foundation is a good place to start. I feel like this is a foundation budget that could go on for the next four years with good additions, changes and evolution of the budget and so on. I look forward to the business-planning process, because it will basically be the first time we're going through a business-planning process, going from the very beginning of the process to the end.

There are still a lot of things that I think this government could do that will positively impact smaller communities. I still feel like I stand up in the House and I talk about the smaller communities versus the bigger communities. I'm not doing that because I want things taken away from big communities; I do that because I think there has to be some form of equalization.

This government is supposed to make sure that all people in the Northwest Territories are afforded the same opportunities and the same chances to live their lives the way that they want to live them — opportunities for people in small communities to have all the same services and all the same programs that are available to everybody else in the North, everybody else in the bigger communities. I've always believed that it's like anything in life: the unfortunate ones should get the attention so that it kind of equalizes things. If you have to put less in areas where there is a lot already and you have to put more in areas where there isn't quite as much, then that's what has to be done. I feel like that's what this budget's done.

I feel like there are issues that I talked about from day one. Probably the first thing I talked about after campaigning in Tu Nedhe was that I felt like the youth were our future. A lot of people feel that way. Everybody talks that way too, but I feel like, for the first time, this government and people on both sides of the House said, "Hey, that is true; that is the way." The way to cure the ills of the Northwest

Territories is to make sure that the youth become people that are responsible, quality people that can go on in life and not rely so much on the support of government to be able to become good, functioning citizens of this territory. I feel the youth are in the forefront of this Assembly.

The issue that everyone only talks about and nothing really substantial happens is the area of the cost of living: the high cost of living in some communities, where people can't afford basic essentials to operate a house or basic essentials to feed their kids and so on. I feel like now the government here, the people in this room, understand. Maybe they always did. I'm not saying this is something people are just beginning to realize but actively, proactively, trying to address the issue of the cost of living.

The housing conditions across the Territories, balancing out the housing conditions, making sure that... Thinking and knowing that individuals who operate their own households are able to maintain their households, are able to live and support themselves in their own home ownership units, and giving them the supports to be able to do that. At the end of the day, it's going to save millions of dollars for this government, instead of putting people in institutions or putting people in subsidized housing.

Those are the things that I feel this budget is going to allow us to do. There are a lot of issues that I felt were brought out in this process, where we said, "No, we're not happy with this budget." I wanted us to work on this budget. I couldn't really fathom the thought of going back to square one and starting all over, so I voted in favour of the budget to try to move forward and put the handprint of the ordinary MLAs into the budget.

I feel the process was excellent. Nineteen people came together and created a lot of synergy to be able to pass a budget that positively impacts all constituents, all the way from the very north of the territory to the south of the territory and east and west. I feel like this is truly a consensus budget that everybody here can live with for this year.

And then we'll do it again next year. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 8 here at third reading. I listened quite intently to the words of my colleagues, and I appreciate all of their words. I know Mr. Abernethy put a great deal of work into his remarks, and I appreciate those. I echo a lot of his sentiments and those of other Members.

I guess I stand here today.... Four weeks ago — and four weeks goes by pretty quick in this line of work; although it seemed like an eternity at times, it did go by fairly quick — I voted against the budget at second reading, and I did so out of principle. As many of you know, I'm a process guy, and I honestly believe the process was flawed. I don't believe Members were given an opportunity to have input into the budget to the extent that I would expect in a consensus government.

What it took, Mr. Speaker, was the 11 Regular Members working with their Cabinet colleagues, over the past three and a half weeks, to come up with something that we could live with. Is it perfect? No, it's not. Has the process been flawed? Yes, it has. It hasn't been perfect, but we need to move ahead. We need to get on with things. We need to learn something. We need to grow as Members and as an Assembly.

I think we can take a lot out of the last three and a half weeks. We've had some lively debates in this House; we tried to keep things on an issue level. From my standpoint, it never did get personal; it's all about the issues. I respect the Premier — as the Premier and as the Finance Minister — and the work that he and his Cabinet colleagues have done over the past three and a half weeks in getting the budget to the state it is in today, and that's at third reading. I think a lot of good work has been done by the Members of this House, and everybody's to be applauded for working together and showing the patience to see this through. It would have been easy for us to vote it down in second reading. But as my colleague Mr. Beaulieu stated, we would have started back at square one, and I don't think that was something we wanted to do.

What I believe is the government took on too much too soon. It's a government still trying to find its legs. I can appreciate some of the growing pains of a new government just coming in and wanting to do so much, and I give Premier Roland a lot of credit for his ambitious start and trying to get some things done and a new way of doing business. I subscribe to a lot of that, Premier Roland and Members. I believe fully in trying to do the best we can with what we have. That's where I believe we can all work together and achieve some good things over the next three and half years, the time that we have left here together.

Moving ahead, though, I do believe we need to come up with a road map of some kind: something that we can share with the public, we can share with each other, we can share with our stakeholders. Something that's going to show us going from where we're at today to the time the next election comes around and the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories is voted into office three and a half years from now. We have to

come up with something like that. We can gauge our progress and our success on that road map. It has to happen.

One of the key failings, I think, in all of this, was communication. That's been flawed from the start. Whose responsibility is that? I'm not sure. Again, I think it's just the way things happened. We were trying to get too ambitious too soon.

Our budget has grown 30 per cent in the last five years. That's a tremendous rate of growth. It's over \$1.3 billion now. We do need to find ways, and a means, of getting our spending in check. One of the things in the process that we've set out for ourselves.... I buy into the fact we've got to reduce our spending, but as fast as we reduce our spending, we're finding new places to spend the money.

Some of this, going forward, has to be in an effort to cut back on our spending. We can't spend every dollar that we reduce ourselves by. We can't find more ways to spend it, because it's a tremendous.... Thirty per cent in five years: that's a tremendous rate of expenditure growth, and it's something that we just can't sustain. I know the Finance Minister has said that himself. Again, I think we have to have our eyes squarely on the future, and we need to work together to get there.

Before I close, again I want to say it's been a struggle at times. But I believe with the back-and-forth that has happened in at least the past week.... I really do appreciate the work Cabinet Ministers have shown this side of the House, and I'll point out Mr. Miltenberger specifically, and Mr. McLeod, for their efforts to work with committee, and Premier Roland, at the end of the day, stepping up to the plate. Mahsi.

Applause.

What we see here today, again, is not perfect, but it's something that I can lend my support to and take it out to my constituents.

The job loss has been minimized, so I think that's a key thing too. In all of this the job loss has been minimized. Again, with that, thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the start of the budget I supported it, knowing that for my open-handed approach of working together.... Today I stand here with my colleagues — 11 Regular Members. You know I'd go to war with you any day to support you. Given myself and my constituents of Nunakput, I appreciate it. Members, colleagues across the floor, I thank you as well.

Just looking back at so many things.... For myself, worrying about not sleeping well at night while I've been here — like, what I got myself into. You know, for myself, I worry about not sleeping well at night while I've been here: like, what have I gotten myself into? You worry about the people the cutbacks are affecting. That's what bugged me the most.

Mr. Abernethy and Mr. Beaulieu and all of you spoke so well in regard to working together to try to save as many jobs as we possibly could for all of us and the people. I really think we've come a long way. I really knew that we could get through this, but I'm not looking forward to the next one.

A lot of good has come out of this. I mean, for myself, my access road 177 is going to get started finally. It's not lip service; it's a reality now. For my people of Tuk, you're going to have gravel, water, a new graveyard, sewage, a dump site, and a back door for the safety of my people. That was one of my key drivers for being here: the safety of my people.

When I was the mayor of Tuk, we had so many problems from global warming. Everybody says so much about global warming, but my people in my community of Tuktoyaktuk live it every day.

I'd like to thank the staff for all the support you've given us; the EDI Committee, our Chair, for all the hard work he has done; and our Gov Ops. To P-and-P Chair Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, thank you so much again for the support. To my colleagues across the floor, for the meetings with Mr. Miltenberger and Mr. Yakeleya, and for all the good work every one of you has done. There's a lot of support. We've done our best with what we came out with today. I'd just like to thank you all, my colleagues, again. Mr. Krutko down there is smiling at me. Thank you. Have a good day.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. To the motion. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to rise today. This is my 13<sup>th</sup> budget, going back to the last century. This is truly a budget "first." This is the first time there's been debate on second reading and a move to potentially vote down a budget before it even hit the floor of the House. This is, if we check Hansard, the most amended budget, I believe, in the history of the Government of the Northwest Territories in terms of the amount of give-and-take, money in and out, accommodations that were made. This is definitely the first time I can recollect, maybe with one minor exception, where there's been discussion and this kind of debate on third reading of a bill, any bill, let alone the budget bill. This has been a very interesting process.

Budgets, clearly, are not an event; they're a process. I want to thank everybody who kept faith with consensus government. We got the bill onto the floor, and then we had the process. It is a process of negotiation, consensus, give-and-take, all the work that went on up and down the halls to get to where we are today.

I'd ask everybody who plans to come back here, all of us when we walk through the door of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, to keep this time in mind. This is my fourth time. There are four of us who have been through this process four times. Every time we've been through the process, we've always said, "My God, we've got to do it better next time." After our fourth try we have still to hit success. The 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly will make their effort at it. Clearly, we've embarked on a process that is unique and hasn't been tried in any of the Assemblies I've been in.

In case there is any doubt, I'm going to be voting in support of the budget. I have the same message from my constituents which I'm sure we all have. They want us now to pass the budget and get to work. We have just a shade under 1,200 days left to get a lot of things done. I want to just recognize that the Finance Minister is probably one of the longest serving in the country at this point — it's usually a profession that has a very high mortality rate — and just acknowledge that this is an important budget. It's his fifth one. Not many Finance Ministers get to make that claim.

I'd like to thank all the Members of this House. I do believe, as I said to my colleague Mr. Bromley, that when we look back at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, I'm convinced we'll have enough of the pieces in place — that we're far enough along in our relationships with each other and that we have enough of a plan — that we're going to be able to look back at a whole host of areas and say that we've done a lot of good work for the people of the Northwest Territories. This budget process was the first major hurdle for us to get over.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we first started this process, I got the impression that the Finance Minister, Premier Roland, whatever way you want to call it, sort of walked through the gates kind of like Clint Eastwood in *Pale Rider*. He sort of walked through with his spurs clicking away and saying, "This is how the budget is going to be, and this is how the budget is going to be." I heard the whistle of *Pale Rider* go.

Mr. Speaker, the attitude of Mr. Roland has changed quite a bit. First, it was "This is it," and then there was a little bit of "Maybe," then "We'll talk



about it." We've gotten the budget we have here today. The bravado of first coming out there and blazing away has certainly changed. I want to recognize that, because this has been quite an experience for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, when we first started off, there were 135 layoffs before us. Right now we've been able to save over 50 per cent. I certainly wish we could have saved every single one of them. I think we have a long way to go, but I also think we've come a long way.

Mr. Speaker, I've gotten to know personally a number of the people who have been affected, not just in my constituency but throughout Yellowknife, and a few people throughout the North. I've gained a greater respect for what they do and what they provide to the public service. To that, I personally recognize their efforts in the way they've done this, in the sense of the fight and how they helped us.

We've been able to reduce that 135 to a little more than 60 employees who will be affected. It's between 60 and 70. I wouldn't think that the fight is over. I think that on this side of the House we still have a long ways to go. We're going to still continue to work with government to bring their attention to issues and stuff.

Mr. Speaker, when it first started and our esteemed Premier said, "This is the way it's going to be," I started losing a lot of sleep. I haven't taken this process very lightly. I mean, I've been exhausted. I worry about people who got a layoff and who aren't going to be taking a retirement package, who aren't available to go to school, and even those people who don't have a position to transfer to. I worry about them today; I'm concerned about them today. I know everyone in this building is concerned about them. I hope no one takes that lightly. But there is still a long ways to go.

I want to recognize a few things; I should call them milestones. The first one is the way the Regular Members collectively came together. In my experience in the last budget — in the sense of the last government, that is — Regular Members worried more about their own constituency and what they could raise individually on their own merits, whether it's their own credibility or legacy. This has been quite an interesting change, because Regular Members formed a united caucus, where each one of us was able to come together in some form or another to vote collectively. It was quite impressive. I think there was only a little chip in our armour only in one vote or so. With that, we can move forward, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to recognize the fight and appreciation that the UNW put up. Mr. Speaker, they took a lot of time and energy. They produced reports. They called us; they met with us. They took a lot of time

to make sure we understood their points of view. For that, I thank them. The hill that they were charging up wasn't easy. They needed the support from Regular Members here to take the time to listen to them and understand their issues. The issues the UNW brought forward, I thought, were good ones and interesting ones. I'm grateful for that.

When I look to Cabinet, I certainly hope they got a message through this whole process. I certainly hope they don't think this was fun. I didn't enjoy these stressful days, these stressful afternoons, the late nights. Like I said, I've lost a lot of sleep. Although I wasn't on a hunger strike, like some Members, it certainly feels like I've been on a sleeping strike. I'm certainly looking forward to Friday, when the budget process is over.

I certainly think most people in the public don't know that there isn't a door on the side where you walk through to Cabinet, and that there isn't a door that stops people from entering the Regular Members' side. The thresholds are open. There's no door there. As I understand it, there's never been a door there — or maybe there was — in my time, that is.

The important thing I'm trying to emphasize is to make sure Cabinet uses that hallway and comes down and knocks on our door. At the start of the budget there was a silence. This is the way it was going to be, and there was this silence. But as the process got on and as we united collectively under all Regular Members — and I want to thank each individually, of course, for their efforts in coming together — all of a sudden, through the doors we started hearing Ministers making special visits down the hall. All of a sudden we were back to sort of: "No. Maybe. Okay. We'll work through this, and we'll find a way."

Is this an example of consensus government working? I would certainly say that quite often we're the envy of Canada, and this is exactly why. We can reach things and work through them, and sometimes, whether we like them or not, we can find a balance to make it work and come together.

I have great respect for Finance Minister Roland. I don't think it was clearly highlighted by Mr. Miltenberger, but the fact is that this is his last budget. Although he's mentioned how many he has carried on, it is not any easy task to carry on such broad shoulders the future of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the future of the people of the Northwest Territories. Premier Roland doesn't get enough recognition for the fact that, I'm sure, he lost a lot of sleep, and maybe he lost a little weight on some type of hunger strike or something like that of his own — maybe a frustration strike with many Regular Members.

The thing I'm trying to recognize here is that his composure through this process has been admirable, and I admire him. It's hard to take it line-by-line — "We'll fight every single line through this budget" — and not take it personally. He's done wonderfully. For that, I respect him, because it's hard not to take this job personally when you're worried about everything and the struggles. If we vote no, it doesn't mean we don't like you or that we don't want something. We're just concerned about how it sort of pans out for the future.

Mr. Speaker, voting for a balanced budget, in my mind, is the only way to do business. I can't imagine a Member here not wanting to vote for a balanced budget. Who knows where we would be? It doesn't represent sound management. We have to work on a sheet that's always balanced. This is an historic day, where Regular Members came together in such united ways to influence government, not as 11 voices but as one voice. We have proved time and time again that we are a force to be reckoned with when we work together.

With that said, it's always nicer to work together with the other seven Members too. I would encourage them, as we go forward in the future, to reach out to us in advance, as early as possible, to ask us what we think before they put it in print and to say, "Any thoughts?"

Mr. Speaker, as we go on to the next budget, 2009–2010, that will grace our desks in the fall, when we start talking about them in committee, I certainly look forward to seeing things such as zero-based budgeting, better evaluation on how we plan to proceed. I want to make sure we proceed with things that we support, and I certainly want to make sure that we're in the business we want to be in as far as government. There's always a huge expectation that we do everything as a government, and I know that's completely unrealistic, but I know we try.

Working through these business plans, I would encourage the government side of the House to use every opportunity to make sure we're communicating and hearing the side of the Regular Members as we bring forward some issues.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, years ago I read the book and even took a course, the Stephen Covey course. One of his famous sayings that has always stuck with me is: begin with the end in mind. Whoever the Finance Minister will be, whatever lucky Member on the Cabinet side gets that, I would encourage them to start thinking about this process. I say again: this was not fun; it was not enjoyable. I will carry the concerns of those who won't be in the public service with us much longer for quite a while, because it does bother me. I would encourage Cabinet to use every opportunity to seek

support early on, to listen to Regular Members and engage with us and work with us, because consensus government will never continue if you act like a government in majority. I say that this is a teamwork process, that we need to do this together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone for this privilege to speak today. I will be supporting the budget. It's an honour to be part of this Assembly, even though some days are longer than others. I definitely say that I'll be supporting this budget, knowing that we will be working toward a better future for the people of the Northwest Territories. With that, I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say, as well, that it's been a privilege to participate in helping to develop this budget. I think there are various perspectives on how much I've participated, but I certainly agreed with the Premier in the direction that we set off with, our visions and goals and so on, basically living within our means and, I think, facing up to the fact that we have some new realities coming. We need to respond to those. The more we can respond to those progressively and with good thinking, the better off all our people will be. I'm not convinced that a budget of \$1.4 billion has gotten us very far along this road.

Mr. Speaker, we have some huge issues before us. There's a time element that makes them crushing and more severe and demanding of our attention, not just for action but a thoughtful and well-laid-out and steadily building series of responses. That's the sort of thing I'm looking for in budgets.

The first — and I've harped on this a lot — is climate change. It's not a new thing. I think there's a lot of awareness happening out there. Mr. Speaker, I'll just read a little bit here on what other jurisdictions in Canada are doing: British Columbia, a 33 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 is their target; Alberta, 14 per cent below 2005 by 2050; Saskatchewan, 32 per cent below 2004 by 2020; Manitoba will meet the Kyoto target, 6 per cent below '90 levels, by 2012; Ontario has a specific target; Quebec, 6 per cent below 1990 by 2012; New Brunswick, similar; Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador. We get to the Northwest Territories and this chart says, "No explicit target." This is no longer acceptable. Perhaps we haven't had time in our short life to address this, but there's no bigger issue to me and many of the people of the Northwest Territories than to get going on this. So let's really get after that one.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the cost of fuel, it's related to the cost of living. It imbues everything. It

has been, again, predicted for years. It is steadily rising. Now we're looking at issues of availability. We continue to unwisely rely on fossil fuels, and our response to this crisis has been to subsidize. I think that's appropriate in the short term, but I'd like to just review a few of our community situations. I'm speaking as the Member for Weledeh here. I've selected three communities to look at, that reflect the broad makeup of my constituency. The communities I selected are Yellowknife, Inuvik and Fort McPherson, because of the characteristics that they have and that, again, reflect Weledeh.

Just looking at family incomes — and I'm comparing them to Canada, and these are total after-tax incomes — in Yellowknife, for example, at \$100,029 per household, we're 46 per cent higher than Canada, and we have a cost of living that is 17 per cent higher than Edmonton's. Inuvik, on the other hand, at \$78,000 per household, is 15 per cent higher than Canada but with a 47.5 per cent higher cost of living than Edmonton. Fort McPherson: 23 per cent lower than the average after-tax income in Canada, at \$52,000, but with costs that are 52.5 per cent more than Edmonton. Quite different situations there and things that we obviously need to address any time this jurisdiction is developing a budget.

Our response to try and deal with this — and probably rightfully so, again, in the short term — is to highly subsidize those communities that require it. The costs of housing, utilities, transportation and recreation are all actually lower in our small communities compared to Yellowknife because of those subsidies.

We're subsidizing about \$140 million right now, and this is an extreme cost to the Northwest Territories and the taxpayers of the Northwest Territories and Canada, but it's also an opportunity. To me, it reflects the opportunity of developing our local economies to provide for some of those needs in ways that stimulate that local economy and the jobs and innovation that can bring.

Mr. Speaker, again we need some real innovation here and some real new ways of thinking outside the box. Let me give one example that we could have easily done here. We could have put out a giant RFP for a heating energy service contract for all major government facilities in our major road-connected centres at zero capital investment and millions of dollars of savings per year. At the same time we could then dedicate those savings to deal with the higher cost of living in our small communities.

This is the sort of straightforward thing that we can do. It's all laid out there for us. It just requires a dedication to a new approach and new way of doing things.

My hope is that we can do things in an even better way in the next budget. We're always talking about business plans and so on. I'm excited about that. For the revenue-generation discussion paper that's coming up, we're going to need some really innovative responses there. I'm looking forward to those discussions.

I'm very impressed with all my colleagues and all the people in this room for their dedication and their wisdom. I think we've really brought the issues to the table, and we're struggling to address them.

My hope for the next budget and the actions we come up with is that we're going to have greatly improved communication; an earlier consensus that contributes to comprehensive and real change in direction; some more direct and timely input from this side of the House; and that in the result, we come to value our volunteers and the incredible services and savings that they provide in the Northwest Territories. Finally, my hope is that we do the thorough and comprehensive analysis that we said we would but somehow didn't quite get to in this round.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I like the noises I'm hearing for next year. I think we've had a bit of a challenge here with the new Assembly coming together and the timing difficulties in the normal process of budget planning that we've had to deal with. So again, I'm looking forward to participating in the next round.

Let me end by saying that I've been very, very pleased and privileged to work with my colleagues and the staff that we get to work with. I've appreciated that each side of the House has spoken with one voice. I'll note that it's a little more democratic on this side of the House.

Laughter.

And that speaks volumes to the hard work and the realistic approach that Members on this side of the House are showing. There's a different kind of reality on that side of the House that I also recognize.

I also want to say that I think we're all keenly aware that this process is for the betterment of the people of the Northwest Territories. I recognize that that's where we're all coming from, if I tend to speak a little too harshly from time to time.

So I can't say I really support this budget, but I will be voting for this budget. I think we need to get this show on the road. And I'm very much looking forward to a new, outside-of-the-box, progressive approach to next year's budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Bill 8 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008–2009, read a third time.

BILL 11  
AN ACT TO AMEND  
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 11 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, read a third time.

BILL 9  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,  
NO. 4, 2007–2008

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, be read for the third time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 9 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, read a third time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if His Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills?

### Assent to Bills

**Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (Hon. Tony Whitford):** Asseyez-vous, s'il vous plaît. Please be seated.

Monsieur le président, les députés, mesdames et messieurs, it's certainly a pleasure for me to be back here today to assent to the bill, and I shall get right to it.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bill:

Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 2008–2009.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please be seated. Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the Day for Wednesday, June 18, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

### Orders of the Day

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Returns to Oral Questions
- 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 6) Acknowledgements
- 7) Oral Questions
- 8) Written Questions
- 9) Returns to Written Questions
- 10) Replies to Opening Address
- 11) Petitions
- 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
- 18) First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act
  - Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act
  - Bill 12: An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
  - CR 2-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Public Housing and Homeownership Programs
  - CR 3-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner

MS 62-16(2): Government of Canada  
Residential Schools Apology

21) Report of Committee of the Whole

22) Third Reading of Bills

23) Orders of the Day

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until  
Wednesday, June 18, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

