



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Table of Contents

Prayer	1417
Ministers' Statements	1417
76-16(2) National Aboriginal Day (Roland)	1417
77-16(2) Signing of the Building Canada Infrastructure Plan Funding Agreement (M. McLeod)	1418
78-16(2) Sir John Homecoming (Lafferty).....	1418
79-16(2) National Aboriginal Women's Summit (Roland)	1418
Members' Statements	1419
Recognition of the Crew of <i>HMCS Yellowknife</i> (Hawkins).....	1419
Voluntary Sector Funding (Abernethy).....	1419
Mandatory Ignition Interlock Program (Menicoche)	1420
Issues of Importance to Residents of Tu Nedhe (Beaulieu).....	1420
Issues of Importance to Residents of Nunakput (Jacobson).....	1420
Revenue Loss from Northern Communities (Bromley)	1421
National Aboriginal Day (Krutko).....	1421
Town of Inuvik 50 th Anniversary (McLeod).....	1422
Reflections on 2008–2009 Budget Process (Groenewegen)	1422
Review of GNWT Diamond Strategy (Ramsay)	1423
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery	1423
Oral Questions	1424
376-16(2) Access to Funding for Children with Autism (Hawkins)	1424
377-16(2) Voluntary Sector Funding (Abernethy)	1425
378-16(2) Building Canada Infrastructure Plan Funding Agreement (Krutko).....	1425
379-16(2) Private Public Partnerships (Groenewegen)	1426
380-16(2) Review of GNWT Diamond Strategy (Ramsay)	1427
381-16(2) Housing for Teachers in Communities (Bisaro).....	1429
382-16(2) Dust Control on the Dempster Highway (McLeod)	1430
383-16(2) Ignition Interlock Policy (Menicoche).....	1430
384-16(2) Access to Services for Children with Autism (Hawkins)	1431
385-16(2) Building Canada Funding Available to Communities (Bisaro)	1432
Written Questions	1434
34-16(2) Information on Positions Affected by the 2008–2009 Budget (Abernethy)	1434
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)	1434
Written Questions	1434
35-16(2) Contract Information with the Government of Nunavut (Hawkins).....	1434
Returns to Written Questions	1434
16-16(2) GNWT Senior Management Performance Bonuses.....	1434
18-16(2) Capital Projects within the Department of Transportation	1435
20-16(2) Wage Subsidy Program	1435
Tabling of Documents	1435
Notices of Motion	1436
15-16(2) Appointment of Three Human Rights Commission Members.....	1436

16-16(2) Appointment of Equal Pay Commissioner.....	1436
Motions	1436
15-16(2) Appointment of Three Human Rights Commission Members (Motion carried)	1436
16-16(2) Appointment of Equal Pay Commissioner (Motion carried).....	1437
12-16(2) Support for the Business Incentive Policy (Motion carried).....	1437
13-16(2) Support for Changes to Federal Divorce Act (Motion Carried).....	1440
14-16(2) Extended Adjournment of the House to October 1, 2008 (Motion Carried).....	1443
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters	1443
Bill 6 An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act	1443
Committee Report 2-16(6) Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Auditor General's Report on the NWT Housing Corporation	1445
Committee Motion 67-16(2) That the NWT HC Table a Detailed Action Plan for Addressing Audit Report Functions (Committee Motion Carried)	1445
Committee Motion 68-16(2) That the NWT HC Prioritize its Framework for Action and Focus on Primary Mandate (Committee Motion Carried)	1446
Committee Motion 69-16(2) That the Minister Responsible for the NWT HC Provide Periodic Updates on Action Implementation (Committee Motion Carried).....	1446
Committee Motion 70-16(2) Monitoring and Support for Local Housing Organizations (Committee Motion Carried)	1446
Committee Motion 71-16(2) Monitoring District Offices and Evaluation of Home Ownership Programs (Committee Motion Carried)	1446
Committee Motion 72-16(2) Risk Management Component in NWT HC Strategic Plan (Committee Motion Carried)	1447
Committee Motion 73-16(2) Comprehensive Response to CR 2-16(2) Tabled Within 120 Days (Committee Motion Carried)	1447
Committee Report 3-16(2) Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner	1447
Committee Motion 74-16(2) GNWT Review of Web Site Policies (Committee Motion Carried)	1447
Committee Motion 75-16(2) Training and Registry of Interpreters/Translators (Committee Motion Carried)	1447
Committee Motion 76-16(2) GNWT Response to Recommendations in Previous Report (Committee Motion Carried)	1448
Committee Motion 77-16(2) GNWT Response to Current Report Within 120 Days (Committee Motion Carried)	1448
Minister's Statement 62-16(2) Government of Canada Residential Schools Apology	1448
Report of Committee of the Whole	1451
Third Reading of Bills	1452
Bill 6 An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act	1452
Bill 5 An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act.....	1452
Bill 18 Supplementary Appropriation, Act No. 1, 2008–2009.....	1452
Bill 12 An Act to Amend The Human Rights Act.....	1452
Assent to Bills	1453
Orders of the Day	1454

**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Thursday, June 19, 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.

Colleagues, it is with great sadness that I inform the House of the passing of a former Member, Speaker and Minister, Michael Ballantyne. Mike was first elected as the Member for Yellowknife North in the 10th Legislative Assembly in 1983. He was subsequently re-elected by acclamation in 1987 to the 11th Assembly and re-elected to the 12th Assembly in 1991.

During his time as a Member of the Legislative Assembly he served as Government House Leader, Minister of Justice, Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Minister of Finance and Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board. Mike also served as a member of several standing committees of the House and, as well, on the Special Committee on Aboriginal Languages in 1989 and 1990. He chaired the Special Committee on Constitutional Reform from 1990 to 1991.

On November 13, 1991, Mike was appointed the sixth Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Speaker Ballantyne played a vital role in the establishment of a permanent home for our Legislature, and on November 17, 1993, he presided over the first sitting of the House in this impressive and symbolically important building.

On behalf of all current and former Members of the Legislative Assembly, I wish to express the sincere condolences of this House to the family and friends of Michael Ballantyne. Members, please stand and join me in observing a moment of silent reflection on the achievements and contributions of a northern leader.

The House observed one minute of silence.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Members. Please be seated. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 76-16(2)
NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 21 the people across the Northwest Territories will once again be celebrating National Aboriginal Day. This is a day to celebrate aboriginal peoples' rich and diverse cultural heritage and to also acknowledge the valuable contribution of aboriginal peoples to the healthy development of our communities, our territory and our country.

The Government of the Northwest Territories honours and respects the importance of aboriginal cultures and the vital role aboriginal people play in contributing to our economic, social and political development and in enhancing our traditional knowledge through learning and sharing.

Our commitment extends well beyond our annual statutory holiday. Our government continues to invest in aboriginal languages and cultural programs, increasing the number of aboriginal teachers, creating opportunity for aboriginal people to enter the trades and exploring alternative energy opportunities in our aboriginal communities.

Mr. Speaker, this June 21 I ask all Members to join me in encouraging the people of the Northwest Territories to get out and participate in National Aboriginal Day activities in their communities and to celebrate the wealth of traditions, lifestyles, languages and values that make up the fabric of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Michael McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 77-16(2)
SIGNING OF THE BUILDING CANADA
INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN FUNDING
AGREEMENT

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise the House that yesterday the Hon. Lawrence Cannon, federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and I signed the Building Canada infrastructure plan Base Funding Agreement.

This agreement sets the stage for \$185.8 million in new infrastructure funding to flow to the Government of the Northwest Territories over a seven-year period. It is notable that the Government of the Northwest Territories is the second jurisdiction in Canada to complete negotiations and sign the funding agreement.

A key feature of this agreement is the unique cost-sharing provisions, which provide for the Government of Canada to pay up to 75 per cent of the cost of eligible projects. This funding will provide a much-needed injection of almost \$140 million for critical transportation infrastructure needs across the Northwest Territories.

As a first step Canada has approved the replacement of the Kakisa River Bridge. This funding will also allow the government to support priority projects like the city of Yellowknife's bypass road, the access road to the Tuktoyaktuk gravel source at kilometre 177 and highway rehabilitation projects.

The government plans to make \$6.5 million per year of this funding available to community governments to support their infrastructure needs. Our first priority is to address urgent water treatment plant needs in several communities. The balance of the funding will be made available to communities to address their own priority projects within eligible categories.

Over the life of the agreement a total of \$1.8 million of the federal funding will be used to establish a climate change research and adaptation program within the Department of Transportation. The program will support research needs for both the Government of the Northwest Territories and community governments, ensuring that transportation infrastructure can cope with the impacts of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Norman Yakeleya, Minister of Transportation, for his support during the negotiations. I would also like to acknowledge the support we received from the Northwest Territories Association of Communities in determining how to move forward with community government allocations.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 78-16(2)
SIR JOHN HOMECOMING

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, this summer one of our territory's most important institutions will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. On August 1, 2 and 3 École Sir John Franklin High School will be hosting a homecoming weekend to recognize the school's 50 years of education.

Since 1958 Sir John has seen thousands of students pass through its doors. Many leaders of the modern North attended Sir John. At least five current Members of the Legislature attended Sir John Franklin Territorial high school, including myself, and at least one of us even taught there.

High school is a place of exploration and discovery, where people form their identities and begin to realize what they want to do with their lives. Sir John holds a special place in many of our hearts.

Quality education in the North is crucial to our success. It is important to recognize a place that has been so important in so many lives and to congratulate the staff and students who have helped to make it a success over the past 50 years. We can all look forward to many more, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 79-16(2)
NATIONAL ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity today to inform the Assembly of an important national summit I am co-hosting with the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, Ms. Beverley Jacobs.

The National Aboriginal Women's Summit will take place in Yellowknife from July 29 to 31. The summit will be attended by about 150 aboriginal women from across Canada, along with representatives from the federal, provincial and territorial governments and national aboriginal organizations. The summit will advance the ongoing work toward improving social and economic conditions of aboriginal women and their families.

The summit theme "Strong Women, Strong Communities" provides an opportunity to build on the recommendations created at last year's gathering in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and

Labrador. Aboriginal women, through their wisdom and experience, contribute to the success of each of our communities. I am looking forward to the discussions on ways we can address issues of concern to aboriginal women and, hopefully, move forward with solutions.

The planning for the summit has been done by a national planning committee that is co-chaired by the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. The planning committee is comprised of representatives of national aboriginal organizations, the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories, the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Local planning for the summit has been coordinated by the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories, Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories and staff from the Department of Executive.

Minister Sandy Lee, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, and I would like to thank all the people who are working hard to ensure a successful summit. I would also like to recognize the contribution of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to support the summit. We look forward to welcoming participants of the National Aboriginal Women's Summit to our beautiful territory. We will ensure they benefit from our famous northern hospitality, and I know it will be a successful event.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF THE CREW OF HMCS YELLOWKNIFE

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it gives me great pleasure to use my Member's statement to do a special acknowledgement of the crew of the *HMCS Yellowknife* who are in our gallery today.

They've been here for a number of days, and I want to thank them for making the long trek all the way here to Yellowknife, to our community. I believe they are meeting with a number of veterans and seniors, and they're getting to know folks on the ground one on one. I'm very grateful that they've taken this time.

I understand that several of them will be playing in the Midnight Golf Tournament, and I wish them good luck. It is a different course to play, and if you need any help with fixing scorecards, come talk to me. I'm very experienced around that.

The *HMCS Yellowknife* crew comes to Yellowknife from time to time, and I'd be remiss not to mention the role that former mayor Pat McMahon played. She was a very strong advocate for the establishment of the ship and making sure its crew did not lose its presence from time to time here in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage them to partake in every opportunity that Yellowknife has to offer. I certainly know they are here to meet the community, because they are contributing in their way. But I want to emphasize a special acknowledgement of the fact that they do defend our sovereignty and play a significant role in our Forces.

I want to close my statement by acknowledging each member quickly, and I apologize in advance if I say your names incorrectly. I'd like to acknowledge as follows: Lieutenant Commander Grant Bannister; Lieutenant Larry Moraal; Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class John Malysheff; Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class Frank Vengels; Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Duguay; Petty Officer 2nd Class Hugh O'Neill; Master Seaman Amanda Dunphy; Master Seaman Kevin Andres; Master Corporal John Hodson; Master Seaman Kumar Ingam; Leading Seaman Erik Lindholm; Leading Seaman Jason Zerdin; Leading Seaman Jennifer Lawless, who I think also is a Yellowknifer; Leading Seaman Catherine Boucharde; Leading Seaman Matthew Houghtling; Leading Seaman Ray Crowder; Leading Seaman James Nauss; Leading Seaman Derrick Fedoryshyn; Able Seaman Amanda McCabe; and Leading Seaman Matthew Rexin.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to thank them for coming to Yellowknife. I certainly appreciate their representation here.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Support for the voluntary sector is a priority of this government, yet voluntary sector organizations that deliver key human services continue to struggle to find funding to help improve salaries, keep their staff, pay their utility bills and keep their doors open to those in need. Their only options seem to be to cut services or run a deficit.

Forced-growth requests from NGOs throughout the NWT have met with limited success, and some agencies are not even offered this opportunity by the GNWT. Family violence shelters have been instructed that help is on the way in the form of a

GNWT review of sector financing. This would be most welcome to the sector.

Mr. Speaker, late in the last Assembly the government expressed dismay at how they could operate a shelter for the same amount they have previously allocated to an NGO to operate it, but little has been done to support these NGOs, which provide incredibly valuable services to the people of the NWT. As a note, the Action Plan on Family Violence includes some relief for staff retention in this fiscal year but not after that.

NGOs and other voluntary sector organizations would like some assurances that this review of the sector financing will be timely, produce tangible results and include their participation. Given that these, our stakeholders, are our best resource when discussing the challenges the sector faces, it would be unfortunate to not involve the sector in the review and identification of solutions.

The clock is ticking, and human service agencies do not want to be forced to reduce key services year after year. It's not in the best interest of the people of the NWT for this happen.

At the appropriate time I'll be asking the Premier some questions on this topic.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANDATORY IGNITION INTERLOCK PROGRAM

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Drinking and driving remains a serious problem in the NWT. Despite the introduction of new rules and harsher penalties in 2004, impaired driving is still the number one cause of death or injury on our roads.

We do have a useful tool to deal with the NWT's worst drunk drivers. It is called the ignition interlock device and prevents drivers from using their vehicles if they are not sober. This device requires the driver to provide a breath sample before the engine can be started. It also demands random breath samples while the vehicle is being driven. If the driver does not pass the breath test, the vehicle horn is then activated.

The Department of Transportation can impose conditions on drivers who wish to have their licences reinstated after being convicted on a drunk-driving charge. One of those conditions is the installation of this ignition interlock device.

I believe we need to make these devices mandatory for any NWT residents who have been convicted of having twice the legal alcohol limit, who refused to give a breath sample or who are repeat offenders.

Being a licensed driver is a privilege that comes with responsibility. We need to get tough on those who repeatedly show contempt for the law and for the safety of their fellow citizens by driving while impaired

I urge the Minister to use the tools that are readily available in legislation and implement the mandatory ignition interlock program.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO RESIDENTS OF TU NEDHE

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to address the elders in my aboriginal language. [English translation not provided.]

Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO RESIDENTS OF NUNAKPUT

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few months I've seen a number of important achievements for my Nunakput riding: the opening of the RCMP detachment in Sachs Harbour, the 24th anniversary of the signing of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the awarding of the new exploration bids in the Beaufort Sea, and at last, my access road 177 has made it into the government's plans thanks to the Building Canada Fund and all 19 Members' support. I thank you.

Although we have so much to celebrate, Mr. Speaker, life in the small communities, like those I represent, continues to be very difficult. The programs and standards are not up to the same standards as those in larger centres.

During the session I have spoken about run-down medical equipment in Tuktoyaktuk; the importance of funding the Aboriginal Sports Circles so the youth in the communities have access to the same opportunities as those in the larger centres; the unfairness of claw-backs to the Inuvialuit beneficiary dividend cheques, though it is not income, through the Income Support program; the need to give elders' cheques twice a month instead of once a month; the lower quality of education in small communities and the need for adequate housing for teachers; the legacy of residential schools; homelessness; shamefully rundown housing with problems such as black mould and elders not being able to open their doors in the winter months; and the high cost of everything, from

groceries to heating oil to power, which makes living in Nunakput communities so difficult.

Mr. Speaker, you and my colleagues can expect to hear me raise these issues again and again until I make some progress on them. I look forward to working with my fellow Regular Members and Ministers to address these concerns. We are now coming to the end of the budget session, and I'm pleased to say that our long debates resulted in some victories for the Northwest Territories and Nunakput.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In particular, the court worker and renewable resource officers positions, which were slated to be cut, were reinstated, thanks to the support of my colleagues. I'm very much looking forward to returning to Nunakput and visiting all my constituents in the near future. I would like to thank them for being a strong voice and coming forward with their issues and concerns. I want to assure them that I'll be continuing to work hard on their behalf to improve life in our communities.

This is our last day of sitting. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the hard-working staff of the Office of the Clerk, my colleagues and you, Mr. Speaker, for guidance and support during this long sitting. I would also like to wish everyone a happy Aboriginal Day and Canada Day. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REVENUE LOSS FROM NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about revenue leakage, the loss of dollars, just like with a bathtub drain, out of the Northwest Territories, out of our communities. Solutions to plugging this drain would be a huge contribution to a healthy economic stimulus for the Northwest Territories. The Government of Canada announced this morning that \$40 million is the subsidy that they provide for food mail for the North. They started to suggest that we grow our own food. What a concept.

This government subsidizes almost \$140 million to various forms of cost-of-living expenses. When I worked in the community of Whati, I noticed that during flights into the community the aircraft were filled with things that could have been made and produced locally. I studied local retail outlets to see how much money was being spent on water, believe it or not, and pop, which is coloured water

with sugar added. It was over \$100,000 per year. Mr. Speaker, these are opportunities for local economic development. Commercial birch syrup is now happening in the Northwest Territories and could provide a source of fructose sweetener, which is a much better source of carbohydrates and nutrients than the refined sugars and artificial sweeteners we see in our pop.

Everybody knows what we're spending on oil and gas and fuel. We're shipping hundreds of millions of dollars from our communities to outside our Territories. With the export of dollars and the import of goods and services we send away our jobs, our skills, our opportunities and our local economies. With this go our health, our social supports, our self-sufficiency and our ability to make good local decisions on resource management.

Over the coming summer months our Cabinet will be developing the business plans for the 2009–2010 budget. They will be establishing a program review office, finally, to base the redirection and cuts on a sane and justified assessment of needs. They will develop new initiatives that establish a new approach with heightened efficiency and effectiveness. It is my hope that all of these good works will address our large and pressing challenges. In particular, I hope that the work, in a thoughtful and coordinated government-wide way, will plug our leaky economy, the flush of our dollars away from our communities and the loss of our basic skills, self-sufficiency and local development.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I will be ready and demanding, when next we gather, to finally reverse some of these trends and truly do good work for the benefits of our residents, our land and our families.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, June 21 is a special day to all Northerners, aboriginal people in the NWT and across Canada. The Northwest Territories is the first jurisdiction in Canada to make June 21 a statutory holiday in recognition of National Aboriginal Day. It's a day that's there to recognize our First Nations peoples and the significant role they played in the history of Canada and the Northwest Territories and how the First Nations people of the land welcomed the newcomers to Canada and the Northwest Territories. The unique culture and history we have within the Northwest Territories is because of our First Nations people.

Mr. Speaker, June 21 is the day to celebrate not only the uniqueness of our First Nations people but the history and culture of the Northwest Territories and the role our First Nations people have played in developing the North into what it is today. We cannot lose sight of the culture, history and values of the First Nations people in everything we do, and the protection of our land, protection of our waters and also the protection of our languages.

With that, I wish everyone in the Northwest Territories to celebrate June 21 with the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories in recognition of the contributions our First Nations people have made to the history and the uniqueness of the Northwest Territories. I wish everyone all the best for National Aboriginal Day. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TOWN OF INUVIK 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, many years ago Canada decided that a new town was going to be built in the Mackenzie Delta because Aklavik, the regional centre at the time, was sinking and would soon disappear. Well, we know now that Aklavik didn't disappear. We saw it in the budget documents.

After a few locations were surveyed, Mr. Speaker, East Three was chosen as the new site for the proposed town. My grandfather Dan McLeod was part of the original survey team in 1954, and 1958 was the beginning of the community of Inuvik.

For such a young community Inuvik has a very colourful history. For many years we had the Canadian Forces base in Inuvik with 400 to 500 people. That closed down in the mid-'80s. Many families left, but a lot of the families, or a lot of the kids from the CFS, are still living in Inuvik and made Inuvik their home.

Mr. Speaker, despite all the negatives surrounding residential schools, Inuvik was the location of both Stringer Hall and Grollier Hall. We had an opportunity, growing up in Inuvik, to go to school with the CFS kids. We called them students from Grollier Hall and Stringer Hall. We made many good friends from the hostels and with CFS kids. We have many good friends to this day. That was one of very few positives that came out of the whole residential school experience.

In the mid-'70s there was an oil boom in Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta that went on strong for a few years and then just stopped as quickly as it started. It's starting to pick back up again, Mr. Speaker. We see that with the announcement of all the money spent on exploration. We expect it to pick up again

soon. We will be back to booming, and the residents of Beaufort-Delta will benefit greatly from this.

This summer, Mr. Speaker, Inuvik will be celebrating its 50th anniversary with two weeks of celebrations. Many activities are planned for it. We have the Great Northern Arts Festival. We've got two weeks of events going on. We'd like to have a ball tournament, but our ball fields were torn down, so we can't have that. It will all be on July 18. It's the big day; it's the 50th Anniversary civic holiday. They're planning a homecoming. We'll have many past and former residents of Inuvik coming to Inuvik to take part in these celebrations.

I'd like to use this opportunity to congratulate the Town of Inuvik for all their perseverance over the years. I welcome all visitors from the NWT to come up this summer and join us in celebrating 50 years.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON 2008-2009 BUDGET PROCESS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's the last day of session, and I will be glad to be going home. When I first came here at the beginning of session I was one of the ones who said, "Let's not waste our beautiful summer days in here." I saw ice on the lake and buds on the trees when we got here, but we've gone through a change of season.

I was one of the ones who said, "Let's not try to beat this untenable budget document to death here. Let's just go back to the drawing board and come back." But a number of Members wanted to persevere and press on, and they did. Between reinstatements, reinvestments, reassignments and the fact that we're going to be revisiting some of the '09-10 cuts when we come back to do our business plan, I think we ended up with something that we can go home and talk to our constituents about and be very proud of some of the advances and some of the accomplishments that will be entailed in that budget document. I do look forward to getting back to Hay River and debriefing with my constituents and dissecting some of the details of the budget further.

Mr. Speaker, this was an experience. It was an unusual experience, even for those of us who've been around here for awhile. I must say that I've gotten to know all the Members quite a bit better. I want to say how much I appreciate all their perspectives and what they bring to the table. I think there are many things that can be accomplished when we work together.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REVIEW OF GNWT DIAMOND STRATEGY

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been over ten years now since diamonds were first processed at the Ekati mine, north of Yellowknife. After ten years I do believe it is time to review our policies, our objectives and the strategy as it pertains to diamonds.

It was just over three years ago that the Department of ITI gutted the diamond division within the department. It was a decision by the former government that that happened. Given what is at stake with the development of mines across this country in jurisdictions such as Saskatchewan, Ontario and potentially Quebec, I believe that we need to move on the review of our diamond policy. Otherwise, we're going to get lost in the crowd. I'd like to know who's going to be doing the work on the strategy. Who's going to be planning our objectives and the policy? We need to have some concrete plans, Mr. Speaker, because we can't afford to wait. Other jurisdictions will pass us by.

There's no reason we couldn't set up a diamond exchange here in the Northwest Territories. If we're reviewing the policy, let's take the 10 per cent of the rough, keep them locked up here in Yellowknife or in another community, and we could disperse them to the world. If you have diamonds, people will come. There are examples of that around the world. We don't need to be an Antwerp, a London or even, potentially, Toronto to have a diamond exchange. If we don't get off of our backsides, Toronto is going to be the place that has a diamond exchange in this country — not Yellowknife, not the Northwest Territories, but Toronto. I think that would be a shame, Mr. Speaker, because I think there's more we could do about that.

The fact is that we're not making any progress, I believe. Not much progress has been made in the last 20 years on resource-revenue sharing. I believe it's time we start looking outside of the box and we start, as a government, putting some money in an equity position in resource development.

If you can't beat them, let's join them. Let's get some tangible results and tangible return on our investments, so we can put money back into our communities. If the federal government is not going to give it to us, let's get involved ourselves, and let's do that. That has to be a part of the plan. I don't think we should overlook equity positions in resource development, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of

visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to welcome to the House His Worship, Mayor Mervin Gruben, from Tuktoyaktuk. Welcome.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome my wife, Jenny, and my children, Kristin, Mikayla, Matthew and Mitchell, and thank them for all their support in this last month.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome again all the visitors from Nunakput. It's nice to see them in the crowd. I also would like to recognize my constituency assistant, Ms. Lynda Comerford. And with Lynda, visiting from Nova Scotia, is Ms. Vivian Schouteten. Welcome to Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to use this opportunity to acknowledge and recognize the two pages from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Tamara Voudrach and Paulina Burns. I think they've done a great job this week.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize a few guests in the gallery. We have a group visiting from Lacombe, Red Deer, Alberta, visiting family and friends. Their names are Ken Morton, Norma Camman, Ben and Marg Linkletter, Everett and Marion Joselyn. As well, in the gallery, we have Ed and Joan King from Lloydminster. Welcome to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to recognize my two pages here: Denise Robert over there, and also Darcie Stewart. I'd like to thank them for coming down for the week to serve as pages in this House. Hopefully, they enjoyed themselves. Have a safe trip home. Mahsi.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a page from Hay River who is a grade 8 student at Diamond Jenness Secondary School and thank him for serving us in the Assembly this week — Zachary Pangborn.

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

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 376-16(2) ACCESS TO FUNDING FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up with some oral questions regarding autism. This goes back to my Member's statement yesterday; I talked about the concerns for children.

Now, in all fairness, while I had my Member's statement yesterday, a letter was finally delivered to my office, so I want to make special acknowledgement because the Minister wants to be acknowledged when good work is done. The answer has finally arrived, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, reading the letter, I noticed that it talks about there being few choices for parents to access things like speech and OT, except there are some limited services here in Yellowknife that are private.

Yellowknife Health and Social Services provides money for parents with children with disabilities such as autism to access funding for aids. I'm wondering if this Minister would also allow them to access funding so they could get the extra support out there that's provided in the private industry for the speech and OT therapy for their children.

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services, in cooperation with educational services that we provide, do assist families and children with varying types of disabilities, including autism. Those services are made available on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Hawkins: Case by case is pretty thin, to be honest. A parent who has a child with autism can only receive a few hours a week for OT therapy as well as speech therapy. The problem is that the amount of time a week they receive for therapy here in the Northwest Territories is what is provided in Alberta for one single day.

My question once again is: would the Minister be able to look into the situation and develop a framework so these parents accessing money through Yellowknife Health and Social Services can use some of that money to access more — and private — speech and OT therapy that's available?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, the department is working on a framework to address various issues of disabilities — not particular to autism, but

obviously the autism segment will be included in that.

The difficulties with providing all the services we need to for our children has to do with the fact that we have limited professionals available who can provide that service. For those children in need, we do what we can to provide them.

If the Member wants to talk about specific situations of a specific client, I'd be happy to work with the Member to see what we can make available to them.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate that gracious offer about trying to work for a specific constituent or parent or family, but I'm speaking broadly about all constituents and all people of the Northwest Territories accessing this.

I'm glad the Minister mentioned the limited professionals. As I've been made aware about the territorial services we provide in the area of speech and OT therapy, quite often parents miss out on the opportunity to put their kids into those things because those staff are busy in Nunavut providing speech and OT therapy to their citizens.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be clear: are the professionals employed by the Northwest Territories government putting our citizens first or the private contract that they're providing to Nunavut?

Hon. Sandy Lee: All of our health care professionals employed by the GNWT or funded by the GNWT have to put their priority to the NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A parent told me they had to miss a number of these appointments because our services were being provided.... Our technical experts were in Nunavut, in the Kitikmeot region, fulfilling the contract they have with them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not clear, because this answer seems to be evading us. Who is on the list of priorities: the Northwest Territories' citizens for speech and OT therapy, or the Nunavut contract? Who's the priority?

Hon. Sandy Lee: That is the first time I have heard that our professionals would in any way limit services available to NWT residents in favour of Nunavut residents. I'm glad the Member brought this to my attention for the first time here. I'd be happy to look into that.

What we do have challenges with is the fact that while we have positions available for rehab services

and speech therapists and lots of other services our children need, we do have challenges in filling them, and we have to continue to work on those.

We will continue to work on expanding services for children, especially for children with disabilities of all kinds, not just autism. We don't have a practice of separating different conditions, but we do have to step up to have more services available, not just in Yellowknife but in all of the communities where we are facing incredible shortages of professionals who could provide the service.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 377-16(2)
VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier, and it's related to my Member's statement on the voluntary sector. I'm curious: who is responsible for the review of the sector financing? And how will whoever is responsible for that review ensure that participation of this sector is included?

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is aware, there are a number of departments involved in different areas. The specific area of sector financing is being undertaken by the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

Mr. Abernethy: To the second part of that question, can we get commitment from the Premier that FMBS will include representatives from the sector in the review of sector financing?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, a lot of the work — for example, the third-party accountability framework — has been done, and we're doing a review of it as well as going forward. A number of areas are going to be looked at further to get input from the sector and the NGO sector as well as the volunteer sector.

I'll get back to the Member and provide information as to how this will be undertaken, and the timing of it as well.

Mr. Abernethy: If I can get the Premier to give me a bit of a sense of the timing of the review and when they expect that to be done. Specifically, I'm curious about whether there will be any additional supports or any sort of framework around supports that are going to be provided to the sector during the '09–10 fiscal year.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that as we get on with work now after the session's over, we'll be able to put the energy into getting some of the package together.

As I stated earlier, I'll work with the Member to provide information as to the timing and the structure. We'll look at getting the information. I don't have that with me at this point, but I commit to get that to the Member.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 378-16(2)
BUILDING CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN
FUNDING AGREEMENT

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. It's in regard to his Minister's statement, where he mentioned the signing of an agreement for \$185 million with the federal government in regard to the Building Canada Fund.

Again, I see that they did mention the access road to the Tuktoyaktuk gravel source, but one thing I noticed is missing is the access road in Aklavik.

I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what do we have to do to access this funding, by way of the Building Canada Fund, so we also can develop the access road to the Aklavik gravel source?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very excited to be able to have the document in the plan for the funding agreement on the Building Canada Fund signed off before the end of our time here in the session. A number of projects are waiting to be brought forward. At this point the agreement consists of the funding criteria, and it describes what will be accepted.

As to what projects will be brought forward, so far there's only been agreement on one project. We have had discussions on how we would flow money to the municipalities. We haven't finalized that, but that is the next stage. The next stage will be to bring projects forward.

As to the Member's question about how does he get projects into the Building Canada plan, that is something he would have to work out with the Department of Transportation, as they are responsible for bringing forward infrastructure projects that relate to transportation issues.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we do have \$185 million now. There is a pot that we can access. Knowing that Tuk was able to develop their proposal, I believe they did receive some seed money from this government. I'd like to ask the Minister: is seed money available to communities to develop their proposals and bring that forward so we can also get on the list for the Building Canada Fund?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the community of Tuk had put together a small team to work toward developing a proposal and the general guidelines of how they would move forward. They did receive some money through our government — I believe it was around \$50,000 — and I think we've already responded, through the Premier, that there would be a commitment to provide support in that area.

I'm sure the Department of Transportation has been listening very keenly.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, time flies around here pretty quickly, and we are looking at getting into our business plans early this fall. In order to get anywhere with next year's budget, we do have to have something in place by then.

I'd like to ask the Minister: is he willing to commit resources by way of manpower — either from his Department, Municipal and Community Affairs, or Transportation — to work with the community to develop this plan over the next couple of months so we can have something ready for this fall's business plans review, so we can get something in it?

Again, it's a question of urgency, so I'll ask the Minister if he can commit to human resources along with a \$50,000 contribution.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult for me as the MACA Minister to commit any money on behalf of my colleague for Transportation. However, I certainly expect that he's listening and he would take it as notice.

Mr. Speaker, I think, first of all, we need to see a request from the community with a small indication of how they want to move forward. I think there's been some discussion already in terms of what we need to have done to bring this project more into focus. We need to see some firmer plans, we need to see some price tags, and we need to see some more legwork done.

I will follow up on the Member's question. However, as the MACA Minister, I can't commit for another department. The money for Municipal and Community Affairs is already committed to go to community government, so I don't have any room in that area.

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

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my questions on this matter over the last number of days and weeks, I did request that the Minister of Transportation make an attempt to go into Aklavik along with me and meet with the community and

the general public on exactly where we can go next on this matter.

I'd like to put out a formal invitation to the Minister of MACA; he can also tag along with us. I'd just like to know, with your busy schedule, if we can maybe look at a date to go into Aklavik in the next couple of weeks — hopefully, sooner rather than later. I'd just like to formally ask the Minister here, to formally invite you, to the community of Aklavik and also to set a date when we can meet with the community on this matter.

Hon. Michael McLeod: I didn't realize I was tagging along with the Minister of Transportation, but I'd be pleased to go into the community. In fact, we've had other invitations from community leaders in Aklavik.

We plan — or at least I plan — to be in Inuvik for some of the ceremony for the 50th anniversary.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael McLeod: The Minister of Transportation indicates he's going to tag along with me for that.

Laughter.

Hon. Michael McLeod: So at that time, while we're in the area, I would be very pleased to come into the community to have discussions about gravel, infrastructure, water plants, sewer lagoons, dumps — whatever the community wishes to discuss with us, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 379-16(2) PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. We're about to head out, here, for a while, and we've heard the Premier talk about a potential project to build a highway down the Mackenzie Valley. There have been proponents out there who have suggested this should be done on the basis of a P3 project. I'd just like to ask the Premier if he'll assign any contracts for a highway down the Mackenzie Valley before we get back in September.

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

Interjections.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we could just have a contract put on our desk, we would look at it.

Realistically, though, we know much work needs to be done on the Mackenzie Valley Highway process. I've had discussions with my Cabinet colleagues, as well as shared some of the vision of that with the Prime Minister at the Western Premiers' Conference, and we'll continue to build on that.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Hand in hand with that concept, I think the Deh Cho Bridge project gave us clear evidence that we need something more solid in our policy about P3 projects than references in the Financial Administration Act, which would also cover the leasing of photocopiers. I'd like to ask the Premier: where are we at in developing a policy that would allow us to enter into P3 projects on a more solid footing?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we need to pay attention to that file. In fact, we need to renew it. I guess that is a way of putting it. At one point the Government of the Northwest Territories did venture into the P3 area. That first movement wasn't very satisfactory, so we've agreed that FMBS would take charge in that area, as it relates to financial matters. Hopefully, as we come back together in the fall, we can show Members the work that's being done on it and provide an update at that time.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, again, as we learned through the Deh Cho Bridge project, when you have a proponent that is a private corporation, transparency becomes an issue, as does our government's ability to control some matters like procurement.

I would like to ask the Premier if any policy developed by this government that is related to public-private partnerships would include an element that would speak to the issue of northern participation.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, an interest we always have as the Government of the Northwest Territories is seeing a successful venture happen and the benefits staying in the North. As we develop this and bring this back to Members, we hope we can lay out how it's coming together.

One of the issues with the P3 process — even the federal government and other jurisdictions have had to wrestle with this — is that a true P3 would put the majority of risk on the private sector. As a government we would have to see how far we go that way. One of our exercises in our last initial round in the late '90s, I believe, was to try to pull some of that control back as a government, and that skewed the process a bit. Again, as we come forward with that, we'll be glad to share with Members what work has been done and continue to work to revise it.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would concur that with the P3 projects, whether it's the Deh Cho Bridge or the Taltson Hydro Expansion or whatever it is we're talking about, certainly our government has taken the majority of the risk. Therefore, I think we should be in a position to make up the rules. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would also agree to try and engage northern industry in any policy that's developed, to ensure we have something very concrete when it comes to maximizing the benefits to Northerners through northern participation in any major capital infrastructure project.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, for any changes we'll make or look at making, we'll be sitting down with Members to look at what work has been done. At that point we'd be prepared to expand that further to our business community and people across the North. We need to sit down and come up with a bit of an action plan looking at where things are coming together, sharing that with Members and then discussing the next steps from there — much the same process we will be following with the Business Incentive Policy work.

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

QUESTION 380-16(2) REVIEW OF GNWT DIAMOND STRATEGY

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of ITI. It gets back to my Member's statement where I spoke of the fact we have had diamond mining in the Northwest Territories now for over ten years. I feel it's long overdue that we take a look at our policy, our objectives and a strategy to deal with diamond mining in the Northwest Territories. As we see other jurisdictions across the country — Saskatchewan, Ontario and perhaps Quebec — developing potential diamond mines, there's a great risk that these other jurisdictions are going to pass us by.

The first question I'd have for the Minister is: why can't the Government of the Northwest Territories get access to the 10 per cent of rough, and why does it need to be 10 per cent? Why can't we look at even 15 per cent or 20 per cent and set up a diamond exchange here in Yellowknife instead of Antwerp or London?

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

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to access to diamonds, since the diamonds were first discovered the diamond industry has been one of the big success stories for the

Northwest Territories. We're now third in the world in production of diamonds, behind Russia and Botswana. We're even ahead of South Africa. Part of the issue is that we are a territory, so the federal government owns the resources.

The problem we had as a government was how to receive benefits from the diamond industry itself. The government of the day was able to successfully negotiate with the diamond companies, which was unprecedented at the time. Since then, we've seen that other sovereign countries have started to follow the process we've been taking.

The industry provides 10 per cent of the allocations for manufacturing in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, my fear, again, is that we don't have — and I know the previous government got rid of it — the Diamond Division at ITI. I'm not sure exactly why that happened. Here we are on the verge of other jurisdictions developing mines, and we need to review where we're going with diamonds and with diamond mining in the Northwest Territories. Again, I don't understand why we can't get that 10 per cent and then divvy it up amongst local cut-and-polish plants here in Yellowknife, and we could also open up a diamond exchange.

Once you have the diamonds, people will come. There are examples of this across the world: New York, Tel Aviv, Antwerp, London. If we don't do this, it's going to end up in Toronto, and that would be a shame. If there is a diamond exchange in Canada, it belongs here in the Northwest Territories.

Hon. Bob McLeod: The Government of the Northwest Territories' diamond policy framework was established in June of 1999. This policy facilitated the development of a diamond manufacturing industry in the Northwest Territories. Certainly, the policy needs to be reviewed and updated. As a government we will be reviewing the current strategy. We are quite prepared to look at the suggestions that have been made by the Member and work very closely with the standing committee so we can improve and update our diamond policy.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the Minister and the department on developing the strategy and reviewing the policies that are out there.

Yes, we are third in the world in terms of production. I was a city councillor here in Yellowknife in the late '90s, when the gold mining was falling out and the diamond mines came in. Diamond mining does add a tremendous amount to the economy here in the Northwest Territories. We can't underestimate that, but I do believe we should be getting and receiving more. The federal

government doesn't want to come to the plate in terms of resource-revenue sharing.

The next question I'd like to ask the Minister is: if the federal government isn't going to address resource-revenue sharing, will the government entertain an effort to take an equity position in resource development, specifically in diamond mining?

Hon. Bob McLeod: An equity position in a diamond facility is certainly something we're prepared to look at. We know other provinces have done that in different sectors, and this is an area we can look at. I believe it would have to involve stakeholders in the diamond industry, but this is something we are prepared to look at.

We're prepared to look at any options that would improve and increase the benefits to the Northwest Territories. One of our primary objectives is to see the allocation for the Northwest Territories being fully utilized in the Northwest Territories.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With other jurisdictions moving forward — and I mentioned Saskatchewan with Fort à la Corne and the Ontario Victor Diamond Project in northern Ontario — time is of the essence here. I don't think we can wait another year before we develop a strategy and a plan and policies on where this government is going to go.

I'd like to ask the Minister: what is the strategy in terms of a timeline to address policy issues surrounding diamond mining in the Northwest Territories and the government's role in that?

Hon. Bob McLeod: We will be working in the next few months or so to lay out our approach to how we will be undertaking this review and how we will be laying it out over the next year. My plan is to take this approach and discuss it further with the standing committee.

I should also point out that we've been working very closely with other jurisdictions that have diamonds, and we've been able to share the benefit of our expertise with our sister or brother diamond-producing provinces. I really think that with this review we will be able to take a very creative look at the way we deal with diamonds in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 381-16(2)
HOUSING FOR TEACHERS IN COMMUNITIES

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask some questions of the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

I spoke yesterday in my Member's statement about the difficulties encountered by regional boards in providing housing for their teachers or ensuring that their teachers have adequate housing. They have sent a letter to the Minister. It describes the need for available, adequate and affordable housing, and it talks about housing shortages, substandard and unsafe living conditions in housing and exorbitant rents.

I'd like to know if the Minister has any plans to tackle the housing problems these education boards encounter year after year.

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, this is one of the key areas we are focusing on as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment: to find suitable and affordable housing units for staff, especially for teachers coming to the North. We certainly want to welcome them with open arms. One way of doing that is working with the various organizations in the community, most specifically the LHOs, the NWT Housing Corporation at the community level and the Department of Human Resources.

We are developing a strategy. I myself, the chairs of the five regional boards, including Yellowknife, and the superintendents are putting a package together for us to look at options of moving forward on a long-term basis. I believe we are making good progress for short-term and long-term goals. Mahsi.

Ms. Bisaro: I was very glad to hear the Minister finally mention the education boards. He mentioned a lot of different organizations and finally mentioned the boards that he is consulting with as well. That's a good thing.

The Minister has received a letter from the regional boards, and there are a number of recommendations in that letter for the Minister. On a similar vein, I'd like to know what action the Minister is planning to take to address these suggested options, apart from meeting with these board chairs.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we did meet with the Deh Cho superintendent, who is coordinating for the superintendents, and also with the chairs of the respective regions' education boards. We met a couple of weeks ago. They proposed three or four options for us to consider,

but we wanted to deal with the immediate issue at hand: the new recruits and the returning teachers coming to the North, especially in the isolated communities that may not have housing units.

We're going to work closely with the Housing Corporation to identify vacant units that can be made available to the teaching staff. That is one area where we have found possible solutions. The superintendent also gave us the option of moving forward with the long-term plans. We are making progress in that area and working closely with the education boards and with the department as well. Mahsi.

Ms. Bisaro: I appreciate the information from the Minister that the short-term plan is going ahead. I would like to confirm with the Minister that the short-term plan is basically referencing August and September of 2008. Could he confirm that for me?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we are wrapping up our process of recruiting teachers and principals for the North. We're focussing on their arrival, whether it be August or September, possibly mostly in August, when they arrive before school starts. That's a short-term solution we are identifying. The long-term solution will be in the next few years. Mahsi.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good to hear, and I hope we can find a solution for housing in every community that currently has a problem. One of the options suggested by the boards in their letter was to allow regional boards to have the same authority as the local Yellowknife board and that they be given the authority to acquire and dispose of real property.

I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not this is something the department will or can consider and when we might expect to see a change in the legislation before this House.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This option was just given to us recently, so we need to sit down as a department and go over the options. Certainly, it will be presented once we move forward. There's still ongoing discussion within my department. It hasn't moved forward because this will be a long-term solution. Once we've made a decision, we'll certainly come back to the committee, possibly the Social Programs Committee, that deals with our ECE department. At that point in time we'll certainly be sharing that information with the committee. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 382-16(2)

DUST CONTROL ON THE DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since it's our last day before we sit again in October, I want to use this opportunity to question the Minister of Transportation on dust control, because in October we won't have to worry about it.

The Minister has heard many times from myself and my colleague from Mackenzie Delta on the need for dust control on the Dempster Highway. I'd like to ask him if those decisions to apply dust control are made at the regional level or from headquarters.

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the issue of dust control and some of the issues on the highway transportation systems, certainly the regional offices have some say in terms of moving projects forward. They certainly come up to the headquarters level. At the headquarters level we have discussions in terms of funding allocations and priorities in the areas where we have to look at reconstruction. From there we make decisions, and we provide that back to the regional office in terms of the projects that go forward.

Mr. McLeod: I'd like to ask the Minister if the regional office does submit budgets to headquarters, and in those budgets do they earmark particular money for dust control.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Member is right. The regional offices submit certain projects to go forward. When it comes to the headquarters level, we certainly have some discussion and forward that to the regional office for approval of certain projects based on funding requirements and priorities in our transportation system across the North.

Mr. McLeod: Obviously, the Minister has heard our concerns in this House. The travelling public in the Beaufort-Delta have expressed their concerns to us, to the Minister, to the regional office. There's a disconnect somewhere; somebody is not getting the message, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister if his department or headquarters would direct the regional operations to earmark a particular pot of money for dust control, so we can have more than 100 feet of dust control on the Dempster.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I have driven the Dempster; I know what the Member is talking about. I certainly made the deputy and the regional

office aware. We have set aside a certain amount of money in each of the regional operations. They forward their requests and know that the regional office in Inuvik has indicated it's very high on the list in terms of the issue of improving the dust-control budget.

We have increased the budget based on his recommendations — not to the amount I know the Member would like us to. However, I made it clear to the deputy that I would like to see the Dempster Highway receive more of the dust-control revenue. It's a major reconstruction, so I made it very clear to the department that I'd like to keep the focus on this issue — as the Member has talked about — on the Dempster Highway, in terms of dust control.

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

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a concern, because I've seen rocks flying. I've seen rocks exploding windshields. It's a serious concern to the travelling public of Beaufort-Delta.

The Minister stated that the department does allocate money for dust control. I'd like to ask the Minister, just in closing, if his office monitors the amount of money that is spent on dust control, and the amount of work that was done on the dust-control situation on the Dempster.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I share the concern with the Member, because as I've said, I have driven the Dempster Highway. I know what the people there are faced with.

We certainly monitor our dust control in terms of the Dempster Highway. We've continued to increase the budget. I would like to see the budget increased to satisfy the people who drive the Dempster Highway. I've again asked the department.... If we were to find some additional dollars, I'd certainly like to have the Dempster Highway looked at as one possibility in terms of putting money into it to deal with the dust control.

Just for your information, dust control up there for the North is very expensive. We've estimated it at \$5,000 per kilometre, as opposed to the southern parts of the Northwest Territories, where dust control on gravel is about \$1,500 per kilometre. We have to somehow deal with some of these costs.

I do share the concern with the Member and look forward to working with him in terms of how to deal with this issue.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Minister Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 383-16(2)

IGNITION INTERLOCK POLICY

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on my Member's statement where I spoke about

ignition interlock devices. A constituent from Fort Simpson recently advised me that Alberta is instituting theirs beginning July 1. In the 15th Assembly I did raise it in this House with the Minister of Transportation then. I'd just like to know how much work is being done with the ignition interlock device issue within our government and within the Ministry of Transportation.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised a very good point. The Member has also spoken very strongly in terms of this issue.

Certainly, safety is our number one concern. I want to say that we're working on a program called the problem drivers program. We are looking at implementing this program, building the business case for it, and one of the components is the ignition interlock device. We're coming to the point now where we'd like to see if this program could be implemented in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much. I'm very glad to hear they're seeking not only that but other alternatives. I'd just like to know once again: how soon are they looking at implementing such a program? And do interlock devices require separate legislation, or will they be including that in any amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The ignition interlock device — we certainly want to implement it as soon as possible. Our department right now is building a business case in terms of federal regulations and our Motor Vehicles Act amendments. We're looking at all of this. Hopefully, we'll have this together, and hopefully, we can implement this program as soon as possible.

Certainly, we'll notify and work with all the Members in terms of how soon we can get this device on the road. We look forward to discouraging drinking and driving on public roads for the safety of our people.

Mr. Menicoche: I'm just concerned that if the department puts it off too long and tries to encompass the many, many changes that are contemplated for the Motor Vehicles Act, they'll just push the date back for this. I'm just wondering if they've examined the possibility of doing separate legislation just for this alone.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: With our assessment in putting forward a business case, it is the department's view that if we can do it as soon as possible without other types of amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act, we will certainly do it. We'll look at our existing legislation and look at how soon we can implement this program. I believe we can do it as soon as possible.

Certainly, we'd get back to the Member in terms of putting this program in place right away so that we

will discourage drinking and driving and keep our roads safe.

Mr. Menicoche: If the Minister can provide any of the details he's talking about, or any documentation, that would be helpful to me and my constituents. Certainly, he'll have my support in moving this forward too.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I'd be happy to work with all the MLAs. Certainly, Mr. Menicoche has raised a very important issue regarding our safety and transportation, and it helps us with this issue. I will certainly work with him in terms of this constituent in the Nahendeh riding and this issue. We also offer training for drivers in terms of safety on the road. I will continue working with the Member in terms of providing safety to our travelling public.

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

QUESTION 384-16(2)
ACCESS TO SERVICES
FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I want to continue with the autism questioning. I just want to be clear, to make sure that everything gets on the record so parents can get access for their children for services.

As I highlighted earlier in my questions about the limited ability to receive speech and OT therapy, I wasn't 100 per cent clear on the fact that.... Can parents access funding through the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority to obtain speech and OT therapy in the community, if it's available and in the community to access?

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of parents being able to receive funding from Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority or any authority.

What I'm telling the Member is that parents can receive the services. We still have more speech therapists — or any other specialists — that the children with autism or any other disability need. They're mostly hired by the health authorities. There is a team of people who would work with children and families to provide the services they need.

You have to understand that children with autism come with all sorts of individual and varying degrees of needs. Some children with autism are much more high-functioning than others. Children need different care at different stages of their life, and our health care system and the social service

system are available to intervene as needed by different professionals that can help them.

Mr. Hawkins: Parents are flocking to the province of Alberta, because Alberta sees this as an issue on which they can make significant ground on this disorder by early intervention.

The issue I keep bringing up is the fact of early intervention for speech and OT therapy, which I would prefer to always fall under the umbrella of Stanton Hospital and that leadership, but it can't happen in every case.

When I say "access private services," I want it to be seen that I'm not advocating that's the best or the only result. But it seems to be the only one to access extra service.

Can the Minister describe this team and how many hours are being provided as speech and OT therapy within the Stanton unit so parents can access it?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I am aware that the Alberta government has instituted intensive behavioural intervention programs. It is one of the most aggressive programs in the country, but it's not something that's available everywhere, and the success and merits of that Alberta program are not conclusive.

I do also believe this is an area where the federal government needs to step in to provide some comprehensive national response.

With respect to Yellowknife or the Territories, it is really hard to speak about exactly what services are available to children without knowing exactly who the child is. Autism is not a one-time, one-situation condition. It's something a child and family have to live with throughout life.

What I'm saying is that we have programs available in schools, at hospitals, with rehab teams. Whether they need a psychologist, speech therapist or physiotherapist, the child in need and the family have to.... If the Member wants to give me the name of the person, I'd be happy to look into that, but it is a multi-faceted and multi-stage process that the GNWT provides.

Mr. Hawkins: I'm finally really glad to say that I can agree with the Minister in the sense of this being a federal responsibility. I'm glad the day has come that we both see eye to eye on this issue.

The program provided through the Ministry through Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority goes down to the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities. Right now, as I understand it, there are 14 people on that list providing services only a couple of hours a week. Furthermore, there are 14 on the waiting list.

The issue really is, where is the framework and policy to develop this concept, to make sure we're

providing the best services for families and children with autism? That's really the question: where is that framework, so we can move forward on this issue?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I have worked with parents of children with autism, and I am aware of situations in Yellowknife where certain children with autism have someone with them the entire day at school because that child needs a full-time aide every minute he is in school.

What I'm saying is it's hard to talk about how many hours we provide a child with autism. My answer is: it depends. It depends on the needs of the child as well as what services are available. Children with autism sometimes need.... I don't know; I'm not a professional. I think that's all I can say for now.

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

Mr. Hawkins: The issue keeps coming around to this, which is the framework. We need a framework so we have a baseline to work from. We don't have to look too far — just a little south of us; Alberta — to see what they're doing with their ABA, the Applied Behaviour Analysis, and their IBI, which is the Intensive Behaviour Intervention. Would the Minister work on a framework so we have a model developed on those principles?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Yes, I did indicate in my letter to the Member that we are working on a framework to have a coordinated intervention plan. I look forward to having this framework reviewed with the standing committee members and working to make it more concrete through our upcoming business-development process.

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

QUESTION 385-16(2)
BUILDING CANADA FUNDING
AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITIES

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on a statement made by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs earlier today and on some of the questions posed by my colleague Mr. Krutko.

I need to say that I'm extremely pleased this agreement has been signed. It allows us to go forward and get started on many of the projects we know this territory needs.

Part of the Minister's statement was that some \$140 million was going to critical transportation infrastructure. He also stated the government plans to make \$6.5 million per year available to community government.

My question to the Minister is: is that all the money that's going to community government —

\$6.5 million per year? That's the only funding that's available for community government?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, that's correct. The money will be distributed on an annual basis over seven years. It comes to about \$26.5 million annually. It was decided that \$20 million will go toward transportation projects and \$6.5 million would go toward municipalities.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you to the Minister for the clarification. I guess I need the clarification, then, on the money that is going to the communities.

The first priority is water treatment plants, and I have no problem with that. It then says the balance of the funding will be made available to communities to address their own priority projects. If I could get some clarification on how communities are able to use the \$6.5 million they are going to get annually.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of projects that were left over on our capital plan when we transferred the dollars to our communities. These projects are all in the area of water plants. We have met with the NWT Association of Communities and have discussed with them. They have indicated we should have these projects completed, and that the remainder of the money, as it comes forward, should be distributed to the communities on a formula basis, similar to what we're doing with our capital money and our gas tax money.

There are a number of different areas that have been put forward as national priorities, and those are water and waste water, public transit, highways and green energy.

We really negotiated strongly for flexibility in this agreement. We also have local priorities put in place, and those are in the area of sports and culture, disaster mitigation, solid waste management, local roads and airports. Within these broad categories, each jurisdiction has to then negotiate the details of what projects will come forward.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Minister. It's good information. That was the kind of information I was hoping to hear, the response that I think.... Obviously, he has worked with the communities, and that's the response they want to hear.

To the money that's available for transportation infrastructure. I know we have huge needs in that area, but how will a community get their projects on a list, if there is going to be a list — that famous list we all know about. If the money is being handled through either MACA or Transportation, how are

communities going to be able to indicate the urgency of transportation infrastructure needs other than that of their local roads, which, I gather, come out of their own community funds?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the methodology that is being used right now is to have each community develop a capital plan, an undertaking that has been already started. We require that information as part of our Gas Tax Agreement.

We also have transferred all the capital dollars to the communities, and they now decide what projects they want to see in their communities. It's the same plan, the same capital projections that will come forward and will be utilized as we have the discussion with the federal minister to sign off on community projects. It will indicate what portions of dollars will come from where, and it will also indicate.... We'll have a plan to see which ones come forward. It will be a process we don't expect to be very complicated. Each community will have a plan. Each community will decide what projects. We have the criteria already, so that's how we plan to move forward.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for the information. I'm gratified to hear it, and I think it's going to be a workable process. I guess I would like to ask the Minister: if there are communities that don't feel they have the human resource capacity to develop their own community capital plan, will the department be able to help them to finish off these plans in a timely manner so they can get their priorities known to the department?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, that's a commitment we've already made through the New Deal initiative. It's a commitment we made to all communities — that we would work with them. Some communities, however, have really been able to grab this whole initiative and move forward rather quickly. Others are struggling, and we still have to work with a number of communities. We will continue to do that. We are already doing that with some of the other funding sources that are coming forward.

Of course, there are still a number of challenges we have to continue to work toward solving, and that is in an area of capacity. Especially now that there are large amounts of capital going to each community, we really have to ensure that all the planning and all the legwork is done.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Written Questions

QUESTION 34-16(2) INFORMATION ON POSITIONS AFFECTED BY THE 2008-2009 BUDGET

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written questions are for the Minister of Human Resources. I have two.

- 1) Now that the 2008-09 budget is completed, I would like a comprehensive list of all positions that are being deleted as a result of the budget. As part of this list I would also like to know the following:
 - a) Which position were/are vacant?
 - b) Which positions were filled as of June 16, 2008?
 - c) Which positions were identified for deletion due to sunsetting? and;
 - d) Any other standard information such as department, region and location.
- 2) Can the Minister of Human Resources also provide me with a comprehensive list of all new positions created and approved within the 2008-09 budget? Within this list I would like standard details such as position title, department, division, region and location. As well, I'd like to know the current status of the positions. Specifically, is the position currently filled?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to Item 6 on the order paper.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 6 on the order paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Unanimous consent granted.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much, colleagues. I just wanted to say a special thanks to the pages who come from Fort Liard, Ms. Blair Kotchea and Ms. Tina Klondike. They had a nice long travel over here, and I hope they have good, safe travel home.

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

Written Questions

QUESTION 35-16(2) CONTRACT INFORMATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding contract information with the Government of Nunavut. Please provide the following information in detail for the past three years:

- 1) How many people work in the speech-language pathology and occupational therapy unit; and further, what are the staffing levels historically, noting duration of any vacancies?
- 2) How long has this unit been providing speech and occupational therapy services to the Government of Nunavut?
- 3) Please provide the details of the contract with the Government of Nunavut, such as:
 - a) how often this unit needs to travel;
 - b) how long do they travel for;
 - c) how many staff travel;
 - d) how much money does this contract garner;
 - e) does the Government of Nunavut pay this cost when a bill is submitted;
 - f) what is the timeliness of our invoices; and
 - g) has the Government of the NWT failed to submit invoices in a timely way, or have our bills been disputed or missed?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 10, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have three returns to written questions.

QUESTION 16-16(2) GNWT SENIOR MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE BONUSES

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): First, I have Return to Written Question 16-16(2), asked by Mr. Abernethy on June 2, 2008, regarding Government of the Northwest Territories senior management performance bonuses.

Performance bonuses may be provided to senior managers and those employees with executive managers' contracts in a lump sum payment, an increase to salary, or a combination of the two. A

performance bonus may be granted to an executive or senior manager who demonstrates outstanding job performance and contributes to the achievement of departmental or government-wide objectives.

Performance bonuses have not been awarded yet for the 2007–08 fiscal year. Over the four fiscal years previous to 2007–08, that is fiscal years 2003–04 to 2006–07, the following numbers of executive managers have been employed in each respective fiscal year: 14, 17, 19 and 23.

The number eligible in each year to receive a bonus is 14, 16, 19 and 21. The number of executive managers who received a bonus in each fiscal year is 14, 16, 17 and 20. The number of executive managers who did not receive a bonus in each fiscal year is zero, 1, 2 and 3.

Over the same four fiscal years the following number of senior managers have been employed in each respective fiscal year: 158, 172, 190 and 191. The number eligible in each year to receive a bonus is 145, 164, 169 and 169. The number of senior managers who received a bonus in each fiscal year is 122, 133, 134 and 145. The number of senior managers who did not receive a bonus in each fiscal year is 36, 39, 56 and 46.

QUESTION 18-16(2) CAPITAL PROJECTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 18-16(2), asked by Mr. Krutko on June 6, 2008, regarding capital projects within the Department of Transportation.

All transportation projects identified for funding under the Building Canada Plan have been previously referenced in the NWT Highway Strategy (Investing in Roads), the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan or the 20 Year Capital Needs Assessment. Many of the projects have also been included in the Corridors for Canada, Corridors for Canada II and Connecting Canada funding proposals to the federal government. The highway strategy and subsequent funding proposals have been previously provided to MLAs, community and aboriginal governments for comment and review. Agencies such as the NWT Business Coalition and the NWT Association of Communities were also involved in the development of these strategies.

Consultations on specific projects have also been undertaken with community and aboriginal governments. For example, in developing the Highway Strategy, the Department of Transportation for each proposed highway project established a stakeholder advisory committee comprised of individuals from local aboriginal and community organizations. These stakeholder advisory committees were also complemented by

various Minister/MLA information tours and attendance at a number of aboriginal assembly and regional leadership meetings. Many of these consultations have realized letters or resolutions of support. As many of these projects have long histories attached to them, the department requires further details on which projects and time frames the Member requests supporting documents for. As these projects move forward, further consultations will be undertaken as part of the permitting process.

A mix of class “C” and “D” estimates have been used for the proposed Building Canada Plan projects. Class “C” estimates have been used for proposed projects with timelines early in the Building Canada Plan. These include Kakisa River Bridge, the city of Yellowknife bypass road and the Yellowknife combined services building. Class “D” estimates have been used for all other projects.

QUESTION 20-16(2) WAGE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 20-16(2), asked by Mr. Robert C. McLeod on June 9, 2008, regarding the wage subsidy program.

In 2007–08 a total of 219 employers accessed the wage subsidy programs comprised of Training-on-the-Job, the Youth Employment Program, Oil and Gas, and Apprenticeship Training-on-the-Job.

As of June 11, 2008, there were 365 apprentices in the NWT. Breaking it down by region, there were 40 apprentices in the Beaufort-Delta, 22 apprentices in the Sahtu, 156 apprentices in the North Slave, 123 apprentices in the South Slave and 24 apprentices in the Deh Cho. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document on active apprentices by region and community.

In 2007–08 expenditures for the wage subsidy programs comprised of Training-on-the-Job, the Youth Employment Program, Oil and Gas, and Apprenticeship Training-on-the-Job totalled \$2,060,822.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 11, replies to the opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 20-16(2), I wish to table the following document, entitled Active Apprentices by Region and Community.

Document 72-16(2), Active Apprentices by Region and Community, tabled.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following documents, entitled Building for the Future: Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Annual Report 2005–2006; and NWT Housing Corporation Framework for Action 2008–2011.

Document 73-16(2), Building for the Future: NWT Housing Corporation 2005–2006 Annual Report, tabled.

Document 74-16(2), NWT Housing Corporation Framework for Action 2008–2011, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 15-16(2) APPOINTMENT OF THREE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 23, 2008, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the following individuals be appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories to the Human Rights Commission for the Northwest Territories, effective July 1, 2008:

Ms. Mary Pat Short of the town of Fort Smith, for a term of four years;

Mr. George Collins of the town of Hay River, for a term of four years;

Mr. Yacub Adam of the city of Yellowknife, for a term of four years;

and further, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective dates of the appointments to the Commissioner; and furthermore, that the appointment of Ms. Tammy Rogers of the town of Inuvik be amended to a term of four years.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MOTION 16-16(2) APPOINTMENT OF EQUAL PAY COMMISSIONER

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 23, 2008, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Ms. Nitya Iyer be appointed as Equal Pay Commissioner in accordance with the Public Service Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly; and further, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of the appointment to the Commissioner.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Motions

MOTION 15-16(2) APPOINTMENT OF THREE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS (MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Robert McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

Unanimous consent granted.

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

WHEREAS Section 16.(2) of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Act provides that the Human Rights Commission is composed of such members, between three and five in number, as may be appointed by the Commissioner on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS three of the five commission member appointments will expire on June 30, 2008;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management is tasked with recommending individuals to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation to the commissioner;

AND WHEREAS Motion 2-15(5) appointing Ms. Tammy Rogers of Inuvik as a member of the Human Rights Commission incorrectly made reference to a term of two years as opposed to four years;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the following individuals be appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories to the Human Rights Commission for the Northwest Territories effective July 1, 2008:

Ms. Mary Pat Short of the Town of Fort Smith, for a term of four years;

Mr. George Collins of the Town of Hay River, for a term of four years;

Mr. Yacub Adam of the City of Yellowknife, for a term of four years;

AND FURTHER that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective dates of the appointments to the Commissioner;

AND FURTHERMORE that the appointment of Ms. Tammy Rogers of the Town of Inuvik to the Human Rights Commission be amended to a term of four years.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MOTION 16-16(2)
APPOINTMENT OF EQUAL
PAY COMMISSIONER
(MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS section 40.2. (1) of the Public Service Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint an Equal Pay Commissioner to exercise the powers and perform the duties set out in this Act;

AND WHEREAS the appointment of the current Equal Pay Commissioner, Ms. Nitya Iyer, expires on June 30, 2008;

AND WHEREAS Ms. Iyer has expressed an interest in reappointment for a second term as Equal Pay Commissioner;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management has considered Ms. Iyer's expression of interest and is prepared to recommend her reappointment for a second term;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the Member for Kam Lake, that Ms. Nitya Iyer be appointed as the Equal Pay Commissioner in accordance with the Public Service Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly.

AND FURTHER that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of the appointment to the Commissioner.

Motion carried.

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

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the intent of the Business Incentive Policy (BIP) has been to support the development and growth of the NWT business community and to encourage investment in the North;

AND WHEREAS northern businesses support the NWT economy by purchasing local goods and services, providing jobs and training, and reinvesting their earnings;

AND WHEREAS, in recognition of the higher costs of operating a business and developing new products in the NWT, northern businesses may need preference adjustments to compete successfully and fairly for government contracts;

AND WHEREAS the Cabinet has the authority to waive the Business Incentive Policy in appropriate circumstances;

AND WHEREAS the current Business Incentive Policy is grandfathered under trade agreements including the NAFTA and the Agreement on Internal Trade, which would not permit a new policy of this nature to be brought forward at a later date;

AND WHEREAS business representatives have spoken out in favour of retaining the principles of the existing Business Incentive Policy and in support of a policy that is more reflective of modern challenges while reinforcing and recognizing northern investment in our territory and communities;

AND WHEREAS previous Assemblies have undertaken protracted consultations that have always culminated in the retention of the Business Incentive Policy;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend the government cease considering the elimination of the Business Incentive Policy;

AND FURTHER that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommend the government consider and undertake public discussion on options to revise the policy to better direct it to the benefit of businesses who file their taxes in the North.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. The

honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it. I think the motion really speaks loud and clear to the issue. The fact is that northern businesses work and struggle here in the North to provide a good living, and they need opportunities presented for them. The BIP offers this opportunity and sometimes that competitive edge so they can compete successfully against southern contractors who fly in and take sort of the ripe or the prime best contracts being offered.

It's been my experience that the BIP was developed because at one time, over 20-some years ago, more than 50 per cent of our capital projects and whatnot were going south. That sort of was the development, at least the thinking as to why it's so important to have this to further encourage investment in the North. I've spoken to a number of people in the business community about this, and furthermore I've been contacted by a number of people in the business community about the BIP, and not one single person has said to drop the BIP. What they do recognize is it needs to adjust and maybe have little changes to be modernized, if I may say. I've even heard that people think the BIP should only apply to those who file their taxes in the Northwest Territories. I think that's a really concrete incentive to encourage southern businesses to further invest in the Northwest Territories.

In my time as an MLA I've seen businesses move to the Northwest Territories and establish an office, a presence. They hire people. They mean well in the community. They invest goodwill in the community. That's exactly the spirit and the intent of what the BIP has fostered, and I really agree with that.

I'm going to leave it on one more note and allow further debate by other Members if they so chose. The BIP, to me, truly represents symbolism that our government recognizes and wants to support business. It's easy to say that, but you know what? This is action that proves we support northern business, and we want to see that continue to grow and foster in the North where it belongs and where we really appreciate it.

With that, I'll leave it to other Members, if they so choose to speak to the motion. Finally, I'd like a recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad this motion is being brought forward today. I, obviously, support it. I think we could spend a lot of time and money reviewing the BIP again. In fact,

the BIP does not cost this government very much money.

As Mr. Hawkins said and as the motion says, if we delete the BIP or get rid of it, we will not have an opportunity to get it back. Most companies that are bidding.... Where it's northern company against northern company, a preference or a premium does not even come into play. So in fact, it does not cost this government anything. I think the dollar value that's been attributed to the premium being paid to give Northerners this advantage is somewhere around \$225,000 — really a very small amount of money considering the number of contracts that are awarded by this government.

I am not really interested in seeing the government spend a lot of time and money. This question has been raised almost on an annual basis since I've been a part of this government. We should leave it in place. The risk and the potential downside of getting rid of it is far.... The benefits far outweigh it, for the very minimal cost we actually do pay on a premium. I would encourage Members to support this motion.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief. The motion speaks for itself greatly. I agree with my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen on this. I think what needs to happen is we need to have a look at the BIP, and we don't need to reinvent the wheel. It has been, as Members have mentioned, reviewed numerous times over the years.

What needs to happen is that we need to focus our attention on truly northern businesses — businesses that contribute to the economy in the Northwest Territories. We can't allow companies to be registered with a Business Incentive Policy where a guy is walking around the streets of Yellowknife or Inuvik or Norman Wells carrying a Blackberry or a cellphone, doing business in the Northwest Territories while, meanwhile, they have a workforce in the south — in Alberta or British Columbia, or in New Brunswick, for that matter. Again, I think we need to focus our efforts. We need to find out which businesses are truly northern, and we need to support the businesses here.

My fear if we do away with the Business Incentive Policy is that you'd see a lot of mid-sized companies pack up and leave the Northwest Territories. They would go south, and they would have a guy on the streets here with a Blackberry bidding on contracts, and they wouldn't contribute as much to the local economy. That's a big fear I have with any move to get rid of the Business Incentive Policy.

Again, I support the motion. It seems like, on almost an annual basis, we're up here trying to defend the BIP. Let's do the BIP right. Let's get out there and make it stronger — identify northern businesses so they can succeed and contribute to the northern economy we have here, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, support this motion and encourage my colleagues to support it.

I think a review of the policy would not hurt, to tune it up to truly benefit Northerners. It won't surprise people to hear that I would really see a progressive policy that favours those businesses that use local materials, local energy, local employees and so on.

Our economy goes through dips and dives and rises and heights and so on, and the BIP plays an important role, especially during the lower periods. To do it in right now, just because we happen to have a roaring economy, is not good business.

I will be supporting this motion, and I thank the Member for bringing this forward.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to add a couple of things to this debate. I certainly agree with all of the comments that have been put forward already. I don't feel the BIP should be eliminated at this point. I do believe strongly that it needs to be revised and revamped.

I think one of the things that probably is not in the BIP policy at the moment are differences between large projects and smaller projects and between larger communities and small communities. The economies are very different in the small communities than they are, for instance, in the city of Yellowknife, and I think that needs to be considered.

I am certainly very strongly in support of a revision to the BIP. I don't believe it should be eliminated at this time. I know there's a lot of work that's done on it — and probably on an annual basis, as people have said. Maybe we revise that, but we also should get input from the public. We've had comments already from the NWT Construction Association, and I found that letter to be very informative, with a lot of thoughts put forward in good form.

To that end, I don't think I need to say anything else, but I will be supporting this motion.

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The review of the Business Incentive Policy is laid out in the Member's motion. As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we have to look at how this works for us. The Budget Address identified.... The wording is reviewed and the focus seems to be on elimination, but the process is the elimination of the Business Incentive Policy, particularly its application to capital projects, while maintaining its commitment to local and northern purchasing.

As the Member has noted, this policy is 24 years old. It's not a question of whether the Government of the Northwest Territories will support northern businesses; it's a matter of whether this is the appropriate tool, in its existing form, to stay in place. The fact is, as we found out in the last number of years — and the fact that the Supplementary Appropriation Act was reviewed just yesterday highlights the fact — that the capital program continues to be carried over because we're not getting as much activity in the area of government projects. We would like to see more increased activity in that area in our communities to help get those projects off the ground. The analysis my colleague from ITI will be undertaking will look at consultation about this policy and come back to the Members of this House with what options might be available to us to support the local and northern businesses within our communities.

I think we have to look, as well, at the fact that the private sector that seems to be booming and driving our economy in this day and age does not have that same practice. As a government we continue to have the practice of northern hire, the support of northern contractors and purchasing in the Northwest Territories. We continue to support that, and we'll continue as we go forward.

It is a fact that work has been done on this for quite a number of Assemblies, and we're looking to take that work and dust it off and have another look at how that works in the Northwest Territories. We want to see and continue to support our smaller communities and get some competition and activity happening in those communities.

With that, Cabinet will not be voting on this motion but looks forward to working with the business community, Members of this Assembly and the public to try to come up with an appropriate tool that will continue to see business development in the North. The fact is we know it was a successful program, because many of the companies that started using it 24 years ago are now so successful that they're bidding and doing work in Alberta and have limited their work in the Northwest Territories. We hope to see more businesses grow out of the North like those, but we know we need to have a look at this program and how it supports the business community going forward.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be voting in favour of this motion.

Constituents and businesses in my communities have indicated over and over again that the BIP provides an advantage to those in the communities. It supports businesses in our communities, and it supports the fact that outside businesses are not moving in and taking away opportunities and even jobs from the communities. It does assist our communities. Just once again, I'll be voting in favour of the motion.

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

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be supporting the motion.

Before I give that support, I'd like to mention that this policy is not perfect. We do have some challenges, especially in our small communities. We're not seeing the benefits flowing to a lot of our communities with regard to projects, because of capacity issues and the high cost of running a business in a smaller community versus the larger regional centres, where you have lots of options. I think we have to look at the distribution of this policy and where it is working and where it is not working. More important is realizing that we have a lot of opportunities, but at the end of the day, you cannot have businesses going out of business or having to move because they cannot sustain a workforce or sustain a business by way of the viability of a business and the high cost of operating those businesses.

I think we have to tinker with this policy, but I don't think we should totally eliminate it. I think we also have to work with the First Nations governments, corporations and whatnot and allow them the opportunity to take on some of that work by way of developing the ability to take on this work. A lot of these companies have been developing over the years and have gone out of business or had to get out of those businesses. I think we have to look at what's working and what's not.

I will be supporting the motion subject to some tinkering of the policy.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. I'll allow the mover of the motion some closing remarks. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just in closing I want to say that this side of the House has spoken in favour of this. I certainly appreciate the Premier's point of view, but

the issue really comes down to the fact that, while tinkering's okay and adjustment's okay, if this BIP doesn't evolve, it doesn't need to exist. The thing is, it's not evolving, and that's what we're asking for. We're saying we think it needs to evolve to properly exist, to be implemented out there for the business community so they can access it fairly and reasonably.

It won't take long. Someday I'm just waiting for a Mexico company to bid under the NAFTA agreement, and all of a sudden they're building a school or fulfilling a fancy, lush government contract on consultations or whatnot, and people will be kicking and screaming and wondering what happened.

Deleting or eliminating the BIP takes away that advantage of Northerners supporting Northerners.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

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

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

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

Mr. Speaker: Results of the vote: 11 for, zero against, seven abstaining. The motion is carried.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS it is in the best interest of the child to have, wherever possible, both parents involved in the parenting of said child;

AND WHEREAS the current adversarial process pitting parent against parent with the child in the middle is promoted in legislation like the federal Divorce Act;

AND WHEREAS it would be desirous for the federal government to propose amendments to the federal Divorce Act so that in law and in practice the rights of both parents to due process are

observed in all proceedings and that children benefit from equal parenting from their mothers and their fathers after separation or divorce;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that this Assembly signify its support for amendments to the federal Divorce Act to protect the rights of both parents to be involved in parenting the children;

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know yesterday we had a bit of a go-between with the Minister talking about amendments to the Maintenance Enforcement Act. Part of supporting a motion like this, again, gets back to the children. I believe strongly that both parents should be involved in the upbringing of a child.

If you look around the world, the movement is going to a default system of equal, shared parenting so that both parents in separation and divorce have equal access to children. To me, that's a fundamental right. I believe many rights in this country, Canada... We call ourselves a democracy. I think given our current divorce legislation in this country, the rights of many parents, not just fathers but mothers in some cases, have been trampled on. I believe strongly that we need to be looking at this. It's happening in Australia, in Belgium, in Italy and in Great Britain.

Unless proven otherwise, both parents should have equal access to children. I think when custody is shared, there is not as much animosity between the parents. There are not as many issues with maintenance enforcement, as both share the children and the upbringing of the children. I believe this is fundamental. For the sake of the children of this country, I'm waiting anxiously for this vote to take place and debate to take place in the House of Commons in Ottawa this fall.

I would look to Members of this House to lend our support to the government in Ottawa to open up the federal Divorce Act and make amendments to it so we do have a default to equal, shared parenting in this country, and we get with the program of respecting the rights of everybody. Again, it's for the sake of the children — having both parents in their life. This is something we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the deputy premier to allow Cabinet a free vote on this motion today, and I would request a recorded vote as well.

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

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made a Member's statement on this issue yesterday: equal and shared parenting. There's tons of evidence out there that suggests that children — and that's who this is really about; this is really about the children — benefit from equal access to both parents, to mothers and fathers. They develop stronger relationships with their parents and with others. They do better in school. They're often healthier. This is kind of a no-brainer. We need to be moving down this road. We need to be moving toward equal and shared parenting.

This motion goes to this government saying that we believe and we support equal and shared parenting. As a result, I second the motion, and I will definitely be supporting the motion.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I fully support this motion, and I appreciate the Member for bringing this forward. I think we've all seen experiences around us where cases haven't worked out as they've dreamt upon, where sharing children hasn't always worked out through the courts and they've deemed that one parent should have rights over the other parent. I truly think it's unfortunate that that's happened.

I think every parent has a right to have access to their children. Every parent — willing, of course — has the right to make sure they're there in the lives of their children. For one reason or another, I can't imagine that being the first thought: trying to decide where the children should go and separating access as a normal philosophy or formula for doing business.

You don't have to look too far to see the struggles that parents go through who don't have that type of access to their children. It's demoralizing; it probably leads to depression and probably to a whole school of things. The fact is, they deserve the right to their children. Now, for the children's sake, equally they deserve the right to the other parent who has been stolen from them.

I don't think in any way that the courts may have been thinking it was probably better this way or that way, but the question is: who is putting the children first? That needs to be the principal question every time this situation comes up. I think that relationship is stolen from any child when they're fostered in the situation by saying they go with one parent or the other. They lose that.

Mr. Speaker, the model designed by the courts by pitting parent against parent causes such a caustic atmosphere. They're struggling and saying things maybe they don't mean or shouldn't say or didn't need to say, and in the end they're just fighting for control over the child so they have access. What model is that for the child or children to see? That's not a model we need to be raising our children under.

We need to have a system that says both parents will always have equal rights, both parents will always play a role in the child's life and both parents are recognized as critical to the fabric of their future. That engagement needs to have intervention right at the highest level, and that is our courts, to make that decision early on.

Mr. Speaker, as a parent who shares love for his child with his wife, we struggle very hard to ensure that everything's a balance. As we who are parents all know, in the sense of trying to make life work, it's a struggle on a good day. Can you imagine taking those rights away, and now one parent has to live somewhere else, fostering that relationship? It almost becomes both unbearable and difficult to comprehend. Like I say, I really can appreciate the struggles these parents who don't have access must be going through.

Again, I'll be supporting this motion. I want to thank Mr. Ramsay for bringing it forward and, of course, Mr. Abernethy for seconding it, because it speaks wholeheartedly that these Members, as well as probably others, are fully committed behind those principles of equal and shared parenting of children. I certainly am.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Assembly has expressed interest in protecting the rights of children whose parents are separating or divorcing. However, the Cabinet will be abstaining from the motion that has been brought forward, and I would like to explain why. I will also provide concepts for Members who are not certain whether they should support this or not.

As you know, we do have acts and laws in place within our jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories. First of all, the NWT Family Law supports the principle that decisions should be made in the best interests of the children. The NWT Children's Law Act already states that unless otherwise provided, the father and mother of the child are equally entitled to custody. In the vast majority of cases, having the most contact possible with both parents is in the best interests of the children. This is consistent with the federal Divorce Act, which

expressly supports the principle of maximum contact.

Fundamentally, we are talking about children's rights. Changes to the law that protects those rights can only be supported after careful assessment of what those impacts will be. We have not had the opportunity to make an in-depth assessment of this motion, so as a government we cannot make an informed decision on this particular issue. With that, again, the Cabinet will be abstaining from this motion. Mahsi cho.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion, the honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Mr. Ramsay for bringing this motion forward. We're talking about the best interests of children, and I believe that first and foremost the best interests of children are to be in a home, in a family, where they have parents who are in a committed and long-lasting relationship. However, we know this is not always possible.

When a relationship breaks down, then I think it does become incumbent upon the law and the lawmakers in the process to ensure that children are never used as a pawn or as a weapon of one against the other, because in those types of situations the children are the losers. I think this is very much what this motion is about — protecting children and protecting the rights of both parents. Both parents should have rights. Both parents should have responsibilities that go with those rights, and for that reason I will be supporting this motion.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. I will allow the mover of the motion some closing remarks. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that Cabinet is going to abstain from the vote today, but I thank my colleagues over here who are going to support this motion.

I have seen first-hand, for myself, the devastation noncustodial parents face. Their money might be good enough, but they aren't, and in a country like Canada that is just not good enough. I know the Minister of Justice talks about the NWT Family Law having the best interests of the children at heart, and so does the federal Divorce Act. But if this was the case, why would there be a movement, not just in Canada but across the world, to protect the rights of both parents, specifically fathers? Why would many fathers feel our current system is biased against fathers? Also, it is riddled with false accusations against either side, with no substantiation of those allegations. I think that, fundamentally, is a breakdown in our current system. I believe we do need to fix it.

There was a report commissioned by the Liberal government a number of years ago called "For the Sake of the Children." None of the recommendations in that report have been acted upon. Mr. Maurice Vellecott, MP from Saskatoon-Wanuskewin, is the MP in Ottawa who is spearheading an effort to open up the federal Divorce Act so we can see a move toward equal and shared parenting. What is wrong with equal and shared parenting, where both parents have equal access to the children? It's only fair; it's only just.

Again, I wanted to thank the Members who are going to support the motion that is before us today. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. A recorded vote is being requested.

All those in favour please stand.

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

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

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

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

Motion carried.

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

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

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on June 19, 2008, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to October 1, 2008, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 6, Committee Reports 2 and 3, Minister's Statement 62-16(2), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

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

We have several items to deal with. We have Bill 6, Committee Reports 2 and 3, and Minister's Statement 62-16(2). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen?

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chair, the wish of the committee is to deal with everything you've just listed in that order.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, we'll take a short break and begin with Bill 6.

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.

Prior to the break we agreed to begin with Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act.

BILL 6
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'll ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he has any opening comments. Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to appear before the committee today to review Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act.

The purpose of Bill 6 is to modernize the Residential Tenancies Act, ensure that disputes are resolved more quickly and provide effective remedies to both landlords and tenants. There are also a number of housekeeping items in the bill to correct errors, omissions or outdated references and definitions in the act. Other changes clarify and strengthen provisions to deal with tenants who are involved in illegal activities on rental premises.

These amendments maintain the balance that currently exists in the act between the rights and

responsibilities of landlords and tenants. Bill 6 reflects considerable consultation and discussion with housing organizations, landlords and tenants.

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 will be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time I would like to ask the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, which has reviewed the bill, to make opening comments. Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs met during the week of April 25 to May 2, 2008, to review Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act. Public hearings took place in Fort Resolution, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Yellowknife. The committee would like to thank the Minister's officials and all the witnesses who spoke on the bill.

The clause-by-clause review of the bill was held on June 5. The committee moved two amendments to the bill in response to concerns raised by representatives from the Inuvik Housing Authority. The Minister concurred with both amendments.

The first amendment extends the time for landlords to settle a tenant's damage deposit from 30 to 45 days where there has been significant damage to the rented unit. This change was made in response to concerns that in many communities shortage of qualified workers and material, and travel restrictions due to weather and/or road conditions, can easily delay landlords' ability to determine the cost of repairs.

The second amendment affects public housing leases with fixed terms. The act provides that generally, fixed-term leases become month-to-month leases after the term expires unless the landlord gives the tenant a termination notice. Housing authorities have always been exempt from this rule. Fixed-term public housing leases are not automatically renewed. Bill 6 would remove this exemption so that housing authorities, like other landlords, will have to give 30-day termination notices if they do not want a fixed-term lease to be continued.

The Minister and his officials indicated that during the public consultations, tenants did request this change. The Inuvik Housing Authority advised the committee that they are strongly opposed to this amendment and believe that it interferes with their

ability to administer their leases in a way that suits individual applicants and tenants.

The committee's motion is intended to address some of their concern by removing the requirement for housing authorities to give termination notices for one-month fixed-term leases in order to prevent those leases from being automatically renewed on a month-to-month basis. Housing authorities will still be able to prevent longer fixed-term leases from automatically continuing on a month-to-month basis by providing 30-day termination notices.

Given the concerns and confusion surrounding these amendments, the committee strongly encourages the department to work with the NWT Housing Corporation to provide housing authorities with clear information about the new rules well in advance of the implementation of the act.

The Inuvik Housing Authority also questioned the fairness of the new subsection 68(2), which will allow a tenant facing eviction to raise new issues at the hearing that the rental officer may address at the time of the hearing. This could result in landlords not having the opportunity to prepare responses to new issues raised by tenants. The Minister and his officials advised the committee that the rental officer will be able to adjourn the proceedings in appropriate circumstances to give the landlord preparation time. The provision is an example of the trust placed on the rental officer to conduct fair and impartial hearings and to make objective and reasoned decisions.

Some witnesses expressed concern with the expanded authority that Bill 6 would give the rental officer. In response to questions from committee members about the rental officer's accountability, the Minister and his officials replied that this is achieved through the availability of appeals to the court. The department itself does not consider it appropriate to review or comment on the rental officer's decisions provided contractual obligations are being met.

The committee noted that the act does not require any qualifications of the rental officer and felt that this gap should be addressed considering the power and trust placed in this office. The committee moved an amendment to the bill requiring that the rental officer have experience and an interest in residential tenancy issues and have either five years' experience as a lawyer, five years' experience on administrative tribunals or courts, or reasonably equivalent qualifications. The Minister concurred with the amendment.

Bill 6 includes new provisions that will allow landlords to charge extra security deposits to tenants with pets.

One witness asked about remedies caused by smoking. The Minister and his officials advised that landlords can make not smoking a condition of the lease, although they cannot charge extra damage deposits to smokers. They also confirmed that smoking could, in some cases, amount to interference with the quiet enjoyment of other tenants.

Another witness expressed concern that the provisions of the act applying to land leases for mobile homes are inadequate and unclear. The Minister and his officials advised that the provisions were reviewed and that no amendments were identified at the time but committed to follow up with the rental officer.

During the clause-by-clause review, the Minister also agreed to two minor, non-substantive amendments to the bill. Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 6 as amended and reprinted to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 6. Individual committee members may have questions or comments as we proceed.

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does 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, please. For the record, Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witnesses, please.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I have Janice Laycock, to my left, senior policy analyst; and Janis Cooper, legislative counsel, legislation division.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. At this time I'll open the floor for general comments. General comments on Bill 6. Detail? Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act.

Clauses 1 through 54 inclusive approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole?

Bill 6 as a whole approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 6 is ready for third reading?

Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, approved for third reading.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, witnesses.

As we agreed, the next item we'll deal with is Committee Report 2-16(2), Government Operations Report on the Review of the Auditor General's Report on the NWT Housing Corporation. With that, Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE REPORT 2-16(6)
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT
ON THE NWT HOUSING CORPORATION

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On Friday, May 23, 2008, the Standing Committee on Government Operations presented its Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Public Housing and Homeownership programs.

Mr. Chair, I would suggest we deal with any general comments members of this committee might have on the report before dealing with the seven recommendations it includes.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): On the report? Detail? Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I think the course of action here is that there were up to seven recommendations, and they will become committee motions. I will begin with the first one here, Mr. Chair.

COMMITTEE MOTION 67-16(2)
THAT THE NWT HC TABLE A DETAILED
ACTION PLAN FOR ADDRESSING
AUDIT REPORT FUNCTIONS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Menicoche: I move that this committee recommend that the Minister table a detailed action plan no later than October 2008 outlining how the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will address the recommendations of the audit report.

Furthermore, this committee recommends that this plan outline the following details:

- specific measures for actions addressing each recommendation;
- an explanation of what each of the specific actions addresses;
- progress measures for each action;

- timelines for each action or measure; and
- organizational responsibility and accountability assigned to each specific action.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Menicoche.
Mr. Jacobson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 68-16(2)
THAT THE NWT HC PRIORITIZE ITS
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOCUS
ON PRIMARY MANDATE
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Chair, I move that the committee recommend that the NWT Housing Corporation prioritize its framework for action to specifically address the audit report recommendations while focusing on the primary mandate of reducing the number of NWT households in core need of housing assistance.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Jacobson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 69-16(2)
THAT THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
THE NWT HC PROVIDE PERIODIC UPDATES
ON ACTION IMPLEMENTATION
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommend that the Minister provide periodic updates on progress of the implementation of actions through the status reports to the appropriate standing committee.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 70-16(2)
MONITORING AND SUPPORT FOR
LOCAL HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Abernethy: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommend that in order to deliver the Public Housing programs in a fair and equitable manner and to sustain the programs over time in a cost-effective way, the corporation monitor the

district offices and local housing organizations in order to ensure that policies are implemented, rent is collected and operational and financial controls are in place.

The committee further recommends that specific measures for monitoring and support be tailored to the local housing organization's needs based on risk assessment of their compliance with existing policies, procedures, rent collection and financial management, with the level of practical support, supervision, frequency and detail of these monitoring activities being tailored accordingly;

And furthermore, that the Housing Corporation report on these activities, targets and progress in their action plan and periodic status reports.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 71-16(2)
MONITORING DISTRICT OFFICES AND
EVALUATION OF HOME OWNERSHIP
PROGRAMS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommend that in order to deliver the home ownership programs in a fair and equitable fashion and within economic means, the Housing Corporation monitor this district office to ensure policies are implemented and mortgages are collected.

The committee also recommends that a program evaluation of home ownership programs be carried out to verify how much existing programs contribute toward the goal of self-reliance and the reduction of households with core housing needs; and further, that such program evaluation be ongoing, timely and measurable against specific targets.

The committee further recommends that specific measures for monitoring and support be tailored to the local housing organization's needs based on a risk assessment of the compliance with existing policies, procedures, rent collection and financial management, with a level of practical support, supervision, frequency and detail of these monitoring activities being tailored accordingly.

And furthermore, the committee recommends that the Housing Corporation report on these activities, targets and progress in their action plan and periodic status reports.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Motion's in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 72-16(2)
RISK MANAGEMENT COMPONENT IN
NWT HC STRATEGIC PLAN
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommend that the Housing Corporation include a risk-management component and a strategic plan that identifies and analyzes the risk for the NWT Housing Corporation's plan for specific actions with details addressing the identified risks, include measures to report on the success of the action plan, and evaluate how the risks are mitigated in a timely fashion.

The committee also recommends that a program evaluation of home ownership programs be carried out to verify how much existing programs can contribute toward the goal of self-reliance and the reduction of households with core housing needs; and further that such program evaluation be ongoing, timely and measurable against specific targets.

The committee further recommends that specific measures for monitoring and support will be tailored to the local housing organization's needs based on a risk assessment of the compliance of existing policies, procedures, rent collection and financial management with the level of practical support, supervision, frequency and detail of these monitoring activities being tailored accordingly.

And furthermore, that the Housing Corporation report on these activities, targets and progress on their action plan and periodic status reports.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion's in order. To the motion. Question has been called. Motion is carried.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hawkins.

COMMITTEE MOTION 73-16(2)
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO
CR 2-16(2) TABLED WITHIN 120 DAYS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Hawkins: I move that this committee recommend that the government provide a comprehensive response to the report within 120 days.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion's in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 2-16(2) is concluded?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The next item is Committee Report 3-16(2), Report on the Languages Commissioner's annual report, Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE REPORT 3-16(2)
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE
2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

Mr. Menicoche: On Friday, May 23, 2008, the Standing Committee on Government Operations presented its Report on the Review of the 2006-2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. The report, which includes four recommendations, was read into the record by members of the standing committee on that day. Mr. Chair, I would suggest dealing with any general comments members of this committee might have before dealing with any recommendation.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): General comments? Details? Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 74-16(2)
GNWT REVIEW OF WEB SITE POLICIES
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommend the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct a review of its Web site policies and report back on whether the Web site policies comply with the Official Languages policies, guidelines and legislation.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion's in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 75-16(2)
TRAINING AND REGISTRY OF
INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement a plan for the training and certification of interpreters and translators, and establish a registry of interpreters and translators for all official languages.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hawkins.

COMMITTEE MOTION 76-16(2)
GNWT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS
IN PREVIOUS REPORT
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Hawkins: I move that this committee recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's Report of the Review of the 2005–2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner by addressing the recommendations from the commissioner and the committee in its reply to the present report.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion's in order. Motion's being distributed. To the motion. Question's being called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 77-16(2)
GNWT RESPONSE TO
CURRENT REPORT WITHIN 120 DAYS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories table a comprehensive response to the report within 120 days.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 3-16(2) is concluded?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The last item of the Committee of the Whole today is the Minister's Statement 62-16(2). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 62-16(2)
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS APOLOGY

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I was very happy to hear that our government took the initiative to comment on the events that occurred last week with the apology to residential school victims and survivors that was given by the Prime Minister of Canada. It was very timely, and the feedback over the last ten days of so has led me to believe that.... It was something that was long overdue. It was something that was needed to be heard by all the people who went to residential schools.

I, too, spent many, many years in the residential school system. When I gave my Member's statement last week, I have to admit I was overtaken by emotion. When something like that happens to you, you think back, and all the emotions kind of flow back to you. That's what happened, and I'm sure that happened to many, many people across Canada and throughout our Northwest Territories.

I do believe that the words were sincere. The words had to be heard in order for healing to begin. In order to forgive, there's got to be an apology. I think that's what happened. Once you begin the forgiveness process.... In my healing journey, forgiveness doesn't happen overnight. I believe you've got to keep forgiving and forgiving, and then it becomes easier. The impact of traumatic events that happened to individuals or people or families is never really forgotten. Once you begin the healing process and you hear the words "I'm sorry" and you do want to forgive, you can move on. You can get past that and then start concentrating on yourself — take that event that happened last week and make it a positive for yourself and for your family. I believe that's the direction we want to go.

It's a huge impact. It's like a hundred years old. That's how long this — I want to say — oppression happened, and that's pretty well what it was. Once you get involved in that kind of system, those kind of oppressive states.... Someone I met somewhere along the way — I think it might have been somebody from this House — likened it to the prison camps during the war. The word I heard when I was growing up was "subjugation." Subjugation is kind of like when you have a bug and you put it under your thumb. That's where you keep that bug, and the bug's squirming and doing pretty well what you want. To me, that's what the residential school meant. I went there very, very young, and people all around me — all those people in authority — they were telling me what to do. It affected me throughout my whole life.

It's not only me. This story was repeated 80,000 times throughout Canada, because that's how many survivors are left to this day, and the countless others who have passed on. But it's not only the survivors that it impacts. I was talking with a school principal about four or five years ago, and the principal said our children in our schools today are behaving like they actually went to a residential school, but we know they didn't. That's because behaviours from parents or from the community.... It's instilled and it's pervasive; it's there. Those are the skills that.... That's how we learn. We learn from things around us. So that impact is still there. It changed our lives wholly.

The Prime Minister spoke of an intergenerational gap. That's there. My story is that too. I went there. My grandparents passed away, so I lost a big connection. There was a whole generational gap

there. That's huge, because that affects your language and your culture.

Just in summarizing, Mr. Chair, I just wanted to say it was appropriate that we spoke on it. Many, many Members on this side of the House — our government, where we are the government We spoke, and we understand our people. I'm happy to hear that we'll provide as much support as we can in order to begin this healing process, and I wish everybody well.

As well, that day was very, very emotional. It's a signal that people are ready to let go and move on. We, as a government, I believe, have always been ready and willing to help. I urge the government to continue to provide the resources to do so, because there's still a long way to go in terms of providing a healing ring for our communities and our families out there today. So with that, thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too would like to thank this government for the apology and, more importantly, hearing it from the Prime Minister of Canada. Again, you cannot replace the lives of the young individuals who have lost their lives, either at these residential schools or by way of problems that originate from a lot of these experiences. We're still seeing it in today's society. I think people can't state, Oh well; we can compensate somebody. You can never replace a language, a culture, a way of life.

Again, we talk about a society in the Northwest Territories, and you look at other nations around the world — Africa or other countries of the world — where indigenous people have basically been able to sustain a traditional lifestyle that's still unique to those different regions of the world, because they weren't assimilated. I think you have to look at exactly how unique our aboriginal people are and what has happened to them. There are a lot of strong cultural communities that still retain their culture, their language, their different lifestyles, their ability to sustain themselves on the land and carry out their traditional pursuits. Yet we have other cultures that have lost a lot of those unique values that every society has. By being able to say that you're a Gwich'in or you're an Inuvialuitan, you basically have a cultural background.

I'll use my own example. The Gwich'in culture in Alaska is very traditional. They still retain their language, they still retain their traditional lifestyle, and a lot of them still depend on retaining their connection to the land and their survival on those lands to sustain themselves. Yet in the Northwest Territories we have almost lost our language, and we have a very poor connection to the values of the Gwich'in people. In Alaska they weren't touched by residential schools like the people in Canada.

I think it's important to realize that we, as government, as Northerners, can never lose sight of the effect this has had on aboriginal people. It has affected the mosaic of what the Northwest Territories could have been by way of having seven strong cultural groups, seven strong languages, seven strong unique aspects of how people were able to survive, maintain their lifestyle in the Northwest Territories and be able to celebrate those groups of people. I think, as a government, we still have an obligation and a responsibility to find ways of working with those people who have survived residential schools.

Mr. Menicoche asked why students today are still acting like they're in residential school. One thing that was paramount in regard to people who are having problems today with alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, physical and emotional anger.... You can trace a lot of these things back to their great-grandparents. A lot of their great-grandparents were the ones who felt the bulk of residential schools by being removed from their home at the age of five. You never got to go back to your home communities to see your parents, see your siblings and see your relatives until you were 12. I think you have to put yourself in the shoes of those young children — to be removed at that age and not have an opportunity to see your parents, your brothers, your sisters, for seven years. That's the reality of what the residential school has done to our people.

Like I stated, it's going to take a while for us to really pinpoint the problems that residential schools have caused — but again, the element of being able to put your thumb on the problem is to do a mosaic of your family tree. You can ask: Why is it that there's violence in my family? Why is it that there's anger in my family? Why is it that we do not trust people, from the police to the justice system to teachers? I think a lot of this has to do with that experience, which has been with us for some time. It is going to take work to get around that.

As a government, we do have an obligation to do everything we can to deal with these issues that are still practiced today: socially, economically. Look at the health statistics; look at the social statistics; look at our judicial statistics. Why is it that 85 per cent of people in jails in the Northwest Territories are aboriginal people, yet they make up 50 per cent of the population? Why is it that the health standards for aboriginal people are lower than for other Canadian citizens?

We cannot assume that by simply making an apology everything is made right. We do have a lot of work to do to improve that. More importantly, we have a lot of healing to do by way of governments, the churches, the communities and our families and the next generation of aboriginal children.

If we do not deal with this issue today, it will carry on to the next generation and seven generations

forward. It's something we can't take lightly. As a government, we have had an apology. The question is: how real is that apology? Is there going to be a difference in attitude? Is there going to be a difference in how we deal with the social issues that still affect aboriginal communities and aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories and also in the rest of Canada?

I, for one, know that a lot of these issues stem from that experience. But again, people are trying to retain their language; people are trying to retain their cultures; people are making an attempt to deal with the social fabric of residential schools on our communities. As government, we have to realize that we have to put more focus, more emphasis.... I know people don't want to hear about programs, but that's what it's going to take. If that means counselling programs, rehabilitation programs.... In light of institutional process, just look at what happened to people in regard to the Second World War, in regard to what is happening in other countries in the world when oppression takes hold of a society. That is nothing different from what we've done here in Canada and nothing different from what has happened to the residential school survivors in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, I just would like to request that the government not lose sight of this issue. It has to be dealt with, and we in government have to change the attitudes of our society and, more importantly, our bureaucracy and the system of government. We have to take down those barriers that have kept people entrenched in a system that has destroyed the lives and the culture of our First Nations people. With that, thank you very much.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hadn't really planned on saying too much, because I'd spoken to the apology during my Member's statement. But listening to David and Kevin speak, I was thinking about.... Since the apology, I've been reading articles in the newspaper. One in particular that caught my attention was an article in the *Edmonton Sun*. It wasn't the actual article that caught my attention; it was some of the letters to the editor. I couldn't believe the ignorance of some people, yet, in this country, making comments toward the aboriginals and the apology and the compensation and what they went through. I could not believe how ignorant some people still are as to the plight of aboriginals.

Most aboriginals didn't want to go to residential school. They didn't ask to be taken from their homes. They didn't ask to be beaten when they spoke their language. They didn't ask for all of this. So that ignorance shouldn't be directed toward the aboriginals. That ignorance should be directed to

the people who did that to the aboriginals. But no, it's not, and that's what really upset me.

I've seen a few letters to the editor in a couple of the papers, and I honestly, to this day, could not believe how ignorant some people in this country still are. I hope there is none of that sentiment here in the Northwest Territories. I really hope that, because, like I said before, we didn't wish this on ourselves. A lot of the old-timers were threatened. They had to send their kids to school; otherwise, they'd go to jail. They did whatever they could.

I think this whole experience, if I can call it that.... I was one of the fortunate few, as I said in my Member's statement; I only spent a few months. But I've been hearing stories from a lot of the Members. I know a lot of people who have been in hostel for, basically, their whole lives. I think this is a real testament to the fact that, as hard as they tried.... They bent and they bent and they bent the aboriginal people, but they didn't break them. It's not going to happen again, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much, Mr. Robert McLeod. Any other speakers? Seeing none.... Premier Roland, would you have any response to the comments we've had in response to yours?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Members for their comments on this. It was indeed a day in the history of Canada to be remembered. The fact that the Prime Minister of Canada — a present-day Prime Minister — apologized on behalf of the people of Canada for the actions of a government in a direction and a policy of assimilation.... I believe that apology to be a sincere one for aboriginal people across the territory and the country of Canada. We as the Government of the Northwest Territories felt we needed to recognize that.

As we've heard Members say, there are still a lot of things that people are going through in the Northwest Territories around this matter. It comes up in many discussions yet, and I'm sure it will continue for some time. But it has now opened the door, as some Members have pointed out, to a healing process that can proceed. There are many people who would move ahead in life but hit a certain point and seem to almost collapse or fall into an old pattern. I see that in the lives of individuals — in many of us who did go to a residential school and saw a different side of life and longed to be home.

I was one of the fortunate who only spent a couple of years in a residential school. But as Mr. Krutko said, there are some who spent their whole educational life, from kindergarten to graduation, and some even longer, in facilities away from home. We, of a younger generation, didn't experience the level of difficulty — putting it that kindly — that some of our elders had gone through

in the first days of the residential school and the standards that were in place at that point.

It was something we felt we needed to recognize. Indeed, to see the importance — when we're in a facility or an Assembly like this — to see what happened, and to see our national aboriginal leaders as part of the ceremony, as part of the parliamentary session and sitting there formally as a part of that.... It is a rare occurrence that non-parliamentarians would take part in a process that involves the House.

Mr. Chairman, it is for us a day to remember, a day to turn the page and look toward the healing that can occur, to recognize the terms that we use, as well, how we describe ourselves as people in the Northwest Territories.

One of the things we had pointed out and the tone we used was in the recognition of our aboriginal peoples, all aboriginal peoples. In the term of the day they were called Indians. We in the Northwest Territories now call them Dene, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Tlicho. There are also Inuvialuit, Inuit and Métis people. We are all affected by this; we are all a part of it.

It is something that we as the Government of the Northwest Territories felt we needed to recognize: the importance of that day in sending a message and accepting that and hoping that now the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories can see the page turn and the door open to a journey of healing.

The memory will always be there, but we'll also now have the memory that there was a sincere apology by the Government of Canada, by the Prime Minister, who spoke quite clearly to that. I'd like to recognize it again, and I'd like to thank Members who spoke to this in their Members' statements in this forum.

As we know, there are times in life when we speak to issues that draw back a lot of memories, some of them not so good, and they can be emotional. To share that with the Assembly and share that with the people of the Territories is important even in that step, so I thank Members for speaking to this.

Many of us are looking forward to the journey of moving ahead. As well, we would like to recognize the fact that the next phase of the journey is also open to people across Canada, and that is the reconciliation journey that is starting to happen and will travel across the country.

One other thing, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that those of us who are here — and we've heard Mr. Krutko speak to it — were able to hear that for ourselves, to hear that apology made, but there are many who were not able to hear it. Those of us who

were here to hear that message can share that in our prayers for those who have left us and are in a better place. That is one of the things we get to recognize and to bring some healing to our own families in that way.

I'd like to thank Members for speaking to it, and let's not be afraid to share.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much, Premier Roland. Any other speakers?

Does the committee agree that Minister's Statement 62-16(2) is concluded?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. As Chair I'd like to recognize that National Aboriginal Day is the day after tomorrow. It's an opportunity for all of us to get out and do some of the sharing that the Premier mentioned and the celebrating of our aboriginal people and their cultures. I hope to see you out there.

Does the committee agree that that concludes the business before the Committee of the Whole? Is there a motion? What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: I move we report progress.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): I will rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

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

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act; Committee Report 2-16(2); Committee Report 3-16(2); and Minister's Statement 62-16(2) and would like to report progress, with 11 motions being adopted. Committee Reports 2 and 3 and Minister's Statement 62-16(2) are concluded, and Bill 6 is ready for third reading.

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Third Reading of Bills

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 6.

Unanimous consent granted.

BILL 6 AN ACT TO AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, be read for the third time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 6 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, read a third time.

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

BILL 5 AN ACT TO AMEND THE MAINTENANCE ORDERS ENFORCEMENT ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, be read for the third time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 5 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, read a third time.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Bill 18 has had third reading.

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

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

BILL 12 AN ACT TO AMEND THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, be read for the third time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 12 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, read a third time.

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

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (Hon. Tony Whitford): M. le Président, M. le Premier ministre, messieurs et mesdames les députés, mesdames et messieurs, friends, mes amis.

It is indeed my pleasure and privilege to be back here in your company in this House today.

Members, I know you were advised earlier today of the passing of former Member, Speaker and Minister Michael Ballantyne. It was my pleasure and my honour to have served with Mr. Ballantyne during the 11th and 12th Legislative Assemblies. He played a pivotal part and role in the evolution of this institution and the strengthening of our unique style of consensus government. I express my deepest and most sincere condolences to his wife, Penny, and to their three children during this difficult time.

Now, if I may, since we met in February I have attended many events throughout the Northwest Territories as your Commissioner.

During the Arctic Winter Games, for example, in March, I had the pleasure of escorting one of our former Commissioners, Mr. Stuart Hodgson, to Behchoko for a visit with the chiefs, the elders and residents of the Tlicho region, people he had the pleasure of working with as the Commissioner. It was an honour to see Mr. Hodgson again and to welcome him back to the Northwest Territories.

In April I travelled to Inuvik to take part in the special events marking the visit to the Beaufort-Delta by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, our Governor General. While in

Inuvik Her Excellency presented the Northern Medal to Nellie Cournoyea. Nellie is a most worthy recipient of the Northern Medal. Her commitment, her dedication and tireless work for the people of her region and for all Northerners is admired, respected and greatly appreciated.

While in the Delta I drove the ice road to Aklavik, where I met and had lunch with the elders at the Joe Greenland Centre and had a tour of the Moose Kerr School. I was very impressed with the beautiful artwork and ethnic artefacts and the students' paintings that were on display in the school, which I know are very inspiring to students, to staff and to visitors alike.

I was very pleased to have been invited to attend the grand opening of the Gwich'in Wellness Centre. Gwich'in President Fred Carmichael spoke with passion about the need for the Wellness Centre to be a cornerstone of healing, wellness and personal growth for all people.

I am also pleased to convey to you that I heard during the Arctic Winter Games from the Prime Minister's office inviting me to remain as your Commissioner for another two years and to complete the full five-year mandate. I want to thank the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Members of this House and the Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly, as well, for the confidence you have placed in me.

I am honoured to stay on as your Commissioner, and I look forward to continuing to serve the people of the Northwest Territories to the best of my ability in my role as your Commissioner.

During my remaining time as Commissioner I have set yet another personal goal I hope to achieve, and that is to travel along all of the highways in the Northwest Territories and to visit those communities that are along them.

My next official road trip will be next week to attend the Deh Cho Annual Assembly in Kakisa.

Also, I have been invited by the Town of Hay River to take part in the Canada Day celebrations, so I will drive that highway as well.

Now, the biggest trip I have set is for July, when I will drive the Dempster Highway to Inuvik to attend the 50th anniversary homecoming of the Town of Inuvik. That trip, I am sure, is to be both a journey through time as well as through some of the most beautiful country in Canada, and one I am most excited to make.

You see, back in 1959 I worked as a welder and a steel cutter during the summer months for Dominion Bridge of Canada on the utilidor system and the water treatment plant at Hidden Lake — which I'm proud to say is still standing — in what

was at the time known as East Three, now today known as the town of Inuvik.

Over the past several weeks I have attended convocation ceremonies at several of our high schools and two of the Aurora Colleges in the Territories. We should be very proud of the achievements of all of our students, who have worked so hard to further their education and to make a better life for themselves and their families.

Assent to Bills

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (Hon. Tony Whitford): Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

Bill 4, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008

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

Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act

Bill 7, Securities Act

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008

Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act

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

As we adjourn from this House, I wish you all safe travels home and a busy and productive summer as you continue to work for the people of your constituencies and for all the people of the Northwest Territories.

I also wish you a happy Aboriginal Day the day after tomorrow, and I hope you will participate in some of the many activities your communities will be sponsoring. I look forward to seeing you all in October.

Thank you, mahsi cho, quyanainni, and merci beaucoup.

Applause.

Mr. Speaker: Colleagues, today marked the last appearance in the House for our Law Clerk, Mr. Glen Arthur Boyd. Mr. Boyd has served the Board of Management, the House and its Members as Law Clerk for the past two years. His counsel through some difficult files was greatly appreciated and greatly valued.

Mr. Boyd has accepted a position as counsel for the federal Department of Justice, effective this summer. Members, please join me in expressing thanks to Mr. Boyd for his fine services to this institution.

Applause.

Mr. Abernethy: Colleagues, before we proceed to Orders of the Day, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the work of all Members during the last five weeks. It has been a challenging session in many ways, with difficult decisions being debated and decided in the unique manner that defines consensus government.

It has also been an exciting time for the Assembly, as we introduced during this sitting both our Legislative Assembly television network and the self-guided audio tours of the Assembly in our official languages.

As we leave here today, I know you are all looking forward to finding some time this summer to attend and participate in summer assemblies, continue your work for and with your constituents, and spend some of this all-too-short season with family and friends.

As we all know, the work of Members does not end when this House adjourns. However, I urge all of you to make some time to connect with those you love and enjoy this special time in the North. A perfect opportunity to do this is on June 21, when Canadians all across this country are invited to celebrate National Aboriginal Day. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding achievements and to celebrate the diverse cultures of our aboriginal, Métis and Inuit citizens. We are all fortunate to celebrate this special day, chosen to coincide with this summer's solstice in the land where the sun will shine on those achievements long after it sets in other parts of the country.

Following on the heels of National Aboriginal Day is Canada Day. Please try to take some time to acknowledge and celebrate our special northern heritage and our country. We have so much to be proud of and thankful for.

I would like to take a moment to thank the pages who have served us in this House during this sitting.

Applause.

I would especially like to recognize Chevy Beaulieu, a page from Hay River North — my riding — who was here. Unfortunately, he had to catch the plane home a little bit earlier, but I would like to acknowledge the work he has done here for us.

I also extend appreciation to all the pages who have assisted us during this session.

Thank you, colleagues. Now, Mr. Clerk, Item 23, Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, Orders of the Day for Wednesday, October 1, 2008:

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until October 1, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

House adjourned at 5:38 p.m.