



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 32

16th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Pages 1385 to 1416

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Wednesday, June 18, 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 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 74-16(2)
GRADUATES OF 2008

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, spring is a very exciting time in education. Graduation ceremonies have started and will continue to be taking place at high schools, post-secondary institutions and various technical training programs throughout the Northwest Territories.

These ceremonies acknowledge the hard work and dedication of each individual who has reached his or her goal of completion. Individuals will be acknowledged for excellence in academics, athletics, fine arts, leadership and community involvement.

Whether or not they have won tangible awards, each and every graduate should be exceptionally proud of reaching this milestone in his or her life. The completion of a high school, Adult Literacy and Basic Education, apprenticeship or postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree program is a significant achievement in the lifelong journey of learning.

We are very proud of the efforts and successes of our NWT graduates. I would like to take a moment to congratulate them on their commitment, hard work and perseverance.

Over the years the high school graduation rates have steadily increased across the Northwest Territories. In 2005 the graduation rate was above

50 per cent for the first time ever. That year there were 343 graduates. Graduation rates have continued to increase, and in 2007 we had 370 graduates, a rate of 56 per cent. The numbers reflect the tremendous dedication of students, teachers, educational professionals, elders and volunteers across the territory. Their work ensures that we can meet the needs of northern society for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, the teachers and educational professionals are an integral part of society. As I mentioned earlier in the session, the first graduating class to have completed the Bachelor of Education degree at Aurora College in the Northwest Territories held their convocation in April. This class includes 15 graduates, 13 of whom are from the Northwest Territories. Many of them will soon be working in schools across the territory. Northern-educated nurses are also important to the Northwest Territories. In 2008 there are 13 students graduating from the Northern Nursing Program at Aurora College. I want to congratulate these and all other Aurora College graduates and recognize their achievements.

Although award ceremonies for many apprenticeship and technical training programs do not coincide with the academic school year, I would like to recognize the achievements of individuals pursuing careers in trades and occupations at a time when the northern economy is rich and there is a great demand for skilled workers.

The list of noteworthy accomplishments this year is extensive. It is difficult to highlight every success within this setting, as each deserves special recognition. However, I would like to recognize the people who helped our students reach their goals. The success of each graduate depends on his or her support system. The help of devoted family and friends is invaluable. They, too, share in our grads' successes, because they helped the students get there.

Mr. Speaker, the teachers, support staff, volunteers and community members who stand behind each graduate deserve to be recognized as well. The countless hours dedicated to the success of grads have enabled them to reach their full potential. Our

graduates are the workers, parents and leaders of tomorrow. We can all be proud of them and their achievements, and we can be sure that each will contribute back to our territory as they realize their full individual potential.

I am very proud of all our northern students and graduates, and I ask the Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in applauding their achievements. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 75-16(2) NWT WATER STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, as Northerners we value and rely on clean waters and healthy aquatic ecosystems for our spiritual, cultural and physical well-being. It is one of our most valuable resources and will only increase in value and importance as sources diminish.

As we all know, wetlands, deltas and water flows throughout northern Alberta and the southern Northwest Territories are changing. We know these changes may be affecting the fish, moose and other life in the aquatic ecosystems. One of the major issues relates to the pace and scale of development within the Mackenzie River Basin and the potential for this development to impact the waters. We know that the effects of activities outside our boundaries are putting pressures on the basin and are far reaching. The increased demand for energy in hydro, and oil sands development in particular, could compromise the Mackenzie River Basin if not properly managed.

A significant priority of the 16th Legislative Assembly is an environment that will sustain present and future generations. The protection of our water supply and quality is listed as an action item to ensure this priority is successfully met. As a result, the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to take a lead role in forming partnerships to protect the waters of the Northwest Territories and to fulfil our political and moral responsibilities.

As Members of this House are aware, the Government of Canada is legally responsible for the management of water and the regulation of water use in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in collaboration with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, has developed a framework document on an NWT water strategy. At the appropriate time today, Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling this document.

The paper Northern Voices, Northern Waters is presented in the form of an outline and identifies the issues, challenges and opportunities in this area. The document also presents goals and principles to facilitate sound water management and policy in public water, transboundary waters and aquatic ecosystems.

Aboriginal traditional knowledge is a vital and essential source of information about the natural environment and its resources, including water, the use of natural resources and the relationship of people to the land and each other. The framework acknowledges the significant role of traditional knowledge in ensuring development is sustainable and compatible with protecting aquatic ecosystems.

It is important to recognize and respect aboriginal and treaty rights, land claim agreements and self-government agreements. Water rights and interests are entrenched in land claims and legislation, and the Government of the Northwest Territories is working to ensure that these rights and interests are recognized and respected.

The framework for developing a water strategy will be shaped by the advice and expectations of Northerners. Aboriginal leadership and northern communities have often emphasized the importance of water in the Northwest Territories. Input from NWT residents, aboriginal governments and organizations and interested stakeholders will ensure that all those who have water interests have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a strategy and that it addresses their needs and concerns with a strong northern voice. It is our intention to have the water strategy finalized by March 2009.

Mr. Speaker, our government, together with our partners, intends to do all it can to keep our water resources abundant and healthy. The interests of aboriginal governments and organizations and people across the territory need to be reflected in the development and implementation of the strategy. Northern Voices, Northern Waters will help move us towards these goals and towards the protection of this resource for current and future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk again about the difficulties that northern families have in accessing services for children who are diagnosed with autism. As I stated on June 3, 2008, I can relate to the frustration as I've now been waiting since May 11 – that is, five and a half weeks – for information from the Department of Health and Social Services on just exactly what they offer as services.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, if I as an MLA cannot readily get this type of information, what hope does the average Northerner have? I'm trying to do my job as an MLA and act as the conduit between the constituent and the government, but if the department or the Minister is unwilling to meet me halfway or at the very least tell me why it's taking them so long to provide this information, it causes me to wonder. It's starting to look like they're more interested in the ministerial privileges than doing the work. How long does it take to say nothing because there aren't any programs? I'll type the response myself.

Everyone knows that early intervention is extremely important in making sure that a child diagnosed with autism has the best possible outcome and is able to function to their full potential. This requires support from the Department of Health and Social Services and, of course, the health care professionals for the family and the child. That is where I want to start with my inquiries. What intervention do we have?

As there is with everything, I understand that there is a fine line we walk regarding quality and affordability, but right now we have nothing offered up as facts. With no policy framework in place, what are we doing to offer anything to these constituents? Does it really come down to who you know, the squeaky wheel or even where you live?

Now, if you can get into a program run by the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities, you get to receive between four and five hours a week of support, but, Mr. Speaker, that's what a province like an Alberta offers per day for children with autism, not to mention that the Alberta expert panel points to getting these children into intervention programs as soon as possible. This will allow these kids to have the best chance to sustain the reasonable quality of life that every other child enjoys. So we don't have to look too far for examples of what exists.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services about where the non-

existent policy framework is to deal with children with autism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SPORT, RECREATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about the need to support our smaller communities with sport and recreation youth programs.

When we were younger, many of us were able to participate in a wide range of winter and summer sport and recreation activities here in the Northwest Territories. Among them were a very successful skiing program in Inuvik, a floating swimming pool that made stops up and down the Mackenzie River, above-ground swimming pools, and vibrant outdoor rinks in many of our smaller communities: all of this in the 1970s. What happened? How were we able to provide all those activities back then? Today, the youth in many of our small communities don't have the same opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, part of the reason for the success of these programs was that the communities were able to hire qualified staff: staff who dedicated themselves to their jobs, who had the necessary skills to develop and, more importantly, the natural aptitude to deliver a variety of summer and winter sport and recreational activities for the whole community.

Today, smaller communities struggle to attract, hire and retain qualified recreation and youth staff. There is no question, Mr. Speaker, that small communities need help from this government to be able to properly fill these positions. I firmly believe that hiring qualified recreation professional staff and hiring local recreation assistants is the first step towards addressing many of the sport and recreation and youth problems.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke many times on many issues and concerns affecting the youth in Tu Nedhe and the need for swimming pools, youth centres, more dollars in O&M for existing facilities and much, much more. In addition to all of this, these workers can deliver programs where the youth have fun, enjoy themselves and gain positive experiences in a safe environment.

We need to support these communities. If that means getting creative, so be it. Providing communities with adequate assistance and support to hire qualified staff today can result in cost savings in the long run. However, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, the real benefit to this is that if we

can assist communities with this issue, we'll soon see them become more active, more vibrant and more healthy.

Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TEACHER HOUSING NEEDS

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke yesterday about housing needs in the Territories, and today I'd like to address a specific aspect of housing. It's a topic that's been mentioned several times already by Members of this House over the last weeks and months. That is the need for available, adequate and affordable housing for our teachers.

NWT teachers consistently face housing shortages, unsafe living conditions and exorbitant rent. Last year some 130 teachers were recruited to the North. Of those, 94 were replacement teachers, and 75 of those moved to our small communities. We experience a 20 to 30 per cent turnover of our teachers year after year, and the most often cited reason for this turnover is the lack of available, adequate and affordable housing.

Education authorities cannot sustain such a high staff turnover rate year after year. It costs the education authorities financially. More importantly, there is a cost to the students in our schools. It's been proven that students perform better when they have consistent, quality teaching. The quality of the teaching is not at issue here, Mr. Speaker, but wholesale changes in school staff every year do have a negative impact on the students and their academic achievements. We want to attract qualified teachers to the NWT and retain them in our schools. How can that happen if housing conditions are deplorable?

The two Yellowknife school boards are lucky enough to have two powers that assist them in the governance and management of their schools. They have the legislated ability to acquire real property and the authority to levy taxes. Over the years they've been able to address their teachers' housing needs on their own without government assistance. Regional boards do not have these abilities and must rely on either the government or the local housing market, which very often is non-existent, to find housing for their staff. The NWT Housing Corporation has admittedly made some effort to supply market housing in some communities, but it's met with very limited success.

Housing for teachers is still the most difficult aspect of teacher recruitment. The Minister of Education has recently been presented with a study called

Cheating our Students: The Impact of Inadequate Housing for Teachers in Small Communities. It has also received a letter of support for the recommendations in the study from the Yellowknife Education District No. 1.

The need for available, affordable and adequate housing for teachers has been around for a long time, Mr. Speaker, and we're not much closer to filling that need.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker: You may conclude your statement, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues.

We're not much closer to filling the need that exists.

In closing, I'd like to quote from the study.

"If the current GNWT policy on staff housing remains intact then there must be flexibility provided to Councils such as what is available to the Yellowknife District Education Authorities. If schools in the NWT are going to remain attractive to teachers seeking employment...then the need for housing must remain a high priority."

Action needs to be taken and taken soon. I urge the Minister of Education to consider the recommendations of the study and to respond to the district education authorities immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW LEADERSHIP OF THE GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to publicly congratulate the newly elected president and vice-president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council: Mr. Richard Nerysoo, president, and Mary Ann Ross, vice-president. I look forward to continuing to work with Richard and Mary Ann on the issues that affect the Gwich'in in the Mackenzie Delta region but more importantly to enhancing the Gwich'in social and economic opportunities in the region and throughout the North.

I would also like to thank the people who put their names forward to run in the Gwich'in elections, to serve the people in the Gwich'in nation and to stand for public office. I would like to thank Norm Snowshoe, Robert Charlie, Charlie Furlong and Lawrence Norbert for putting their names forward

and for getting their message out. I would also like to take the time to recognize all the Gwich'in people who cast their votes to elect their leadership for the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

At this time I would like to thank the outgoing president, Mr. Fred Carmichael, who has done so much for the Gwich'in nation and for the people in the Northwest Territories during his service as the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and also as chair of the Aboriginal Pipeline Corporation. Fred, we all know, deserves to take some time out and enjoy his retirement. More importantly again, on behalf of the Gwich'in people and the people of the Mackenzie Delta, I would like to thank Fred Carmichael for his commitment and dedication to the people of the Mackenzie Delta.

Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AIRPORT RUNWAY LIGHTS

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided].

Mr. Speaker, because of the long distances between our communities in the NWT, air travel has become an essential service for our residents. Most community airports across the NWT are equipped with basic infrastructure, such as adequate runways, navigational aids and runway lighting. This ensures that communities can be safely accessed by air 24 hours a day.

Unfortunately, that is not the case for two communities in my riding. The airports in the communities of Jean Marie River and Nahanni Butte do not have runway lights. The lack of runway lights makes it very difficult for essential services such as medevacs to travel to the communities at night. I just want to mention that June and July aren't issues; it's the winter months.

This is a serious disadvantage and compromises the health and public safety of these communities. The Minister of Transportation has stated that public safety is the number one priority for his department and for the government. I urge the Minister to extend his commitment to public safety to the communities of Jean Marie and Nahanni Butte to ensure that runway lights are installed at these airports.

Mahsi cho.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET PROCESS OBSERVATIONS

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use my Member's statement today to speak on the whole budget process that we just went through and Premier Roland's announcement yesterday during Committee of the Whole.

I voted at second reading to have the budget put into Committee of the Whole, because I wanted to have the opportunity to debate it. I said at the time that I would fight this tooth and nail for Inuvik and Arctic Tern. Well, we did, and last night and this morning I felt like I was in a brawl after five weeks of Committee of the Whole. But we were able to defer the closure of Arctic Tern, and it wasn't because of me. Although I played a small part in it, it was largely due to the letters that we received from the employees of Arctic Tern. They had a lot to do with my Social Programs colleagues. I shared the letters with them, and they committed their support. The biggest support came from the 11 Regular Members on this side of the House. Without their support — standing with me when it came for a vote — this never would have happened. I appreciate the support, and I thank you for it. According to a few of the e-mails I got from Inuvik this morning, they also thank you very much for your support.

Cabinet also played a role in this. This time you not only talked the talk, you actually walked the walk. We appreciate it, and Arctic Tern appreciates it.

We wanted to be able to save all the jobs, but we weren't able to. For those we weren't able to save, I apologize. But I'm confident that with your abilities and your commitment you will find employment within the GNWT. If you don't find employment with the GNWT because you are an affected employee, let me know. I will raise the issue with Minister Bob McLeod of Human Resources, because affected employees should be first on the list. I think we've already said that.

We fought the budget cuts, not because it was our job, not because we wanted to justify our position as MLAs, and not because of ads in the paper. We fought the budget and the cuts because it was the right thing to do for the people in the Northwest Territories. I said yesterday and I'll say again today — and I read it somewhere on the Internet — I believe consensus government does work. I think this whole budget process was a prime example of consensus government working. Had it not been for that.... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. I was saying this was a prime

example of consensus government at work. Had it not been for that, they'd have put forward a budget, and the budget would have been run through with 135 job cuts and everything else they wanted. So I do believe in consensus government.

I work with a lot of Members from the smaller communities. They raise their concerns passionately. I believe we will reinvest in the smaller communities across the Northwest Territories regardless of what other people think, because our Member's Conduct Guidelines say that we will distribute our resources fairly and justly, and I think this Assembly will do that.

Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET PROCESS OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to use my Member's statement today to speak about yesterday's proceedings in regard to third reading of Bill 8 for the 2008–2009 budget.

As Members are well aware, the last four weeks have been a real battle between the Regular Members and Cabinet. We have moved an historic number of motions during our budget deliberations, and yesterday was the culmination of all of our efforts.

The budget is not perfect, but we were able to minimize job loss and get the message out to our constituents that consensus government can and does still work. Our Premier himself has gone through an amazing transformation — from the Premier who took a hard line early on and said no to any movement by government to address our reinstatements to a Premier who did listen and at the end of the day breathed some life back into consensus government. In the past, Premier Roland has been nicknamed Captain Consensus, and he has on occasion in this House said that he is consensus to the core. So I'm very glad to see the Premier getting back to his roots.

I want to thank Premier Roland for working with the Regular Members on the concessions and also Deputy Premier Miltenberger, whom I know played a key role in bringing the budget to the conclusion that we had yesterday.

I want to say thank you to the UNW for all of their efforts in assisting Members with research and advice and also for their public relations campaign regarding the 2008–2009 budget.

The last four weeks have been a gruelling time for Members — many of us far from home and families

— and I want to thank all Members for their efforts and their dedication in arriving, finally, at a product we can accept.

None of our work here would be possible without the professional staff we have here at the Legislative Assembly. I want to thank our Clerk, Mr. Tim Mercer; Deputy Clerk, Mr. Doug Schauerte; all of the Clerk's staff, research staff; and all of the other building staff and service providers who make putting on a budget session — and a session in general — possible. Thank you to you too, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMPLOYMENT OF NORTHERN GRADUATE NURSES

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, our northern graduate nurses are choosing to leave the North. I would like to profile the experience of one of my constituents.

As a recent graduate of the nursing program at Aurora College in Yellowknife, she enjoyed considerable support throughout her training. Yet upon graduation she found that the reality is that there are not enough positions to satisfy the employment needs of our graduates. Furthermore, positions appear to be being filled not on the basis of qualifications or affirmative action policies but rather on perhaps who one knows in the system.

This person, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing with distinction, specialized in mental health and addictions: clearly an area of priority concern for us. Her qualifications would clearly prepare her to be an asset to our psychiatry unit at Stanton, but instead she was offered a graduate placement position in Hay River as a general medicine nurse. This would have meant selling her home and leaving behind her family and the supports available to her here. This graduate forwarded a resumé of her qualifications to the Calgary Health Region, where it was readily accepted. That's quite a contrast.

The nursing program was started at Aurora College to keep Northerners home. Yet time and again Stanton Hospital hires new grads from as far away as Newfoundland, while those who have graduated in the North do not meet the qualifications for nursing positions here. Why do our nurses qualify anywhere else in Canada but not in the Northwest Territories? Hiring locum nurses to fill positions at Stanton when we have homegrown talent right here in our backyard does not make sense. Mr. Speaker, we cannot fail to recognize and support our northern residents. Let's get our priorities right.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FREQUENCY OF PAYMENT
OF ELDERS' PENSION CHEQUES

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Speaker, today I stand here in regard to my elders' pension cheques that are not lasting as long as they should because of the high cost of living in the North, which in my riding is 81 per cent higher in communities such as Nunakput than in the capital, Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, my elders should not have to worry about having enough food to last them until the next pension cheque comes in. We need to have action. The Minister has to talk to the federal government to try to give elders a choice of pension cheques once or twice per month. I stand here and I worry. I talked for about half an hour yesterday with a constituent who stated that elders' cupboards are empty. That's not right. This government has to act on this. Our people are asking for help, and let's give it to them. It's got to be done.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Item 4, Returns to oral questions. Item 5, Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Recognition of
Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to recognize Amanda Mallon, who is here with her staff, Dave Roebuck and Colleen Eckert. Amanda served four years as NWTTA president, and she is outgoing president. This is her last month, and we do have a new president coming on stream. I'd just like to say thank you for all the services that you've done for us. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize a friend, Steven Veness. He's up there with Tricia Melanderford.

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

Item 6, Acknowledgements. Item 7, Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 361-16(2)
SPORT, RECREATION AND YOUTH
PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the need for this government to assist smaller communities so that they're able to hire qualified sports, recreation and youth staff. My question is for the Minister of MACA. Will the Minister commit to looking at this issue and to developing a plan to assist communities so they can have adequate resources to hire qualified youth staff?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, this is an area that we've had a number of communities express interest in. We've also had some early discussion with the Council of Sport and Recreation Partners, and we've talked with the Aboriginal Sport Circle staff about the needs in our communities. We all recognize that more has to be done to assist the communities.

We have a number of funding programs that are directed to the communities. However, we recognize that there are probably other areas, especially in the youth programming area, where we could provide further assistance or find a way to do that. We have already committed to look at this with a number of different organizations, such as the ones I mentioned, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to increasing much needed funding to the communities to specifically address the issue of sports, recreation and youth?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't expecting to get that request this soon after concluding our budgeting process. In our recently approved budget we did increase funding to youth by way of creating a second youth position for the north side of the Territories, and we have still retained one position in the south end. We will look at what we can do. We need to have more discussion with our recreation, sport and youth organizations to see what we can do as we come forward for the business planning process.

Mr. Beaulieu: I'm talking about the government themselves hiring youth staff — people who can deal with youth concerns and do youth surveys. My question is: could the Minister talk to his Cabinet colleagues about putting a budget together sometime in the next business planning process to look at this important issue?

Hon. Michael McLeod: That's not something we're prepared to commit to at this point. We need to have further discussions with the different organizations that have expressed concern over our investment in the area of youth. We need to look at all the sources of revenue that we have and also to have the opportunity to discuss this with the Regular Members. We haven't really gotten to that point yet. I'd like to do that before we enter into the business planning process.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about the actual thought of a whole bunch of individuals working in this area in the communities, working for the department. I don't think that has been contemplated, so I would like to ask the Minister if he's committed with a committee of MLAs or some of the communities to develop a long-term solution to seriously look at the issue of actually having youth staff working for the department at the community level. Of course, that would be during the next business process.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we just went through a departmental reduction that has in fact just come into play. We don't have any funding from within to hire. If I understand the question correctly, it's to hire staff and it sounds like right away. We don't have those resources. We'd be reluctant to hire without the proper discussion and without being able to come forward and have that developed into the business planning process.

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

QUESTION 362-16(2)
SOCIAL PROGRAMS MINISTERS'
EFFORTS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke yesterday about homelessness and about the need for us to address it across the Territories. I was pleased to hear the Minister indicate yesterday that the social programs Ministers will be meeting to discuss options with regards to housing for the homeless. It's recognized that having a continuum of housing is part of the solution to homelessness. My question for the Minister responsible for the homeless is whether these discussions, which are going to be held over the next weeks and months, will consider expanding the continuum of housing within the Northwest Territories to help address homelessness.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister responsible for the area for homelessness

works with the other departments that actually deliver the services themselves. He committed to working with those social programs Ministers in getting the information and ensures that he continues to work on that path as they sit down and put this together.

Ms. Bisaro: I thank Mr. Roland for answering the question. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for homelessness: in recognizing that there is a continuum of housing needs — from people who have absolutely no home to people who are transitioning from no home to be able to go to work to people who need a place while they do work until they can afford enough money to rent their own home, and so on — whether or not that continuum of housing is part of the discussions that the social programs Ministers will be having.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I will have to defer that to the Minister responsible for homelessness, as he'd have that detail.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the homeless, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, that will be a part of the discussions we'll be having with our social envelope of the Ministers that we will be gathering this next couple of weeks. That has been part of our discussion when we're dealing with homelessness, since we're in a process of opening the new Bailey House. We did meet with the group on the female facility they proposed for years down the road. There have been some discussions in that area. Certainly, that will be one of the discussions we'll be having as part of the program within our social envelope.

Ms. Bisaro: I'm pleased to hear that they're discussing a female facility. But I need to point out that homelessness.... I'm not speaking about homelessness just from a Yellowknife point of view but from a territorial point of view. It's a problem in all of our communities. I'd like to ask whether or not the issue of homelessness and reducing the number of homeless people that we have in our communities is going to be a priority for these social program Ministers in our '09–10 budget?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I think it is one of the focuses of the GNWT, where we need to develop programs and services for those homeless who are out there. We currently do have programs among our resources. If we need to increase in that area, we need to work with the communities. We have contribution agreements with the communities, whether they be with First Nations or organizations in communities, to deal with the homelessness.

Certainly, any input from the Member or the Members will be very helpful for our discussions with the social envelope Ministers to move forward.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister. It's nice to hear that it's important to the government. I guess my next question would be: if it is that important, if it's going to be a priority, will the Minister be assigning more financial resources and human resources than we currently have to this problem?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we do provide financial resources, and we will continue to do so. If we do need to improve in these areas, whether it be the program or services, I will certainly be discussing that with my other two colleagues in housing and also Health and Social Services; and I'll be working with the Members, of course, on how we can improve in these areas, financially and in resources as well.

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

QUESTION 363-16(2)
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM
(TAKEN AS NOTICE)

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement today, I'm concerned about children with autism and the service levels that are what I and the parents in the city would describe as non-existent. There are services provided by service agencies, but they're not specific to autism treatment. My question to the Minister of Health and Social Services is: what is the policy and framework that the Department of Health and Social Services operates under specific to autism? What exists in place today?

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. I'm thinking that, in the interest of mutual respect and decency that we're supposed to treat each other with in this House, perhaps someday the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre will make a statement about all the requests that my office does respond to and the constituents that we help him with. I know we have done some good, because I have had his constituents personally thanking me.

On that note, I'll take the Member's question on notice.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 364-16(2)
AIRPORT RUNWAY LIGHTS

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement to the Minister of Transportation. Recently I was flying over the communities of Nahanni Butte and Jean Marie, and I noticed there were no runway lights there. I'd just like to ask the Minister: is purchasing of these lights or fixing them up being planned for this fiscal year?

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, no.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: I'd like to thank the Minister for the brevity of that answer and his efficiency there. I thought in the budget cycle previous to this there was a line item specifically referring to repairs to runway lights in Jean Marie and even in Nahanni Butte, I believe. I'd like to ask the Minister if there are plans this coming year to at least assess them and evaluate the repairs to those lights.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, in the department's O&M plans and forecasts starting in '09-10, we're looking at improving the safety of the Nahanni Butte runway in terms of improvements to that runway. In Jean Marie we had to do some brushing in September of last year. There used to be lights in Jean Marie. However, on two occasions those runway lights were damaged. The department has indicated that they could look at putting some cones there. These runways are used by the charter companies.

There are other options that we're looking at for Nahanni and Jean Marie in terms of emergency lighting on the runways during the dark seasons. In Nahanni Butte we are looking at some engineering work and ways we could improve our safety on the runway issues.

I will have to go back to the department and see specifically if there were plans in terms of runways to be put in at that airport. However, there hasn't been any indication as to Jean Marie River airport getting runway lights.

Mr. Menicoche: I'd like to thank the Minister for a much better answer. The intent of question period is not to get the short answers. I didn't like the tone of that. The intent is to inform me and the public and our communities that the government is here to provide services for our communities. Safety is one

of them. Once again, I'd like to tell the Minister that my communities feel that not having these runway lights installed is a safety issue, and I'd like him to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I didn't hear a question there. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 365-16(2)
ACCESS TO GRAVEL SOURCE
FOR AKLAVIK

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Transportation. It's in regard to the issue that there was a motion passed in this House concerning roads to access sources in Tuk and Aklavik. The constituents of Aklavik have been calling me and wondering why it is that there's a million dollars earmarked for Tuk but zero dollars for Aklavik. I'd just like to ask the Minister: what exactly is the process that has to be followed to ensure the residents of Aklavik will see an access road to their gravel source?

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I want to assure the members of Aklavik and also the MLA for Mackenzie Delta that, through the discussions and exchange with the Premier and myself, we are committed to going into Aklavik to look at the access road and at what it will cost us. We have our numbers; Aklavik will have their numbers. We'll look at a partnership arrangement and see where we go from there.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, the residents of Aklavik want some assurances that they will get a road at some point. It's been 30 years in the works, and it continues to proceed. The residents in other communities were able to receive budget allocations through this process, yet in Aklavik they weren't. I'd like to ask the Minister if he has any resources that will be earmarked for the community of Aklavik to develop that plan or proposal so that he can also forward a similar proposal to Ottawa by way of the Building Canada Fund.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The department is definitely committed. The Premier has stated his commitment. We need to get into Aklavik and show our commitment as other communities have shown theirs. We certainly want to sit down with Aklavik. We want to look at the best way to approach this access road to the people of Aklavik and start working on it. We need to get there and look at the final numbers and sit down and get to work.

Mr. Krutko: As I've mentioned, this has been in the process for 30 years. We've heard of commitments before.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he would put this commitment in writing so I can post it in Aklavik, where the residents can see it.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Yes.

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to ask the Minister if he can also commit to me a date and time for the meeting in Aklavik. We were looking at July, somewhere in the second week. Does he have a date nailed down for the residents of Aklavik that will allow us, by way of having a public meeting, to discuss this issue publicly? Does the Minister have a date at hand for a public meeting?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I'm certainly looking forward to going to Aklavik sometime, but I need to sit down with my colleagues and Mr. Bowden to see about talking to and arranging a meeting with the people in Aklavik and to sit down with the MLA in terms of coordinating the dates. I'm hoping to go to Aklavik and have this very important meeting sometime in the next couple of months. Of course, that means coordinating all our schedules to get into Aklavik.

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

QUESTION 366-16(2)
LOCATION OF LIQUOR RETAIL OUTLET
FOR HAY RIVER

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier this afternoon. The GNWT went out to RFP for a liquor retail contract in Hay River. The contract was awarded. The liquor store would move from the downtown to the industrial area, as per the contract. The development permit for the new location that was granted by the town was appealed. Opponents to the change of location, for various reasons that I won't go into, appealed to the courts. This matter has been in limbo for more than a year. I'd like to ask the Premier, as the grantor of the contract for the liquor retail services in the Northwest Territories, if he is aware of this situation in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I'm not sure if that issue is still before the courts. I'll allow the Premier to answer. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That case has had some controversy in the community of Hay River when it comes to the community development permit process. An RFP was issued. The decision was made by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Since then, because of the

issues that have arisen there, it's been extended. The existing operation contract has been extended, but we are coming to a point where we're going to have to review other options that are available to us if there's no settlement in that community.

Mrs. Groenewegen: It is an issue: a big issue. It can become a big issue in a small town. It seems that most of the angst is around the whole issue of the location of the liquor store. Again, as the grantor of the contract does the Premier feel that there is any influence he could bring to bear to resolve this too long outstanding issue?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Until I get a recent update as to what the state of the situation is in the community of Hay River, we're being careful as to our involvement. The fact is that the Government of the Northwest Territories' process has been on existing facilities and, as old contracts ended, on looking at new contracts for efficiencies. We have to look at a combined services retail storage facility, thereby saving some of the cost of having separate facilities. That's the process we look at to continue. Our preference would be to continue with that path. The RFP proved a result, and we're hoping that things will get concluded to finalize the deal.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, without going into the merits of the concerns that have been raised, I'd like to know: at what point does the Premier think it would be appropriate to step in, to at least discuss some way the government might be able to be involved to resolve this issue?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Again, having to be careful with all the interested parties out there, we have to first see where the situation sits within the community. At that point, the department would look at reviewing its next options. We are considering what options are available now and would be prepared to sit down with the Members for the community and look at what the next processes or steps may be.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: Again, I realize that those looking on from the outside might not consider this to be a big issue, but it has dragged on for a long time. It has caused division in the community. Again, not wanting to hold the contractor up but not wanting to discredit the concerns of those folks — just general townspeople who think it's good to have a liquor retail store located in the downtown, where there are sidewalks and adequate parking and so on — could the Premier commit to attending a meeting, perhaps, with all the stakeholders and parties involved to see if there is a solution that the government could bring forward?

Hon. Floyd Roland: First of all, I will sit down with the department to get the latest update as to what's happening and sit down with the Members as to

where things are and what options may be available to us. Then we'll decide at that point what next steps we may be taking. If it's a meeting of that nature, then we will take that into consideration. The first step is to get the latest update and sit down with the Members.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 367-16(2)
EMPLOYMENT OF NORTHERN
GRADUATE NURSES

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, this is in reference to my Member's statement. I realize that Human Resources is responsible for the graduate placement program, but I believe that the departments, and presumably their authorities, make the final decisions on hires. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services: is there a clear understanding of a northern hire preference policy within our health institutions, and how is this reinforced from time to time?

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a clear understanding within our health and social services system to follow the affirmative action plan and to train and hire as many northern employees and graduates as possible.

Mr. Bromley: I probably don't need to state that the role of nurses is particularly enhanced when they are from the community and bring the local and cultural understanding and sometimes even linguistic services to their work. Is this fully appreciated by our health managers, and what is being done to ensure that this appreciation shows itself in the hiring practices?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Our health authorities are encouraged to hire Northerners.

In the situation to which the Member is referring, we had one of the biggest graduating nursing classes this year from Aurora College. Out of 15 grads, I think almost all of them were offered a northern placement. Ten of them have accepted their placements in the Territories, and seven were placed at Stanton Territorial Health Authority.

I understand that not everybody who wanted to work at Stanton was offered a job at Stanton. The constituent that the Member is referring to was placed in Hay River, and unfortunately that did not work for her personal circumstances.

Mr. Bromley: Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. Why are we hiring locums from afar when we have local nurses available to do the job?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I think we are talking about two different things. I do acknowledge and want to say that we could do a better job at supporting and helping the new grads coming out of college. That's one of the reasons why not all nurse grads can be placed in a setting: they do need support, and we need to make sure that experienced nurses and staff are able to be there to help them.

On the use of locum nurses, any nurse you talk to will tell you no nurse is the same as the nurse right next to her. Nurses come with different backgrounds and different qualifications, and we have to make sure that we have the right mix of nurses. When we hire a locum nurse when there is an existing new grad nurse in the Territories, it could be because the locum nurse provides a different background that the new grad doesn't have. Obviously, we need to make sure the new grads get the training necessary to be fully skilled at the job they're assigned to.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the specific case I have in the back of my mind, the person had considerable experience: over a decade and a half in mental health and addictions. It seems to me it should be appropriate and should be easily slotted in. I'm wondering why we continue to hire even short-term locums from afar when we could be building the experience of our graduates here.

The Minister did acknowledge that more needs to be done. I'd like to hear exactly what is being done, then, to address that need.

Hon. Sandy Lee: First of all, we have reduced the use of locum nurses substantially. We have a larger pool of casual nurses registered with the nursing association who are available to work in the Territories. This is less costly than bringing in locums. I could provide the Member with the stats on that.

In the situation that the Member is talking about, particular to his constituent, I understand that she wanted to work in the psychiatric unit. That's a very, very small unit, and it could be that the hospital was not able to accommodate that situation. I'd be happy to undertake seeing what other options were made available to her. I think that talking about locums and a new grad placement are separate things, and I'd be happy to look into that specific situation.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

QUESTION 368-16(2)
ADULT LEARNING CENTRE IN INUVIK

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We ask residents of the Northwest Territories to go and further their education. Students at the Adult Learning Centre in Inuvik have made that commitment to further their education.

I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister of Education on the upcoming destruction of the only facility in Inuvik that meets the needs of the Adult Learning Centre, and that's the building that the students work out of.

I'd like to ask the Minister if his department has identified any alternate locations. What are the options that his department has come up with? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Ever since there was a petition from the students of Inuvik that came in late last year, my department has been working with the community of Inuvik and the different departments of ENR to try to find a solution, because we know that in August of 2008 there will be the closure of the facility. We're doing what we can as a department to come up with a solution.

We're working on some options, and we're also working with the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council, possibly using some classrooms in the interim. Also, we've identified an ENR building that's going to be vacant, so we're exploring that option as well. We're exploring the college campus as well. Those are the options that we're working with. Then there's also a leased space managed by Inuvik Commercial Properties. Those are just some of the areas that we're exploring at this point.

Mr. McLeod: I think the big thing here is that we have to find a suitable location. I know for a fact they need about seven rooms. They operate on timetable schedules, so having classes in different locations throughout the community isn't very much of an option.

Going back to the centre itself — I may have asked the Minister this before — was the engineer's report done by DPW, or was that done by an independent engineer?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, through PWS and our department it was a contract for the inspection of the building.

Mr. McLeod: We have staff who are leaving next week, and they're coming back in September. They're not sure if they've got a facility to step into when they get back.

The facility has been safe for them to occupy in June; it should be safe in September. I'd like to ask the Minister if the department would consider deferring demolishing the Adult Learning Centre until a suitable location is found.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, one of the options that we did work with was PWS having another inspection done on the actual building itself. The building is an old building, so it was a safety factor. The foundation is rotting away. At the same time, that was one of the options we were working on.

The next option, in the medium term, will be to do a lease agreement with the college campus, because we know that the students need to enter the fall school year. That's one of the short-term solutions that we are working on. After July 30 I do believe there will be space available for them. That's one of the areas that we are focusing on as well. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that. There's a lot of uncertainty as far as students and staff go.

Inuvik is starting to remind me of Jericho in the Old Testament, but in this case you walk around the building seven times and walls come tumbling down.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if a contract has already been put out and awarded for the demolition of the Adult Learning Centre. Thank you.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, the building itself is scheduled to come down in August. As far as I know, it's not out there yet, but I believe it's in the process.

There was a request to PWS to have another inspection done on the facility itself, so we're in the process of pursuing that. We do have some time until then, so we are looking at other options as well. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 369-16(2)
DELIVERY OF RCMP DARE PROGRAM
IN NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are to the Minister of Justice. I'd like to ask some questions about the RCMP's DARE program.

Mr. Speaker, we all know how successful the DARE program has been in many communities. I would like to ask the Minister if he can look into having the DARE program delivered to my constituents and to students in Nunakput. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education program has been very successful in the North. In fact, we do have approximately 20 RCMP members who deliver the program in the communities. They are situated in Inuvik, Aklavik, Whati, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith.

There have been some programs undertaken in the Member's riding. This was for a short period. Certainly, it's one of the areas that we can talk about with the Member—it is a G Division area—if the community is interested.

When the officers are in the community, they get trained. It's a specialized training area. If an individual constable would like to get training, I think the opportunity is there. Certainly, that is one of the areas the department can work with. Mahsi.

Mr. Jacobson: My final question for the Minister. I know the members are assigned to the different detachments. Can the Minister look into having members with DARE training appointed to Nunakput, if he can do that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we can certainly work with the one who is based out of Inuvik, who specializes in delivering the DARE program in the communities. If we can do up a schedule rotation through the communities of Sachs, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok and Tuk, I'm sure it could be pursued, depending on their rotation schedule and their line of work.

Certainly, that message will be passed on through the G Division expeditiously. Mahsi.

Mr. Jacobson: It's "Uluk-HAK-tok." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

QUESTION 370-16(2)
ADULT LEARNING CENTRE IN INUVIK

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my next line of questions to the Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. McLeod.

I'd like to ask Minister McLeod if DPW considers the Adult Learning Centre unfit to occupy. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The inspections that have been done on the facility indicate a number of safety concerns. We have advised the department that the building should be vacated and that the facility should be dismantled. Thank you.

Mr. McLeod: In response to my question before, the Minister of Education said that another engineer's study is being planned. I'd like to ask the Minister: is there a second engineer's report or study being planned, and when can we expect the results of that?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we did have a request to have a second opinion on the safety and structural concerns of this facility. We did hire a third party to do that for us. We recently got our results in, and they indicate that the facility has become a safety issue and that we should move forward on the recommendations.

In fact, the assessment raised the level of risk from substantial to considerable, and we've recommended to ECE that the building be vacated and demolished by sometime this fall. Thank you.

Mr. McLeod: I think the Minister can understand my concern about a facility that these folks need in order to have a place to do their studies.

I'd like to ask the Minister if in the report there are any recommendations that may have been made by the engineers as to a temporary fix or being able to get maybe another year or two years of use out of the building until they find a suitable location for the Adult Learning Centre. Thank you.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was some costing assessed to see if we could do some temporary fixes to bring the facility to a stage where we could continue to use this facility. These costs were in excess of \$7 million, and it's not an option we'd like to follow.

We would prefer that ECE look at either a new facility or modular units. We were considering Arctic Tern, but I think that's not an option anymore, not for the time being.

There are a number of options that are under review. ECE is looking at different ways to do this, and we will be working with them to try to locate another location, including the one that the Minister of Education has mentioned: the ENR building. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Yes. Thank you. Arctic Tern is not an option, and with the support of my colleagues I hope it will never be an option.

I also want to say that the Inuvik Curling Club is not an option. It was an option before, and it's not going to be an option again.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd be willing to share that report with me. Thank you.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, yes, we'd be happy to share that information. In fact, we've committed to the council of Inuvik to sit down and talk about different issues within that community, so we'll probably be talking to them regarding this issue also. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 371-16(2)
GRAVEL FOR AKLAVIK BARGE LANDING

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In inquiries from constituents of Aklavik one of the issues that came up is in regard to problems we're having with docking the barges for NTCL's resupply to the communities. They depend on that transportation connection to resupply the communities with goods and services.

I'd just like to ask the Minister of Transportation: is it possible that his department can assist the community by providing gravel or grounding materials? There is a stockpile of gravel in the community. They are having problems docking the barges and unloading them. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation: is it possible for the Department of Transportation to assist the community in regard to a landing for the barges in Aklavik?

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our Marine Division we do have a program for marine docks and supplies. I would be happy to talk with the Member and the community of Aklavik in terms of how we could access that program to address some of the concerns he's raised today.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, there is some urgency to this problem, because the barges are coming in, and they're having problems docking to unload the goods and services.

I'd like to ask the Minister: is there an emergency program that's out there that the community can access now? It is that season when the barges are coming in. Also, with these barges having problems docking, they're not able to get their goods and services off.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he could look into this and put some urgency to finding a solution to this problem.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, at the rise of the House today I will speak with my DM and look at the issue of the Aklavik landing site and see what we can do within a short period of time, hopefully before the barges land in Aklavik.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, a lot of our isolated communities still depend on barging as an essential way of moving goods and services. It is part of the government's responsibility. The Minister mentioned that the marine division is responsible for this. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can also try to find a long-term solution for dealing with docking problems, not only for the community of Aklavik but for other communities that depend on that barge traffic. We need a plan in place to deal with these types of problems so we won't have to continue to raise them here in the House. Thank you.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, we've been very fortunate with the federal government in terms of having money available for communities for issues such as Mr. Krutko has raised. We certainly will have a discussion with the communities and see what the long-term solutions of this docking issue might be. Other communities use the barging system for re-supply, and we certainly would encourage communities to take advantage of this program so we can fix their long-term problem and so, as Mr. Krutko said, it wouldn't be coming back up for discussion in the House. I certainly will look into that. I'll ask the marine division to do an assessment of all the communities that do need this type of support.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, if after his inquiries I could possibly have

an answer at the end of this week so that I can also mention to the residents of Aklavik that we are working on something here and will hopefully have a solution by the end of this week. Thanks.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated I will speak to my deputy as soon as possible at the rise of this House, and hopefully I'll have an answer for Mr. Krutko before the end of this week.

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

QUESTION 372-16(2)
CAMPGROUND FEES
AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ITI, and they relate to the issue of campgrounds and camping services in the Northwest Territories. Summer is just around the corner. I think it's going to arrive this weekend, and a lot of people want to use our parks and campground facilities.

I understand that the Minister may be conducting a review of the rates, and I'd like to ask if any consideration has been given to giving seniors a reduced rate to use our camping facilities. We would like our seniors who retire in the Northwest Territories to stay in the Northwest Territories. We do give them reduced rates on some other things. I had a constituent approach me who said that he and his wife and another couple went to one of our territorial campgrounds for one weekend, and the camping fees were \$160. That's a lot of money when you're on a fixed income and you're on a pension.

I'd like to ask the Minister: would he consider having a reduced rate for NWT-resident seniors? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you Mr. Speaker. We are just undertaking a review of our rates for parks, and we'll certainly consider having a reduced rate for seniors.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'd like to thank the Minister for that answer. My constituent will be listening.

The other thing I had raised with the Minister but wanted to put on the public record is the use of the facilities at Escarpment Creek. Escarpment Creek is a unique geological area. It is in a park that was designated for camping. Now it is gated off, and it's

available only for group activities at a rate of \$300 per event.

I'd like to ask the Minister if, when considering the facilities, the rates, and so on, he'd consider Escarpment Creek being opened up again so that people driving by could stop in and take a look. Right now, they can't. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We're going into a bit of a different line of questioning here, but I'll allow the Minister to answer. Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Escarpment Creek is part of a park that includes other falls in the area, and we use it for group activities. In our efforts to improve services and enjoyment of the use of our parks in the Northwest Territories, we'll certainly review the designation that we've given to Escarpment Creek. Thank you.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would appreciate that

It's a long, straight, boring road when you're driving north. People are so glad when they get to those big blue signs as they cross over the border that say, "Twin Falls Highway" and there's actually something to stop and look at. Escarpment Creek was always one of those places, but now there's a big gate across there. Thanks, Mr. Speaker. That's it. No question there.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 373-16(2)
HOME REPAIR
AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. In doing some research on another topic, I came across a couple of programs that they have in the Yukon. One is the Home Repair Program, which provides \$35,000 in financing to homeowners at a zero per cent interest rate amortized over 12 years. Another interesting program they have there is an Alternate Energy System Program, which provides up to \$30,000 to residents in the Yukon to install alternate energy systems in their homes.

I'm wondering if the Minister can just comment on what comparable programs the Government of the Northwest Territories offers our residents.

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

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: We have a fairly extensive list of programs, especially on the alternative energy side, working with the Arctic Energy Alliance and through ENR, where there are funds available for different type of things: energy-efficient applicants, vehicles, woodstoves — those types of things. We have some funding programs available to assist with home repairs for those people whose income meets the test. We have home repairs for seniors as well. I would be interested to see the information that the Member has picked up from the Yukon.

Mr. Ramsay: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to follow up on that. All those programs that the Minister talks about are good. We've also had a discussion in this House about a biomass strategy. If you get up to a level of \$30,000, that's a substantive amount of money that would allow homeowners to look at wood pellet technology and at switching over.

All I'm looking for is a commitment from the Minister — and it sounds like he has given that — to take a look at the programs offered in the Yukon and maybe relate those to our situation here, and to include those in a discussion when we're developing a biomass strategy here in the Northwest Territories.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to make the commitment that we'll look at the information from the Yukon. When we come forward with the business plans, as we talk about a strategy for biomass, especially for the diesel communities, we want to look at every option in terms of how we can best cut costs and reduce dependency on oil.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 374-16(2)
DIRECTIVE ON ENROLMENT IN
FRENCH FIRST-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Recently the Minister issued a directive with respect to enrolment in French first-language schools in the Northwest Territories, stating that those admitted for enrolment in these schools will be entitled under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and/or by Ministerial approval.

I'd like to ask the Minister: how does this directive differ or vary from the practice that has been in place in the past with respect to enrolment?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The directive went out to the Members and the communities requesting their input by the 20th of this month. One of the directives is to have the right-holders only allowed in those particular schools: the French schools. Right now it is an open door policy, where any individuals from the community can access their school and take pre-schooling and then a French immersion program. From there they are considered right-holders at that facility.

Mrs. Groenewegen: With respect to the proposed directive — it doesn't sound like it's been adopted yet — I was just wondering about consultation with various stakeholders on this issue and if this proposed directive met with the approval of or agreement from the French first-language school board for the Northwest Territories.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, my department has been meeting with the Francophone School Board, the citizens of the French group and the Hay River DEA. We've been working with them to find solutions to the additional space problem, another area we are working on. The discussion on the right-holders-only enrolment part was also raised at those meetings.

There's been some consultation in the community of Hay River. From there it also has an impact on the Yellowknife perspective. Like I said, we're waiting until this coming Friday the 20th to seek some input from the Francophone communities and the communities of Hay River and Yellowknife. The community members will provide input into what's been directed.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Specifically to Hay River residents, how would they be made aware of their ability to comment or participate in this consultation with respect to this directive?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The letters have gone out to the Hay River MLA and to the schools. They are made aware that this is a directive that has been proposed. In return they can certainly write to the department — to me — identifying their concerns or issues or providing any feedback, which will certainly be taken into consideration. We're expecting some response from the community members.

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

QUESTION 375-16(2)
EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES FOR
CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of our problems with our capital projects is that they quite often will go over budget and run over the time

schedule. Some of the things that have been identified are making amendments to our policies and trying to figure out how to run it a little more efficiently and certainly spend better dollars. I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services: have they done any work on developing a policy to meet that end?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We've indicated to the House that we are reviewing our whole contracting process. We are reviewing the way we do business and deliver our infrastructure. We're going to look at all the concerns that are being raised and all the concerns that have caused issues over the years. We are looking at all the issues that have been of concern.

Mr. Hawkins: It was important to get that on the record, because I want to ask the Minister: what is he doing for public consultation to ensure that we're getting good products out there? Has he made any efforts to contact the Association of Architects, the Maytag organization, the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, as well as the NWT Construction Association and finally the Arctic Energy Alliance? What work has he done to consult with these organizations to help work in partnership to deliver better product, more efficient product and certainly less expensive product?

Hon. Michael McLeod: That's quite a list that the Member has rattled off. I'd have to go back and check to see if we have indeed talked to each one of them. I would have to see which organizations he's referred to, but all the organizations that have concern regarding our infrastructure and our delivery are in contact with us on a regular basis. We are members of the Arctic Energy Alliance. We usually take very seriously all the recommendations that come from these organizations so we can incorporate them into this review we've undertaken to have with the Regular Members over the next while. I guess the answer to that question is yes.

Mr. Hawkins: I wasn't sure what part of the yes was part of the answer. The issue really is infrastructure projects under the Government of the Northwest Territories. If they go over time or over budget, the construction groups that usually develop those projects are the ones that get the bad rap. I think they can be part of the solution. I just want to make sure, when we look at this aspect of timing, from design to implementation and development of these infrastructure projects, that these groups are included.

If the Minister could just make it clear that, before any policy is set in stone, he will contact those associations I talked about: in short, the engineers, architects, energy and construction associations. Thank you.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We didn't develop our recommendations in isolation. We did contact the different organizations that have interest, concerns and professional advice they could offer from the different sectors. We will continue to do that as we move forward. We have a pretty good indication of where each organization is on the different issues, but we will stay in contact. I will make that commitment to the Member, as he's requested. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Time for question period has expired. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Written Questions

QUESTION 32-16(2) AUTISM POLICY INFORMATION

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

- 1) Would the Minister provide all the details and information garnered by way of consultation and research use to develop a policy specific for treatment offered to children with autism?
- 2) Would the Minister provide such policies developed and used by the Department of Health and Social Services specific to the treatment and care of children with autism?
- 3) Would the Minister provide all details specific to working arrangement and agreements with service organizations and other governments that we use to provide treatment and assistance to children and families, specific to autism?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Written questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 33-16(2) GNWT SUBSIDIES BY COMMUNITY

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Chairman of the Financial Management Board, Secretariat. Would the Chairman of the Financial Management Board please provide:

- 1) a list of all subsidies provided by the GNWT; and
- 2) for each subsidy, the amount spent, by community, for the most recent fiscal year available?

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the 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 of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I wish to table the following document, entitled Northern Voices, Northern Waters: Towards a Water Resources Management Strategy for the NWT.

Document 66-16(2), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: Towards a Water Resources Management Strategy for the NWT, tabled.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Pursuant to section 32.1(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the following document, entitled Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2008.

Document 67-16(2), Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2008, tabled.

Mr. Hawkins: I have three items I would like to table.

The first item is entitled parliamentary information research on the Provincial and Territorial Funding Programs for Autism Therapy paperwork.

The second item is entitled A System of Care for Children with Autism, expert panel report. It's from Alberta Children's Services, September 2002.

The third item is entitled Resources Available for Children with Disabilities.

Document 68-16(2), Provincial and Territorial Funding Programs for Autism Therapy, tabled.

Document 69-16(2), A System of Care for Children with Autism, tabled.

Document 70-16(2), Department of Health and Social Services: Resources Available for Children with Disabilities, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins.

I wish to table a report by the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, entitled *Speaking of Health: Official Languages as Part of Quality Health Care in the Northwest Territories*, January, 2008.

Document 71-16(2), *Speaking of Health: Official Languages as Part of Quality Health Care in the Northwest Territories*, January, 2008, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 18
SUPPLEMENTARY
APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 1,
2008-2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008-2009, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 18 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008-2009, read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 18
SUPPLEMENTARY
APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 1,
2008-2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008-2009, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 18 has had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion carried; Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008-2009, read a second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker: Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 12, Committee Report 2-16(2), Committee Report 3-16(2), Minister's Statement 62-16(2), Bill 18, 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. There are some items to deal with in Committee of the Whole today. We have Bill 5, 6, 12 and 18; Committee Report 2 and 3; Minister's Statement 62-16(2).

What's the wish of the committee?
Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee today wishes to deal with Bill 18, Bill 12, Bill 5, Bill 6, Committee Report 2, Committee Report 3, in that order. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, committee agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, with that, we'll begin after a short break with Bill 18.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole back to order. As we agreed prior to the break, we'll begin with Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008-2009.

BILL 18
SUPPLEMENTARY
APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 1,
2008-2009

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): So with that, at this time, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill to make opening comments. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008-2009, requests authority for additional appropriations of \$50.317 million for operations expenditures and \$106.345 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

To clarify the contents of the bill, the \$48.4 million of operation expenditure appropriations includes \$15.6 million offset by federal revenues and \$32

million for contribution funding for the continuation of community infrastructure projects not completed in the 2007–2008 fiscal period. Funding for these projects was approved and lapsed in 2007–2008.

The \$106.1 million for capital investment expenditures includes \$11.1 million offset by federal revenues and \$95 million in capital carry-overs from the 2007–2008 fiscal period. Major items included in this request for operations expenditures, other than carry-overs, include items that are part of the Building Canada Plan, \$11.8 million for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs for additional contribution funding to community governments for community infrastructure, and \$3 million for the Department of Transportation to advance the Yellowknife bypass road.

This is the second year in which the Government of the Northwest Territories has requested a significant amount of carry-over funding from the previous year. I'm confident the changes being implemented to the capital planning process will help lower future requests.

The bill includes changes discussed with Members in response to committee motions during the departmental reviews of the Main Estimates.

That concludes my opening remarks, and I'm prepared to answer questions Members may have.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing any witnesses. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister brings in his witnesses?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses in?

Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, to my right is the secretary to the Financial Management Board, Ms. Kathleen LeClair, and to my left is Mr. Charles Tolley, manager of budget development.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments in regard to the bill?

Maybe we can begin on page 1, which we'll defer. We'll also defer the Schedule, to begin on page 5 of the bill.

Page 5, Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Community Operations, not previously authorized: \$5.344 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Community Operations, not previously authorized: \$5.344 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Regional Operations, not previously authorized: \$28.843 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Regional Operations, not previously authorized: \$28.843 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$34.187 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$34.187 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6. Justice, Operations Expenditure, Service to Government, not previously authorized: \$161,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Operations Expenditures, Services to Government, not previously authorized: \$161,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Courts, not previously authorized, \$833,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Operations Expenditures, Courts, not previously authorized: \$833,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Community Justice and Corrections, not previously authorized, \$613,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Operations Expenditures, Community Justice and Corrections, not previously authorized: \$613,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1.607 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Operations Expenditures, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1.607 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 7. Education, Culture and Employment, Operations Expenditure, Education and Culture, not previously authorized: \$9.878 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Education, Culture and Employment, Operations Expenditures, Education and Culture, not previously authorized: \$9.878 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Income Security, not previously authorized: \$200,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Education, Culture and Employment, Operations Expenditures, Income Security, not previously authorized: \$200,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$10.078 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Education, Culture and Employment, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$10.078 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 8. Transportation, Operations Expenditure, Corporate Services. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In reviewing this supplementary appropriation, I have no problem, given most of the money is coming from the feds or is carried over from the previous year. However, at the beginning of the budget process we were told that the supplementary appropriation available was changed from \$25 million to \$10 million, as \$15 million was transferred to the departments so they wouldn't have to come back for supps on a regular basis.

In the case of this department, \$555,000 minus the \$33,000 — \$518,000, is being asked for out of that \$10 million supplementary appropriation fund that we do have. I was under the impression that the \$10 million was basically to be used for emergency cases: things that were not or could not be planned, things that were not foreseen, things that came out of the blue. In the case of the money that's being asked for here, I'm under the impression that this is something that the departments should have been able to identify and should have been able to plan for and that should be taken out of a portion of that \$15 million that was already transferred to them.

Now, I understand the reality that transferring that \$15 million to the authorities or the departments wasn't done until yesterday. At the same time, this is clearly something that we're going to have a hard time approving if it comes forward in the future, given that it is something that should have been planned and should have been captured within the department as part of that \$15 million that was transferred to them.

I was wondering if I could just get the Minister of Finance to talk a little bit about that supp fund and the fact that it was transferred to the authorities and

how this relates to that. To me, this is clearly something that should have been able to be planned.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of FMBS, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Member referring to the Department of Transportation?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sorry. We're on page 8. Transportation, Operations Expenditure, Corporate Services: \$518,000, not previously authorized.

Mr. Abernethy, is your question on page 8?

An Honourable Member: Page 9.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're not quite there yet. Okay, we're on page 8. Transportation, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Services, not previously authorized: \$518,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Services, not previously authorized: \$518,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Highways, not previously authorized: \$3 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Operations Expenditures, Highways, not previously authorized: \$3 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total department, not previously authorized: \$3.518 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Operations Expenditures, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$3.518 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 9, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: negative \$33,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: negative \$33,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minerals and Petroleum Resources, not previously authorized: \$100,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Operations Expenditures, Minerals and Petroleum Resources, not previously authorized: \$100,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Economic Diversification and Business Support, not previously authorized: \$555,000. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of seconds ago I asked that question on the wrong page. I'd like to ask that exact same question on this page on this item.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Would the Minister of FMBS respond to the question asked previously.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the area of this supplementary appropriation, as the Member has highlighted.... As we've budgeted for the fiscal year, we set aside in our fiscal framework an amount of dollars for supplementary appropriation. At times over the last number of years we've.... In fact, the Government of the Northwest Territories has gone over that initial amount.

This year, after being elected and starting to put the budget together, we took the \$25 million initially allocated for the supplementary appropriation, and based on the drawdown or a percentage of the drawdown from departments, we took \$15 million of that appropriation amount or that amount set aside for supplementary appropriations and gave it to departments. ITI's share was \$90,000 of that. Again, the drawdown represents a percentage across the departments. Obviously, because of the fact that we have exceeded the amount that was set in previous years' supplementary appropriations, we are sticking to the \$25 million figure less now the \$15 million that's been sent out to departments based on a percentage of the drawdown.

Outside of that, there are a number of things that we're still having to deal with. The reason we did that, as the Member has pointed out.... The reason we've allocated part of the supp reserve to departments was so they could do their planning up front and do the budgeting exercise, not come in low and within months have to come in for a supplementary appropriation.

In this case is the fact that within ITI the Western Harvesters' Assistance Program has been in existence since 1994. Initially it was set aside with matching dollars from communities and organizations — actually aboriginal organizations like hunters' and trappers' committees within those organizations — but they'd have to match their dollars before the money could be drawn down. That wasn't put into the Department of ITI's budget. It was a common practice to have them come back during the supplementary appropriation when they had signed agreements with the organizations. FMB would review those and agree to put them into

the supplementary appropriation package for coming to the House.

As this budget we're dealing with or the budget we've just finished dealing with.... The original planning process was put together, and we started the exercise in summer of last fiscal year. As a government, we have taken over that and made our changes through the budget exercise we've gone through. This has found its way on to clear up the amount they'd be needing for this year. So instead of, for example, as we break it down here, Deninu K'ue First Nation, Salt River First Nation, those would have originally come as one single item to a decision paper. It was felt that in this process this allowed the department some flexibility: instead of coming one at a time, to deal with them one time here through the supplementary appropriation.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's good. I understand the process. I kind of like the process that you're implementing with respect to giving the \$15 million to the departments so they can plan, and I understand the timing on this.

I still think this is something that the Department of ITI could have done some forecasting on and done some planning on. They could have planned for it in the normal budget process, and they wouldn't be coming back. They had \$10 million in supp, which is for emergencies. Now we have \$9.5 million for emergencies. Every time we whittle it down on something that should have been or could have been known, I think we're hurting ourselves down the line just in case we have emergencies — a major forest fire year, losing a bridge here, losing a bridge there, any of those things — which is what that \$10 million should be used for.

I do have one question, though. You said that ITI's portion of that \$15 million is \$90,000. That seems a little low: \$90,000 based on \$15 million for ITI doesn't seem very high.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I stand corrected. Their share is \$190,000.

The breakdown — and I might as well give this to Members — was based on the percentage of the drawdown. For the departments that had the larger amounts of drawdown through the exercise over the year, we looked at that drawdown and applied it to the \$15 million figure. For example, Executive Offices got \$77,000; Human Resources, \$800,000; Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, \$54,000; the Financial Management Board Secretariat, \$225,000; the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, \$133,000; Finance, \$57,000; Municipal and Community Affairs, \$168,000; Public Works and Services, \$1.381 million; Health and

Social Services, \$6.137 million; Justice, \$1.362 million; Education, Culture and Employment, \$2.464 million; Transportation, \$1.61 million; ITI, \$190,000; and Environment and Natural Resources, \$342,000, for a total of \$15 million.

As I stated earlier, those numbers don't compare in a straight-across comparison because the drawdown in the supplementary appropriation over the last number of years has been significantly higher. We felt that on a percentage of drawdown, applying it in this way would allow departments to do the proper planning as we go forward.

As Members are aware, we've also set a 3 per cent growth rate, a 3.5 percent total growth rate of government expenditures over the next cycle of our business planning. We're going to have to sit down and go through that business plan to see if we can in fact meet that target.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you for all of that information. It's very good. As I said, I liked the plan you put in with respect to distributing that money amongst the departments so they could plan for it accordingly.

No real question, but just a bit more of a statement. In the case of this particular item, as an example, it is something, in my opinion, that should have been able to be planned for. We're probably going to approve it today. I see no reason not to approve it at this point, giving the department some credit, given the fact that the budget just came down and this is a new process.

In the future, as Cabinet comes to us with some of these supps where they're asking us to draw down on that \$10 million, it may not pass as easily, because we want to be sure that those items that are coming to us in the supps are in fact for emergencies: things that could not be nor would ever have been foreseen or planned for. That's what we understood the intention was. If items come to us that clearly could have been planned for, we'll definitely have a lot of questions on those areas, but in this case, due to the timing, not so much. I mean, it is our job to hold the government to account, so the plan was for emergencies. This doesn't strike me as an emergency. In the future you'll have to demonstrate to us why this one is an emergency if you're going to expect us to put down our emergency \$10 million fund.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the plan we put in place will require discipline, and this process is a part of that. We would again look forward to trying to make sure we stick to the rules of the new way of doing business. Every supplementary appropriation would come before the House, and departments would have to stand the scrutiny, of course. We would use the same level of measure

before even putting it into this document for Members to see.

It will require discipline. It's different from the traditional practice, and we're going to try hard to maintain that. It's going to be quite a jump from previous years' supplementary appropriation. From well over a \$50 million drawdown — that's not the actual number; it was over that, but I would have to get that detail — to where we are now is a substantial change. We're going to have to work hard to live within that.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. On page 9 of the Supplementary Appropriation, No. 1, we're on Economic Diversification and Business Support, not previously authorized: \$555,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Economic Diversification and Business Support, not previously authorized: \$555,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$622,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$622,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Environment and Natural Resources, Operations Expenditure, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: \$305,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Environment and Natural Resources, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: \$305,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$305,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Environment and Natural Resources, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$305,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 11. Executive, Capital Investment Expenditures, Human Resources, not previously authorized, Employment Relations: \$70,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Human Resources, Executive, Capital Investment Expenditures, Human Resources, Employment Relations, not previously authorized: \$70,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Human Resources, not previously authorized: \$70,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Human Resources, Total Human Resources, not previously authorized: \$70,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To page 12. Executive, Capital Investment Expenditure, Financial Management Board Secretariat, Directorate, not previously authorized: \$4.77 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Executive, Capital Investment Expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, Directorate, not previously authorized: \$4.77 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized: \$4.77 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Executive, Total Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized: \$4.77 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Executive, not previously authorized: \$4.84 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Executive, Total Executive, not previously authorized: \$4.84 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Municipal and Community Affairs, Capital Investment Expenditure, Regional Operations, not previously authorized: \$5.646 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Municipal and Community Affairs, Capital Investment Expenditures, Regional Operations, not previously authorized: \$5.646 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$5.646 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Municipal and Community Affairs, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$5.646 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 14. Department of Public Works and Services, Capital Investment Expenditure, Asset Management, not previously authorized: \$431,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Public Works and Services, Capital Investment Expenditures, Asset Management, not previously authorized: \$431,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Technology Service Centre, not previously authorized: \$440,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Public Works and Services, Technology Service Centre, not previously authorized: \$440,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Petroleum Products, not previously authorized: \$1.293 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Public Works and Services, Petroleum Products, not previously authorized: \$1.293 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$2.164 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Public Works and Services, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$2.164 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 15. Health and Social Services, Capital Investment Expenditure, Program Delivery Support, not previously authorized: \$2.38 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Health and Social Services, Capital Investment Expenditures, Program Delivery Support, not previously authorized: \$2.38 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Health Services Programs, not previously authorized: \$11.696 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Health and Social Services, Health Services Programs, not previously authorized: \$11.696 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Community Health Programs, not previously authorized: \$6.699 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Health and Social Services, Community Health Programs, not previously authorized: \$6.699 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$20.775 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Health and Social Services, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$20.775 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving to page 16. Justice, Capital Investment Expenditure, Courts, not previously authorized: \$670,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Capital Investment

Expenditures, Courts, not previously authorized: \$670,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Community Justice and Corrections, not previously authorized: \$582,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Community Justice and Corrections, not previously authorized: \$582,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Services to the Public, not previously authorized: \$383,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Services to the Public, not previously authorized: \$383,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1.635 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Justice, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1.635 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 17. Education, Culture and Employment, Capital Investment Expenditure, Education and Culture, not previously authorized: \$25.454 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Education, Culture and Employment, Capital Investment Expenditures, Education and Culture, not previously authorized: \$25.454 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Advanced Education and Careers, not previously authorized: \$3.157 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Education, Culture and Employment, Advanced Education and Careers, not previously authorized: \$3.157 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$28.611 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Education, Culture and Employment, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$28.611 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): On page 18. Transportation, Capital Investment Expenditure, Airports, not previously authorized: \$9.4 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Capital Investment Expenditures, Airports, not previously authorized: \$9.4 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Highways, not previously authorized: \$30.615 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Highways, not previously authorized: \$30.615 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Continuing on page 19. Marine, not previously authorized: \$484,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Marine, not previously authorized: \$484,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Road Licensing and Safety, not previously authorized: \$329,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Road Licensing and Safety, not previously authorized: \$329,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$40.828 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Transportation, Total Department: \$40.828 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 20. Industry, Tourism and Investment, Capital Investment Expenditure, Tourism and Parks, not previously authorized: \$1.161 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Tourism and Parks: \$1.161 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1.161 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1.161 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 21. Environment and Natural Resources, Capital Investment Expenditure, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: \$267,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Environment and Natural Resources, Capital Investment Expenditures, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: \$267,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Forest Management, not previously authorized: \$226,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Environment and Natural Resources, Forest Management, not previously authorized: \$226,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Wildlife, not previously authorized: \$192,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Environment and Natural Resources, Wildlife, not previously authorized: \$192,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department, not previously authorized: \$685,000.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Environment and Natural Resources, Total Department, not previously authorized: \$685,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry to go back to page 16, but I request unanimous consent to go back to page 16. I just had a question for clarification on that page.

Unanimous consent granted.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, Mr. Ramsay. Page 16.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, it's okay. I've found it. I'm fine. Thanks.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. Can we turn back to the Schedule, to page 3? We're on the Schedule, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Operations Expenditures: \$50.317 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Total Supplementary Appropriation, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures: \$50.317 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Part 2, Vote 2, Capital Investment Expenditure, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Capital Investment Expenditures: \$106.345 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Total Supplementary Appropriation, Part 2, Vote 2, Capital Investment Expenditures: \$106.345 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Supplementary Appropriation: \$156.662 million.

Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, Total Supplementary Appropriation: \$156.662 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We can move to the preamble so that we can go clause by clause.

Clauses 1 through 7 inclusive approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the preamble.

Preamble approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

Bill 18 as a whole approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 18 is ready for third reading?

Bill 18 Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009, approved for third reading.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Bill 18 is now ready for third reading.

The next item we agreed to deal with is Bill 12.

Before we go on, I'd like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. With that, Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out?

BILL 12
AN ACT TO AMEND
THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. As we agreed, the next item we'll deal with is Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act. With that, I'll ask Mr. Ramsay if he has any opening remarks in regard to Bill 12.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to provide opening comments on Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 12 empowers the Human Rights Commission to establish its own rules of procedure and simplifies its annual reporting requirements. The bill transfers the responsibility for hiring and supervising staff from the commission and vests it with the director of Human Rights. The staff become employees in the public service. The amendments empower both the director and the commission to appoint assistants and engage advisors. Finally, the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly is given a role in the making of certain regulations under the act, and such regulations are to be made in consultation with the commission and the director.

Mr. Chairman, the Human Rights Act is administered jointly by the Speaker, the Legislative Assembly and the Minister of Justice. The Speaker's role in administering the act is limited to the administration of the Human Rights Commission and the Adjudication Panel. These amendments all relate to that function and do not adversely affect the rights of individuals.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this time I'd like to ask if you're going to be bringing in witnesses.

Mr. Ramsay: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that he brings in his witnesses?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses in?

For the record, Mr. Ramsay, could you introduce your witnesses, please?

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Ian Rennie from the Department of Justice and the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr. Tim Mercer, to my left.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Welcome, witnesses.

General comments in regard to Bill 12?

Some Honourable Members: Detail.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Detail. We'll move to page 1, Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act.

Clauses 1 through 20 inclusive approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

Bill 12 as a whole approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 12 is now ready for third reading?

Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, approved for third reading.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Bill 12 is now ready for third reading. With that, I'd like to thank Mr. Ramsay and his witnesses. Could the Sergeant-at-Arms escort the witnesses out?

With that, the next bill we need to deal with is Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he has any opening remarks. Mr. Jackson Lafferty.

BILL 5
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
MAINTENANCE ORDERS ENFORCEMENT ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to appear before the committee today to review Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act. The purpose of Bill 5 is to give the Maintenance Enforcement Program more enforcement tools for collection of maintenance payments. The amendment will also bring the act in line with most Canadian jurisdictions which already have these tools available for collecting maintenance payments.

Considerable consultation was undertaken by the Department of Justice on these amendments with the Law Society; the family law section of the Canadian Bar Association, NWT branch; and the Department of Transportation. Proposed amendments were also posted and explained on the department's web site along with an invitation to submit comments.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs for their review and comments on the bill. I'd be pleased to answer any questions. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Minister. At this time I'd like to ask the standing committee that reviewed the bill if they would like to make any comments in regard to the bill. Mr. Robert McLeod, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Social Programs met during the week of April 25 to May 2, 2008, and again on May 20 to review Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act. Public hearings took place in Fort Resolution, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Yellowknife. The committee would also like to thank the Ministry, its officials and all the witnesses who spoke on the bill. The clause-by-clause review of the bill was held on June 5.

Bill 5 contains many new ways to enforce child support and other maintenance orders when a person who owes money is not making their payments. One of the new enforcement measures is suspension of a debtor's driver's licence. The suspension can have conditions that will allow the debtor who needs his or her licence for work or medical reasons to drive for these purposes.

Originally the bill gave the maintenance enforcement administrator the discretion to grant these conditions. The committee moved an amendment to take away the administrators' discretion so that they will be required to grant the conditions if they are satisfied the debtor needs the licence for work or medical reasons. The Minister concurred with this amendment. One witness asked what would happen if a debtor whose licence had been suspended needed to drive in order to be able to visit his or her child. The Minister and his officials claimed that the only available conditions to allow the debtor to drive would be medical or employment reasons. The provision was intended to encourage debtors to make their maintenance payments, and making it easy would undermine that purpose.

Another witness asked whether seizing money from a registered retirement savings plan or income fund amounts to a double penalty for the debtor. The Minister and his officials advised that they do not consider any tax consequences of seizing these funds to be a penalty to the debtor and that all

maintenance enforcement actions have associated costs either with the office or the debtor or both. The seizure of money from an RRSP or an RRIF would only take place near the end of the debt collection strategy when other measures have failed.

During the public hearings the committee heard questions about whether and how the Maintenance Enforcement Office can collect a debtor's cash, wages and/or honoraria received from serving on councils and boards. The Minister and his officials confirmed that the Maintenance Enforcement Office does not have the authority to collect this money. Bill 6 will indirectly improve the ability to collect in these cases, because it includes new powers for the Maintenance Enforcement Office to get information about debtors — for example, by advertising in the newspaper. These powers make it more likely that the administrator would find out about cash payments the debtor is receiving.

One witness questioned the accountability of the Maintenance Enforcement Office, and in particular the qualifications to interpret business records. The Minister and his officials indicated that case workers are expected to return calls promptly and will receive intensive training on confidentiality. On cases involving complex business information, they work closely with the Audit Bureau and legal counsel to ensure that records are correctly interpreted. The Minister and his officials stressed that they want to keep service levels high and would like to hear about any concerns.

The committee also heard concerns from some witness about the fairness of child support orders — for example, the lack of consequences for a parent who makes false allegations of child abuse against the other parent. While these matters are outside the scope of this bill, the committee would welcome further discussions on this issue with the Minister.

During the clause-by-clause review the committee and Minister also agreed to one minor, non-substantive amendment to the bill. Following the clause-by-clause review a motion was carried to report Bill 5 as amended and reprinted to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 5. Individual committee members may have questions or comments as we proceed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister bring in his witnesses?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses in?

Minister Lafferty, could you introduce your witnesses for the record, please?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I have to my left Karan Shaner, ADM, and Mark Aitken, director of the legislation division.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments on the bill? Detail. Turn to page 1 of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act.

Clauses 1 through 16 inclusive approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question under clause 16. Can Maintenance Enforcement garnishee an individual who is on income assistance or receiving EI payments?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that we'll go back to clause 16?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Shaner.

Ms. Shaner: Thank you, sir. EI payments can be garnisheed under a piece of federal legislation called the Family Orders Enforcement and Assistance Act. However, income assistance in the Northwest Territories cannot be garnisheed.

Mr. Ramsay: I think that, for individuals who find themselves in a position where they can't pay maintenance and they're receiving EI payments, there should be something in this legislation here in the Northwest Territories that protects those individuals. They're on unemployment insurance; they're not working. I'm not sure how they could sustain their household or what they have. What we're going to do by garnisheeing unemployment insurance is drive people into the homeless shelter. I think what we need to do is come up with a clause in here that suggests that we're not going to do that to people. I do know individuals who that happened to, and it caused a tremendous hardship to those people.

Now, if they're not paying maintenance enforcement, that's one issue. The other issue is if they're on hard times to start with and unemployment insurance is their only means of income. It's very difficult when Maintenance Enforcement comes knocking for \$600 out of the \$800 they got. It leaves them next to nothing to live on, aside from the food bank and the homeless

shelter, Mr. Chairman. So I'd like to ask the Minister: how do we address that concern?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Ms. Shaner can elaborate after I make some remarks on that particular area. We have considered that as part of the EI, but what we're proposing here is, of course, in the best interests of the child. There are individuals out there who may or may not be working, but there are individuals who are paying and some individuals who aren't paying. This gives the tools to maintenance enforcement officers to go after those individuals who do not pay on a regular basis.

I think the main focus is the needs of those children. That's one of the reasons we need to go after certain individuals who may be on EI: those who aren't making payments. We're definitely going after them. If I can get Ms. Shaner to elaborate a bit on that. Mahsi.

Ms. Shaner: Mr. Chairman, there are really two aspects to that. I have it on page 16 of the bill, and it's clause 19. In the proposed clause 17, sub 5, there's a proposed statutory minimum of wages that would be exempt. When we garnishee under the federal legislation, we apply our statutory exemption to those. So someone who is having their EI garnisheed would be left with a certain amount, as required by law, to live on. It may or may not be a particularly great amount of money.

The fact is that they owe the maintenance. If debtors find themselves in a position where they're not able to pay, it is up to them to go to court and argue that they have had a change in circumstances and ask the court to reduce the amount of maintenance that's payable. That's the remedy.

Maintenance Enforcement only enforces orders that are made by a court, based on evidence that's before the court on the amount of money that the payer makes and the amount of money that the payee makes. Maintenance Enforcement doesn't have the authority to go behind the order and change the amount. That is the remedy for the debtor in that case. If we make it too easy to just be on EI and escape maintenance payments, then really it's children who are going to suffer, and our system will fall apart.

Mr. Ramsay: I know we should always have the best interests of the children at heart. What strikes me most in the current legislation that's in place — the federal legislation and the federal Divorce Act and the Family Orders Act — is the fact that in many cases it's an adversarial type of arrangement, and oftentimes one parent's money is good enough

but they aren't. I think that's a discussion or debate we might have here as soon as tomorrow, and it's a discussion that's happening around the world: equal, shared parenting and a move towards that in the best interest of the child by having both parents in their life.

Like I said, money causes a great deal of concern to both parties, obviously. But if you're on unemployment insurance, everybody knows what rent costs and food costs and gas costs here in Yellowknife. If you take away somebody's unemployment insurance.... It's hard enough to be unemployed in the Northwest Territories to start with. If you start garnisheeing somebody's wages, they can't pay their rent, they can't buy food, and then how are they going to look after the children if they get the children in their care and custody for whatever period of time the other party is going to let them have the children for?

I think it's a big issue. I do appreciate where Ms. Shaner is coming from with the prescribed exemption under subsection 5, but it just bothers me that we can do that to individuals and just go in there and.... They're on unemployment insurance, they're down and out, and we kick them squarely where the sun don't shine when they get that maintenance order imposed upon them by the courts. I know they have recourse through the courts, but if they don't see it coming it's one heck of a ride.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: This does come down from the courts. We are enforcing it through the legislation. Like Ms. Shaner has indicated, there is a process of appealing their payments. If it's too high, they can go back to the court. That's one avenue they can certainly access. At the same time, there are people out there who could be unemployed, and they still owe money to their spouse and their children. That's the area we're focusing on as Maintenance Enforcement: again, the best interest of the child and the well-being of the child. There are avenues where they can go back to court. That's why we're enforcing this act.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Clause 16.

Clauses 16 through 35 inclusive approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Clause 36. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to comment, if I could, on the suspending of driver's licences for individuals who are in default of maintenance payments. The bill will pass, and it'll go ahead, but I wanted to get my comments on record anyway. I do believe that even though individuals owe maintenance payments we shouldn't be so heavy-handed as to suspend a driver's licence, especially when in some cases that parent has access to their children and needs to

pick them up, drive them to soccer, drive them to hockey, and it's 40 below zero outside.

If somebody's fallen on hard times, I think we're limiting a person's ability and access to their children, and to me that's wrong. I would never as a legislator get in the way of a parent spending time with their children, whether the parent is in default on maintenance or not. The time they spend with their children: you cannot put a price on that. It's time that's lost. Once it's gone, it's lost. If we're taking away a person's driver's licence, we're taking away their ability to get their kids, to pick up their kids, to spend time with their kids. We're impacting the person's quality of life. To me that's not fair and it's not just.

Again, I'm not sure how other Members feel about this, but I do feel strongly about taking away somebody's driver's licence. I'm glad to see the provisions are spoken to and that for work and for medical reasons a person can drive a vehicle. But we also should include provisions to pick up their children, to take them to sports or a play or school, and to spend time with them. That needs to be in there as well, and if it's not we're doing society a disservice.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Justice.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. That was part of the discussion we had with the committee members on the Social Programs Committee. There was some discussion on that particular item. Again, it comes down to an individual's responsibility. They have kids, and they have kids in sports. If they paid their maintenance enforcement, it wouldn't be an issue. At the same time, that's what it comes down to: an individual has the responsibility to resolve this issue. There was some lengthy discussion in this particular area by the committee, and we did recognize it. At the same time, we are moving forward with this.

We have to compare it to other jurisdictions as well. It's not just us. We are different from other jurisdictions, but we are trying to be in line with other jurisdictions as well.

There are individuals out there, as I said earlier, who are not paying for various reasons. Some do get away with it. This is one way of giving some tools to our enforcement officers to put a stop to it and start obtaining payments where they're needed for the children. That's one area we focus on.

Maybe I can have Ms. Shaner elaborate a bit on that as well. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Shaner.

Ms. Shaner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister pointed out, it is reported by other

jurisdictions that this is the single most effective enforcement tool that is available to them.

I should also point out that this is not something that would be imposed early on in the enforcement process. We do use a progression model. In this case the debtor would have to reach a certain threshold in terms of either the amount of arrears or the time that has passed without payment. That is going to be set by regulation. As I recall, what we are looking at is an amount of three months of arrears or \$3,000, whichever occurs first.

Mr. Ramsay: I thank the Minister and Ms. Shaner for their comments as well. I agree with the Minister: people should be paying their maintenance enforcement. That to me is fundamental. And you'll see that the statistics, again, don't lie. People who pay their maintenance enforcement can pay their maintenance enforcement. The people who aren't paying the maintenance enforcement are the people who aren't making enough money. If they pay the maintenance enforcement, they don't have enough money to live. They don't have enough money to pay their rent, to put oil in their fuel tank, to put gas in their tank.

In all of this we have to be fair to the one parent receiving the maintenance support. We also have to be fair to the individual paying it. And in most cases they don't pay it because they can't. It's almost impossible for them to pay it. I'd like to see something to the effect that you take into consideration, as well, the right of the person paying it and ensure that they have enough money to at least put a roof over their head and food on their table. If the maintenance payments are impacting them to the degree that they can't live — that they can't sustain themselves — then that's something else entirely, and we need to look at that.

I think there are a number of people out there, Mr. Chairman, who find themselves getting behind in maintenance enforcement payments. One thing leads to another, and it just drives them right into the ground. I don't know if we should be doing that to people. Again, the bottom line is that you should be paying your maintenance enforcement. That's the bottom line; I agree with you on that. But I also agree that we need to be protecting everybody in this and respecting the rights of everybody involved. Whether this is doing that or not, I don't know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): More of a comment. Mr. Minister, if you want to respond, go ahead.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. As Ms. Shaner already elaborated, where individuals are on EI, there are set standards of payments. Another avenue is, of course, to go back to court

and revise payments if they're not working. Those are avenues that they can certainly turn to. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Clause 36.

Clauses 36 through 38 inclusive approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

Bill 5 as a whole approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 5 is ready for third reading?

Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, approved for third reading.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, I would like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses out?

What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to report progress.

Motion carried.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

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

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2008–2009; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act; and Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act. I would like to report progress and that Bills 18, 12, and 5 are 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. We have a motion. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Orders of the Day, Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Priorities and Planning committee at 4:45 p.m.

Orders of the Day for Thursday, June 19, 2008:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 5) Returns to Oral Questions
- 6) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 7) Acknowledgements
- 8) Oral Questions
- 9) Written Questions
- 10) Returns to Written Questions
- 11) Replies to Opening Address
- 12) Petitions
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
 - Motion 12-16(2): Support for the Business Incentive Policy (Hawkins)
 - Motion 13-16(2): Support for Changes to Federal Divorce Act (Ramsay)
 - Motion 14-16(2): Extended Adjournment of the House to October 1, 2008 (Bisaro)
- 18) First Reading of Bills
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 6 : An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies 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

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Maintenance
Orders Enforcement Act

Bill 12: An Act to Amend the Human Rights
Act

Bill 18 : Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.
1, 2008–2009

23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly,
this House stands adjourned until Thursday,
June 19, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 4:42 p.m.