



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Great Slave)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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(Frame Lake)

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Wednesday, October 1, 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, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland.

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker's Opening Comments

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber as we resume the second session of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

I trust you have all taken the opportunity during the summer recess of the House, and amid your constituency, committee and Ministerial work, to enjoy time with family and friends. Some of you may have enjoyed time out on the land or helped in celebrating special events in your communities. Some of you may have been fortunate enough to visit with distant family. However you chose to spend your time this past summer, I trust that you are rested and eager to resume our work in this Chamber.

One of my pleasures since we last met has been to travel once again with the Mace of the Northwest Territories, this time to the community of Fort Smith. The Mace continues to elicit awe and pride in young and old alike as residents of the Northwest Territories are given the opportunity to see this beautiful symbol of our land and our people.

I would like at this time to take the opportunity to extend the condolences of the Assembly to those communities that have lost loved ones and leaders over the summer. We suffer these losses together, and our thoughts have been with you.

As you know, Members, the Assembly introduced its television broadcasting network during our last sitting. We will have interpreters and will be recording three official languages plus the language of the floor each day during the sitting. The Assembly can then choose one of the recorded languages to accompany the rebroadcast of our proceedings in each community. We are looking forward to providing interpretation in all 11 official languages, in turn, during this sitting.

Members, as you are aware, we are in the midst of a federal election campaign. I wish to remind all Members of your duty and obligation to uphold the principles and integrity of consensus government and to refrain from entering into partisan debate on the floor of this Assembly.

I will close with my customary request, colleagues, that we work together, as always, in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories and that we work with dignity and respect for the institution, for each other and for our constituents.

Colleagues, it is now my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

"Dear Mr. Speaker,

"I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passages of Appropriation Act Infrastructure Expenditures, 2009–2010 and Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, 2008–2009 during the second session of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

"Yours Truly,

"Anthony W.J. Whitford, Commissioner"

Thank you, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 80-16(2)
SESSIONAL STATEMENT

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to speak to you today at the resumption of the second session of the 16th Legislative Assembly. It provides an opportunity to take stock of the busy months we have had and to discuss our directions for the future.

You will recall that together as Members of the Assembly we identified major goals for our great territory:

- A strong, independent North, where Northerners make their own decisions and chart their own course;
- An environment that sustains Northerners today and into the future;
- Healthy and well-educated people with bright futures and the skills they need to benefit from all the opportunities our territory will provide;
- A diversified economy providing jobs, business opportunities and prosperity for families and communities;
- Sustainable, vibrant and safe communities where people can build their futures;
- An effective and efficient government that sets the right priorities and gets the job done.

The government's plan to pursue those goals remains unchanged. We are moving forward with our plan in a way that develops the natural resources of our territory while respecting the values our people have for the land and the environment.

Our plan began in February, when I laid out the government's five strategic initiatives:

- Building our future through a focus on our children and youth and by promoting healthy choices and supporting families and seniors.
- Refocusing government to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in how we operate and how we deliver programs and services.
- Reducing the cost of living to help Northerners achieve a better quality of life, and to help grow and diversify our economy.
- Managing this land by finding the right balance between development and protection of our land and resources.
- Maximizing opportunities in the NWT by opening the door to new developments and improving the quality of education and training so that Northerners can take advantage of new jobs and new economic growth.

Lead Ministers have been assigned to work on each initiative, and they look forward to updating Members on their activities during this session. These updates will provide details on the annual spending of over \$1.2 billion in social program areas, economic development, and infrastructure that contribute to the overall quality of life in the Northwest Territories.

I have said these five strategic initiatives would be the focus of our efforts and that they would guide the government's actions and investments as it

works toward building a stronger, self-sustaining Northwest Territories and fulfilling the vision of this Assembly.

We followed that with Budget 2008, which backed up our strategic initiatives and solid investments. We took steps to align our budget with our strategic initiatives so that appropriate resources were directed to achieving our vision. We also took steps in Budget 2008 to establish a strong, sustainable fiscal foundation. We made some tough choices.

Even though we are enjoying a time of prosperity in the Northwest Territories, we knew our spending growth was not sustainable in the long term. Our expenditures were growing faster than our revenues, and we sensed the possibility of economic volatility, of financial turmoil ahead. As I said when we introduced Budget 2008, financial ripples can become dangerous waves.

We saw the need to get our budget under control while investing in our key initiatives so that we could protect the NWT's financial security while building its great future. Our choices were prudent, and we had foresight in our budget, because those dangerous waves have begun.

Now North American and world financial markets are under strain. Stock markets everywhere have had roller coaster rides. There is a lot of confusion and uncertainty out there, and NWT residents and businesses will be affected. So it's more important than ever that we stay on track, that we keep a firm hand on the rudder, that we stay focused on our goals and that we continue to work our plan. Now is the time to remain steady in our efforts to secure the futures of Northerners.

Our plan is prudent and measured. It will improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. It will prepare us for future growth, and it will generate benefits for businesses and consumers alike.

We will continue our efforts to refocus government so that it works better for Northerners and works toward our vision. This means ensuring that government programs and services are achieving their results in efficient ways. It also involves reforming key GNWT boards so that they deliver services effectively and accountably to Northerners. We will also continue to manage government expenditures so that we have a strong fiscal foundation on which to build.

On an ongoing basis we will identify areas for financial improvement — ways we can do things more efficiently and free up dollars. We will also identify new sources of revenue through consultation with Northerners about future revenue options, including potential for growth of our population. We must ensure that the dollars we identify are reinvested wisely, in ways that align

with our major initiatives and help Northerners take advantage of the opportunities our territory offers.

Devolution and resource revenue sharing also play a role. Authority over NWT lands and resources remains a key priority of this government and a cornerstone of our strong future. Recently I have made a substantial proposal to the federal government to bring discussions on devolution and resource revenue sharing to a successful conclusion for Northerners. The proposal offers an infrastructure partnership with Canada as an integral component of an overall devolution and resource revenue sharing deal. We must remember that resource revenues are not the panacea that will solve our fiscal challenges and meet all of our fiscal needs overnight, but they will be an important part of our future. I look forward to discussing this topic with the Prime Minister shortly after the federal election.

There has been a lot of talk about the North over the last number of months. More and more Canadians are realizing that the future of the North is vital to the future of Canada and North America. They are realizing that the North holds vast potential for exploration and development. Greater development in the North offers many benefits to both Northerners and Canadians as a whole. It raises our standard of living and provides additional revenue to the GNWT to help fund important programs and services for Northerners, and it builds a stronger NWT, helping to assert Canadian sovereignty.

We've got incredible resources here. We have diamonds and other minerals, with more to be found. We have rivers and lakes that offer incredible hydro potential. We have arts and crafts and a unique, rich culture we want to share with visitors to the NWT, and we have oil and natural gas, which the world increasingly needs. We're investing in the skills and abilities of Northerners to help realize the promise of those resources. Opportunities for Northerners to apply their trades. Opportunities for northern businesses to sell their goods and services. Opportunities for aboriginal investment. Opportunities to partner in our great future.

When the Prime Minister visited Inuvik in late August, I was encouraged. The Prime Minister has shown a welcome level of interest in the North that we have not seen in a long time from federal governments. He has helped put northern issues back on the national radar, so I expected to hear a great deal about seizing our opportunities.

But let me be clear: it is going to take more than an icebreaker and some geo-mapping to assert Canadian sovereignty over the North. It's going to take more than well wishes to develop our northern resources.

In addition to naming a ship after former Prime Minister Diefenbaker, we need to bring light to his vision. We need to build those roads to resources. We need to grab hold of the opportunities on offer, invest in them and turn them into realities. In short, we need to unlock the incredible energy of the North: the energy beneath the ground and sea, the energy flowing through lakes and rivers and the energy of our people, communities and businesses.

When it comes right down to it, that's what our strategic initiatives are all about. Obviously, the number one way to unlock the energy of the North is to responsibly develop our vast oil and natural gas resources as soon as possible to the maximum benefit of Northerners.

At one time we considered our North to be isolated and remote, insulated from national and global events and issues, but it's a new world now. We know climate change is having an impact here in the North. The ice road season is getting shorter. Permafrost is melting.

Last month the Canadian Ice Service announced that the northern deep water route through the Northwest Passage is open once again. It's only the second time in recorded history. The first time was last year.

This summer Canadian scientists revealed that the ancient ice shelves of Ellesmere Island have been disappearing rapidly. The Arctic is becoming more open and accessible due to melting sea ice — more open to shipping, more open to exploration activity and more open to international interests.

When he refers to Canada's northern lands and resources, Prime Minister Harper says we need to "use it or lose it." We all agree on this. Let's use it.

The timing couldn't be better for projects like the Mackenzie Gas Project. Energy prices are strong. We've got rising worldwide demand for resources. North America is increasingly turning to natural gas as a cleaner alternative. The Arctic is becoming more accessible, and countries are competing for its resources. We're sitting on trillions of cubic feet of natural gas that everybody wants. It's time to get a deal finalized and get the Mackenzie Gas Project built.

The Americans have figured this out, already establishing their business case. From a regulatory perspective the Mackenzie gas pipeline has an encouraging head start over the Alaska pipeline. But the business side of the Mackenzie Gas Project still isn't nailed down.

There are outstanding ownership questions. There are economic questions. There are cost concerns. Every day we debate, every day we wait is a day of progress lost. Meanwhile, we will take the necessary steps here in the NWT to prepare for the

finalization of a deal so that when the time comes, we are ready to move forward.

We can also unlock the energy of the North by pursuing greater hydro development. We've got incredible hydroelectric power potential in the North. Our rivers and lakes have the potential to generate an additional 11,500 megawatts of hydro power. To put that in perspective, Quebec's James Bay Project generates just over 16,000 megawatts.

Developing this great resource can help satisfy the power needs of the Northwest Territories, including major industrial users, and help stabilize the cost of living for our residents. Extra power could be exported for use in other Canadian provinces. This will help more Northerners use hydro for their power needs instead of other costly fossil fuels, helping reduce the cost of living. It will help satisfy the growing power needs of other provinces, and it will help all Canadians lower greenhouse gas emissions and address our climate change objectives.

The NWT has the potential to become a clean energy leader of this country — hydro power, biomass and wind energy — and, at the same time, generate new jobs and opportunities for Northerners and reduce their costs of living. We intend to invest significantly in these areas.

Large-scale hydro projects have the greatest potential to make an impact. In the 2008 budget the government made investments to advance work on the Taltson project, and work is proceeding on this project.

But we will also explore additional opportunities in hydro development. This includes mini hydro projects, which could help power smaller communities, and modernization of hydro transmission facilities can help more Northerners take advantage of hydro. The potential is exciting.

But given our limited tax base we don't have the fiscal capacity to develop these hydro projects all on our own. To unleash this hydro potential, we'll need the creativity, the innovation and the capacity of the private sector as a key partner.

We'll be searching for the right partnership opportunities that can help us realize our hydro goals and result in positive, lasting benefits for Northerners. The federal government will also play an important role here. It is critical for us to make the case for the right investments in NWT hydro development.

Finally, we unlock the energy of the North by investing in the potential of Northerners, northern communities and northern businesses by connecting them with great opportunities, by improving their quality of life and by building a strong, self-sufficient Northwest Territories.

I realize the concerns Northerners have right now and the financial pressures they face. Rising costs of services and utilities are creating challenges for many Northerners and their families. The recent turmoil in world markets is adding to the concern. Many are worried about what it will mean for Canada, for the North and for their own finances. Northerners need to know they'll be able to obtain the services they need. Reducing the cost of living in the North is more important than ever.

In the longer term greater hydro development will help bring down power bills, and the development of the Mackenzie Gas Project will help expand access to natural gas. This will help Northerners transition away from higher cost fuels.

But in the short term the government needs to look at ways of helping Northerners with the cost of living. As the government provides nearly \$140 million in direct subsidies to lower the cost of living, it is increasingly important that we deliver this money in the most effective ways possible.

The government has begun a review of our electricity rate structure to better understand its impact on the cost of living. We intend to come forward with options in the next business planning cycle to promote energy conservation, rate fairness across the system and reduced costs to Northerners. These investments and actions help ensure that Northerners and their families remain strong and stable so that they have the means to contribute to our great territory.

Infrastructure also plays a major role in reducing the cost of living and improving the quality of life for Northerners. Members of the Assembly have heard me say this before: it's time to modernize our infrastructure, especially our transportation corridors, to improve connections between our communities, to improve the connection between the North and the South, to improve the connection between the Northwest Territories and the world.

Building modern all weather transportation is essential for our future prosperity — roads and bridges that can be used year-round by our citizens, by tourists and by business and industry. This will take partnership between the Government of the Northwest Territories, the federal government and the private sector. We will be exploring the creation of those partnerships so that we can build our own roads to resources and help foster new opportunities for our residents and businesses. We will also look at ways of improving the delivery of that infrastructure.

In the recent budget we announced investments of \$180 million in public infrastructure, including community infrastructure projects. It is important that these and future investments are made

effectively so that Northerners see the greatest benefit from all these investments.

Mr. Speaker, our great territory continues to have a bright future, and a future that offers great potential and prosperity. I know during this session we will do important work on behalf of Northerners — work that contributes to a better quality of life for northern families, keeps national attention focused on northern issues and builds a stronger NWT to help strengthen our great nation. Quyanainni.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Before we go any further, colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a former Member of the House. Ms. Lena Pedersen is in the House.

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO CONSTITUENTS ON THE PASSING OF FAMILY MEMBERS

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start by giving my sincere condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the Nunakput riding and the Beaufort-Delta this past summer.

To the Kisoun-Allen and Hind families of Inuvik, who lost well-respected elder Mr. Victor Allen, Delma Kisoun and daughter Asta Kisoun-Hind, and the Shingatok family, who lost Isaac Shingatok of Inuvik. A well-respected elder, again, was lost with the passing of Billy Day from Inuvik. To the Meyook family, who lost Sara Meyook, a well-respected elder from Aklavik. I'm really going to miss her stories every time I see them. To the Green family, who lost son David Green Jr. To the Ruben family with the passing of Cindy Ruben. Condolences go to Edward and Mabel and family.

To His Worship Mayor Ray Ruben with the passing of his wife, Bella Rose Ruben. Last session we had recognized her in gallery; she was down for a visit to the Carpenter family with the loss of their baby, Carter Carpenter, this past summer. Also, to the Steen family and to my auntie Betty Elias, who lost their son Waylon Steen in an accident this summer. I offer condolences to the Ovayuak family with the passing of Peter Ovayuak, and to the Nasogaluak family, who lost Dora Nasogaluak, who was a good friend.

My deepest sympathies go to the families who lost loved ones. My thoughts and prayers are with you for you and your loved ones. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED TAXATION INITIATIVES

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are back. It is October 1, 2008. We are on the threshold of another northern winter. Something largely on the minds of almost every Northerner is the almost certain increase in the cost of living. News reports tell us that the cost of food is going up. Demand on a global basis exceeds supply, and prices will reflect these realities.

The price of crude oil is volatile, and we are vulnerable to economic issues far beyond the reach of our control. Home heating fuel and gasoline have seen record prices in recent weeks. In the North we are particularly affected, given our need to travel to regional centres for services and our need to import almost all of our food and supplies. There is a general rate application before the PUB for a 19 per cent increase in power rates, which will affect all of our communities and residents.

Although we speak longingly of recruiting and maintaining a strong northern workforce in the private and public sectors, the fact is that people, including Northerners, have lots of options as to where they live and work. We saw a net decrease in the population of the NWT according to our last census. This spells a decrease in transfer of funds from Canada as it relates to population. The U.S. and Canadian markets, and all markets for that matter, have been under extreme pressure related to the credit crises, and people are concerned about their investments that are intended to sustain them in their retirement.

With all of this as a backdrop and the many things that could be done to show leadership and give Northerners confidence in their government — in politics they say timing is everything — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask: what are we doing? Why are we expending time and energy looking for new ways to increase taxes?

I have a question for our Premier and Finance Minister. Is it possible, by considering increased or new taxes, to be any further out of touch with the realities of the Northerners we claim to represent by embarking on this dialogue at this time?

Not to end this on a completely negative note, Mr. Speaker, we have oil, gas, minerals, cultivatable land, wildlife, fresh water, fish, forests. We need to look for every way possible to help our people help themselves. We are arguably the richest place left on this planet Earth, yet we are talking about how much we spend on direct subsidies to people. We need to help people to help themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about a strong and independent North, and we need, as a government, to show some leadership in some small measures to help attain that.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED TAXATION INITIATIVES

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back to my colleagues. I am excited to be back in the House speaking about the issues that are important both to my constituents and the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Over the past few weeks I have received numerous e-mails, phone calls and input from residents in regard to the government's proposed new tax options. Mr. Speaker, the single largest issue facing our residents across our territory is the cost of living. To me there seems to be a disconnect between what the government is saying and doing and our people.

I have spoken in the past in this House about the 3,300 migrant workers and the \$330 million that leaves with them every year — a place where the government should be doing everything in its power to persuade these workers to live in the Northwest Territories. Not only do we need to attract workers here, but we must ensure that the people who are here are going to stay here. That the government would communicate a proposed new tax initiative or strategy without first having a thorough examination of its own programs and services is absurd. The easy target for government, Mr. Speaker, is the public. I know I won't stand for that happening, nor will the public.

I am not a fortune teller, Mr. Speaker, but I know last winter was tough. This winter will be very, very difficult for residents. It will be our own winter of discontent. This government set out on a course to reduce spending by \$135 million over two years. They will come nowhere close to that mark. Instead, they propose to find \$40 million from somewhere else. This simply is poor management.

Where are the zero base reviews department by department? Why does this government continue to take misstep after misstep? Instead of taking money from the pockets of our residents, we should focus our energy and our efforts on three key areas. Reduction of migrant workers and retention of existing population, for obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker; people equal money and \$22,000 in transfer payments from Ottawa. Number 2, a meaningful examination of government-wide spending, not just some cost cutting exercise

overseen by deputy ministers. And number 3, resource revenue sharing and devolution.

Why is this government so silent on these big ticket items? In case the government hasn't heard — I know the Premier mentioned it in his sessional statement — there is an election going on, and someone over there should be jumping up and down demanding a deal. At the very least demand that the hundreds of jobs located in Ottawa pertaining to northern development, held by many people who have not even stepped foot north of 60, be transferred to Nunavut, the Yukon....

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Ramsay, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Ramsay: They should be demanding that the federal government transfer the jobs pertaining to northern development to the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, people equal money. If we continue on the track we're on right now, we won't have anyone left to tax, because everyone is going to be gone. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH COST OF LIVING IN TU NEDHE COMMUNITIES

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

On June 14 I asked questions in the House about the cost of living issues in Tu Nedhe communities. I indicated people are having difficulty with the cost of living. However, today, as people and families try to better their lives and find work, government policy prevents them from maximizing the benefits of employment.

Mr. Speaker, the high cost of economic rent is a huge factor in small communities. A public housing client who lands a job in one of the mines impacts his or her rent upon returning from the first turnaround. This all too often results in individuals quitting their jobs and going back to \$32 a month rent. Rapidly rising costs of fuel and the increasing power rate and other maintenance costs for homeowners in small communities are having a big impact on household budgets. Add to this the high cost of food in these smaller communities and the family budget is impacted much, much more.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we need to do something now to address this urgent situation. The outlook is not good, yet the government plans various taxes to erode the disposable income of a working person. The high cost of living and the current system of taxes do not support the working class in a smaller community. As a matter of fact, it makes it easier for one to make the choice of unemployment, to receive government assistance to provide for their family's needs. In effect, Mr. Speaker, government policy will play a role in keeping people on income support and/or in public housing.

Without debt the average NWT family needs to earn about \$90,000 a year to remain self-sufficient and self-reliant. The current average income in the Northwest Territories is \$96,000. The average income is \$117,000 in Yellowknife; however, the average income in Tu Nedhe is only \$46,000. This means the government, on average, needs to subsidize Tu Nedhe families almost \$44,000 to offset the impact of a higher cost of living in Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution.

If you want to stop the leakage, change the policies. This would result in lower costs of living and make it feasible to work and get off the government system.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR SENIORS

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I would like to talk about the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors, YACCS, who are celebrating their 25th anniversary this year, and their dedication and many contributions to Yellowknife and the NWT.

YACCS has been active for 25 years as a highly effective lobby organization on behalf of seniors in Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. YACCS strives to be the recognized leader in the NWT for work with seniors, to provide them with high quality community living choices and advocacy for their needs. They also work to develop a wide range of services that allow seniors to age in their communities, close to their families and support systems.

YACCS is committed to the safety and well-being of the clientele and employees as well as the continuous improvement of their organization. YACCS has achieved great success in providing much needed facilities, programs and services to seniors in the Northwest Territories.

The year 2007 marked the 20th anniversary of Aven Manor, a long-term care facility where caring

and capable staff provide nursing and personal care to seniors 24 hours a day. They also offer a full schedule of activities for all residents to enjoy. Consistently at full capacity, Aven Manor is an asset to our community. YACCS provides independent housing for seniors at Aven Court and, since December 2007, at Aven Ridge. These conveniently located units offer safe and attractive housing options for people 60 years of age and older.

The Baker Community Centre also celebrated its tenth anniversary this past year. The Baker Centre is a multipurpose facility that accommodates many social and recreational activities for seniors in the community at large. The Baker Centre project was initiated by donations made by the late Ed Baker and completed through fundraising and community support. The Baker Centre is operated by the Yellowknife Seniors' Society, which continues to enjoy an excellent partnership with YACCS.

Most recently YACCS has been an advocate and a champion for the development of a territorial dementia facility. Without their drive and commitment I believe that the territorial dementia facility currently under construction on YACCS property would never see the light of day. Given the importance of this dementia facility, I applaud them for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, YACCS is a valuable association made up of people who are deeply committed to the health and well-being of our senior citizens and, ultimately, the community as a whole.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED TAXATION INITIATIVES

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the challenges we face as MLAs is trying to choose our words very carefully. If I were to stand here and tell you exactly what the people in the Northwest Territories think about the proposed tax increases, I would be escorted from this Chamber in 30 seconds, and they are fighting that.

Good, hardworking people across the Northwest Territories continue to be hit or are proposed to be hit with tax increases. They tasked us as their MLAs to bring this forward and fight this issue on their behalf, and that's what we have to do. On one hand, we form a cost-of-living committee to try and find ways to reduce the cost of living, and then on the other hand, we are proposing tax increases. I agree some tax increases need to be made, but you're hitting the wrong people.

You've got resource companies, development companies up here bleeding us dry. They are

paying Ottawa. What do we get out of this? Nothing. Nothing. They give us a transfer payment and say, "This is sufficient. Don't bother us any more until next year." People across the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, are becoming extremely frustrated. You hear from them. I think every one of us in here has had e-mails or conversations with folks who are really worried about this proposed tax increase.

We don't benefit from everything that goes on in the Northwest Territories, and I am not going to pretend that we do. I am not going to sugar-coat anything, Mr. Speaker, because we don't benefit. Until we get our house in order as the Northwest Territories, as leaders across the Northwest Territories, not just this government.... Part of the problem is the leaders across the Northwest Territories have to be leaders and take the next step and do what's best for the people of the Northwest Territories, because we did make an oath.

I strongly urge this government to explore other revenue options and not continue to kick the good, hard-working people of the NWT — I repeat, of the NWT, not the 3,300 migrant workers who don't pay anything — while they're down. They have asked us to look after them, and we should take that responsibility very seriously. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED TAXATION INITIATIVES

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have heard from my constituents over the summer months, especially in the area of power rate increases, the high cost of energy and the high fuel prices in our communities. More important is the cost of living in regard to sustaining individuals in these high cost communities. A lot of our communities lack programs and services. In some cases there is no service. We don't have nurses; we don't have police.

Mr. Speaker, also realize that we have to ensure that we take care of the infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. A lot has been said over the summer months about the condition of the Dempster Highway. We were promised in this House this spring that we were going to do everything we can to ensure that public safety is a factor, but again the roads have been in very poor condition this summer.

One of the biggest issues that is still out there is the cost of living for residents in our communities when it comes to income support, housing subsidy programs and the consolidation that took place. That issue is one of the most pressing in our

communities. To top it all off, the icing on the cake came when this government announced the tax initiatives that will again affect the cost of living of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I don't support all these initiatives. The only one I support is something that was here in the 13th Assembly. I think that if we had taken care of it then, we probably would have seen some revenues from the resource industry by way of a resource tax. Again, here I state that I do support that initiative, but the rest of them can go.

I think it's important that we ensure that the residents of the Northwest Territories, who should be the benefactors of these resource developments, see that the resources and the revenues stay in the North. If anyone wants to take out the resources, there's a penalty to pay. We are not going to get devolution. We haven't seen it in the last 20-odd years. I think that if we wanted to receive something from those developments today, we should have done the resource tax. Again, Mr. Speaker, do not tax the residents of Northwest Territories.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR THE NWT LITERACY WEEK

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be back here with my colleagues. This is Literacy Week in the NWT, and yesterday was Read for 15 Day. In an effort to best Nunavut, as they challenge us for the greatest number of readers, I hope that everyone in this room did their homework. By that I mean that you read some material, even a comic book, for a mere 15 minutes and submitted your name for this contest. The NWT Literacy Council has many other activities planned for this week to celebrate and promote literacy. As they say on TV, check your local listings and take part in something in your community.

The council is a non-profit registered charitable organization that has been promoting and advancing literacy development in all NWT official languages since 1989. They run training sessions and workshops, do research, develop resources and deliver programs. One of their programs is to provide learning materials about elections, a very timely resource at the moment with an election only two weeks away. Learners can take advantage of an election how-to kit and can access suggested questions for candidates and other tools to assist them with and involve them in elections. Just go to www.nwt.literacy.ca and check it out.

For our residents who see the voting process as an unknown and scary prospect because their literacy

skills are weak, the council's tools enable them to understand elections and voting and to gain the confidence necessary to want to vote. No doubt our voter turnout has increased as people become comfortable with the process and then actively exercise their right to vote.

One of this Assembly's goals is healthy, educated people. Our priorities, unfortunately, do not mention literacy, the value of which is well documented and irrefutable. Literacy and numeracy skills are necessary for work, learning and life in general. They provide the foundation for the learning of all other skills. A skilled people are a successful people. This Assembly needs to seriously consider increasing the emphasis that we place on literacy in order to help our citizens achieve more productive and successful lives.

As this government develops the 2009–10 budget, funding for literacy and numeracy must be increased over this current year's amount. We need to support the NWT Literacy Council with adequate and consistent long-term funding. Our residents, our communities and our economy will benefit as a result. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DIVERSIFICATION OF THE NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are all aware of the extreme financial and economic crisis playing out in the United States. We are also acutely aware of the roller coaster global stock markets reacting to the attempts of the U.S. government to respond. This volatility extends to the Toronto Stock Exchange and Canadian investments.

Northerners have closely watched the price of oil soaring to record highs before declining to about \$100 per barrel today. We have noticed how erratic and unpredictable the price is. Those who bravely forecast the future price of oil do so now in a timid voice with many caveats and wide margins.

Northerners are keenly watching the prices of food and housing, which are climbing steeply. Mr. Speaker, we are as yet uncertain about what impact a recession south of the border will have on Canada and, more specifically, on the North. Though we are concerned, we do have our misgivings. We know how closely and increasingly tied we are to the global economy and especially the ailing U.S. economy. Many of us are hugely uncomfortable with such an intimate relationship in which we have absolutely no control or influence.

Conditions can change in an instant in the global economy.

People who are doing well financially buy diamonds and expensive northern holidays regardless of the price of fuel, but these consumers fade away when the economy dives. Yet in almost every news release from our own Premier's office we seem fixated upon entrenching ourselves further in this global economy. Our leaders say we must fully participate and enjoy all the rewards and riches mega-development will bring.

Mr. Speaker, this is balderdash. It is nonsense, because it ignores the unaccounted costs and vulnerabilities that come with it: the environmental costs, the sale of our resources with no ability to capture value, the vulnerability to global economic swings, the declining quality of life and increasing crime.

Though we are currently putting all our eggs in one basket, a basket that is very fragile and easily unravelled, there is a way to ensure a more secure future. That way is to invest in diversified, small scale, local economies that build community and increase self-sufficiency rather than dependence.

While the global economy has devastated the great fisheries resources of the world's oceans, our own Great Slave Lake fish stock is harvested at 15 per cent of sustainable yields. Our once great northern gardens with astounding produce are talked about as history, while we purchase cabbages and carrots from afar. Our water used to be a national standard....

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Bromley, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Young northern entrepreneurs are increasingly absent while we support multinationals. This government continues to promote these trends while wailing about our loss of population, lack of performance in our local economies, trades and social institutions and the soaring costs of energy.

Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to move forward in a different way. I ask the government to show our public that they actually see the connections in the choices we make and that they will be changing course and making the right choice. I look forward to responding to the opening address. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED TAXATION INITIATIVES

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The public is passing judgment today, and they're saying that these new tax initiatives are the last straw. From what I see, the motto of this Finance Minister is "tax first, ask questions later." I encourage the Minister to listen very carefully, because you can hear the caravan of people exiting the Territories. If Mr. Miltenberger has his way, that's what we'll see.

In the past couple of weeks I've had my fill from the public, hearing their concerns about this Minister trying to fix our financial problems with more taxes. They have had it. They're his ideas, and I'll tell you, they're not mine. The problem is — and I say to the Finance Minister to listen very carefully — the government has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. We don't need new taxes. We need someone with some real imagination over there.

If Mr. Miltenberger had his way, everything suggested on his list would affect every person's basic cost of living. That means milk, butter, heating oil, and don't forget the power bill. Don't get me started on the health care premiums. I can clearly see this Finance Minister has been getting sensitivity training from Revenue Canada, which is not the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, the only surprise I have on this initiative is that it wasn't released at Christmastime. As I look it over, you can clearly see they have no direction. You can clearly see that over at the Finance department no one understands bread and butter economics. What they've chosen is a path to destroy our economy, not to help it.

With power rates spiking, home heating going up, what is the next straw? There will not be one, because no one will be here. Let me tell you: good financial policies will encourage investment, and they will certainly help our tax base grow. They will help businesses create employment. By the way, just in case you're not listening, that means more taxes, naturally. More people working will help this territory far more than putting the thumbscrews to the cost of living of the average person, who's had it. Every additional person, as it's been said here today, can add at least \$20,000 from our federal grant. That doesn't even take into consideration the spending this generates.

At this time I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, let me give this Finance Minister a lesson. If we encouraged 2,000 people to our territory, that would cover our shortfall. By the way, that means 60 people per community. We can encourage a grow with the

North policy, as opposed to taxing them to death. Let's start on some of those migrant workers, as has been articulated clearly here.

In closing, the financial gaps are big; imagination is low. As one person told me yesterday, it's time that we start showing some backbone with some mineral tax instead of milk tax. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Returns to Oral Questions

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Hawkins on June 18, 2008, regarding services for children with autism.

The Department of Health and Social Services does not operate under a framework or policy that is specific to autism. Services for children with disabilities are delivered within the context of the integrated service delivery model, which allows for access to rehabilitation services, referrals to specialists and, if necessary, voluntary support agreements through the Child and Family Services Act. A framework for services for children with disabilities is being developed.

The Department of Health and Social Services in partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Stanton Territorial Health Authority is currently consulting with service providers. This collaboration provides an integrated and coordinated approach for developing a consistent service delivery protocol across the spectrum of disabilities.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two constituents from the riding of Great Slave: Lena Pedersen, a former Member of this House, and Todd Parsons, the president of the UNW.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my beautiful mother, who usually watches us on TV but decided to show up in the gallery today. She's also a resident of Avens Court.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Dick and Loretta Abernethy, constituents of the Weledeh riding and the parents of my illustrious colleague here, Mr. Abernethy.

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

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 386-16(2) PROPOSED REVENUE OPTIONS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance. The Minister has put out a revenue option paper. He has held a round table with representatives from many territorial organizations. I'd like to ask the Minister: from his discussions to date, what is the appetite like for a resource tax in the Northwest Territories that could address this gap in finances that they have been referring to? Will he be bringing forward a response to the resource tax? What's the downside?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've embarked on a revenue options discussion, not the tax increase option discussion. We met; we had a massive circulation and mail out of the papers looking for feedback.

The round table was very productive. It brought together a very interesting group of Northerners from organizations across the North that don't normally spend a lot of time together to talk about the issue of revenue options. There's very strong commitment to the North and building the North. There was no unanimity when it came to the issue of, clearly, taxes. I'll be coming forward with a report from the round table. I'll also be coming forward, in due course, with the business plans in the upcoming budget session with what's going to be proposed in terms of potential options to generate new revenues.

Mrs. Groenewegen: As my colleague Mr. Krutko said, the idea of a resource tax has been something that's been out there for a long time. No government has had the courage to introduce it. I would like to ask Mr. Miltenberger, as the Finance Minister: is he aware of any downside to this government raising revenues through a resource tax?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: As the Premier indicated in his sessional statement, there are a lot of things happening around us in the world that are affecting life in the North and business in the North. With every decision we make, be it taxes or other options for generating revenues, there are going to be upsides, but there are also going to be downsides. I've heard the Members opposite talk in great detail about the mass exodus and what they're hearing from their constituents. For the first day of session the political hyperbole was fairly interesting, if not somewhat misleading. It was very interesting and makes the point that there is concern about taxes. So we have to look at the potential impact — what type of tax that would be — and what it would do to the bottom line, in addition to what other considerations we may be looking at right now. Thank you.

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Hawkins.

Point of Order

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I have a point of order on the grounds of being called out as misleading the House.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Hawkins, under what rule are you stating your point of order?

Interruption.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Well, Mr. Speaker, it either falls under 23(h), which is makes an allegation against another Member or 23(i), "imputes false or hidden motives." I think those are good places to start. Of course, I would also say 23(l), which, in my mind, speaks disrespectfully to a Member on this side of the House. Thank you.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I pretty well clearly heard what the Member said in reference to some of the comments that were made from the Regular Members' side of the House. I don't think there was a direct threat or comment that he was misleading the House. I'm going to rule your point of order out of order.

Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Oral Questions
Continued

QUESTION 386-16(2)
PROPOSED REVENUE OPTIONS
Continued

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask Mr. Miltenberger which part of what he's heard from the representatives of our constituents on this side of the House today could possibly, with regard to the tax options, be considered misleading? Thank you.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, we have engaged in a discussion. We've put out a discussion paper. We're talking about options. There have been no decisions made. There have been a number of taxes listed. The documents laid out taxes that were there for consideration. The press clearly put a particular spin on it. There is a misunderstanding in some quarters that all these taxes are being basically agreed to.

Nothing has been agreed to. We're looking at other revenue options like those that have been suggested by other Members. For example, trying to grow the population and bring more wealth, bring more people into the Territories to build our economic base.

There have been no decisions. This is a discussion paper. To stand up and say — for anybody, the press or anywhere — that these are all happening, it's not the fact. The case is that we've put the document out for discussion, and we're looking for feedback. When we're finished the feedback process, we'll pull all that work together and we will come back. There will be a report done on the round table. We will of course be fully engaging with all the committees about what work has to be done as we look at and lay out the whole budget process, including the reductions for '09–10, as well as the revenue options, to try to sustain the government that we have and the high level of service that we currently provide.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank Mr. Miltenberger for that explanation. I do concur with him that there were some almost statements of fact about these taxes having been a foregone conclusion on this side of the House today. So if you perceived that, I hear you; I did perceive that a little bit too.

They are only options at this time. But we want to get in there and tell you that any — or tell Mr. Speaker; I don't want to speak directly to the Minister. But we would like to make sure that this government clearly understands that it would be the

preference under the tax options to be taxing multinational companies who are here harvesting our resources rather than the residents of the Northwest Territories who are struggling with the cost of living. Would Mr. Miltenberger agree that that would be preferable? Thank you.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I, as well, have been getting a number of comments and feedback on my e-mails and from wherever I happen to be going. As a government we are very sensitive to the implications of any decision we make with regard to taxes or reductions. We've been directed very clearly, and the message from the last budget process was that reductions weren't the favoured option. So we've come forward with plans to look at other revenue options so that we don't have to necessarily increase the number of reductions we're talking about.

Yes, we are very sensitive to this, and we want to make sure that we don't further drive up the cost of living for members in the communities. We have set up special initiative committees to in fact look at the cost of living. We don't want to be counterproductive here. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 387-16(2)
GNWT SENIOR MANAGEMENT
PERFORMANCE BONUSES

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be no surprise that I'm going to be asking my questions to the Premier, and they are going to be about senior management bonuses in the Northwest Territories. I seem to ask this question every time we come into a new session.

In light of the fact that we're proposing all sorts of potential tax increases and we are looking for money to help run programs and services, I am wondering why we are still giving bonuses out to senior managers with no rationale. It seems like every senior manager gets a bonus.

In the last session I asked the Premier about how many of the senior managers are getting bonuses, and I got a written response that indicated that all senior managers who were eligible in '04–05 got it. All seniors who were eligible in '05–06 got it, all but two in '05–06, and all but one in '06–07. I guess my question today is: have we given bonuses to senior managers for the '07–08 fiscal year, and if so, how many got it? Of the ones who got... Actually, I'll stop there and let Mr. Roland answer.

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that as the Government of the Northwest Territories we hear about the challenges that we face in recruitment and keeping our staff. The merit pay system is something that has to be taken into consideration. In our life, as the 16th Legislative Assembly, that has not occurred as of yet, but we are undergoing a process of reviewing that scenario now.

Mr. Abernethy: I acknowledge that bonuses are in fact important. I just don't think everybody should get a bonus. I think bonuses should be earned for exceptional performance, or performance above and beyond, not for doing your job. That's what you get paid for. If you look at the number of individual senior managers who are getting it, it's clear that virtually every senior manager gets a bonus every year.

Last session I talked to the Premier, and we talked about the possibility of putting in a process where bonuses would be based on exceptional performance. Has the Premier made any progress in putting in a policy related to ensuring that bonuses are based on exceptional performance?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, through the Department of Human Resources along with the Executive, we have been looking at, for example, the federal initiative that was undertaken regarding merit pay. We are working with that program. As I said, we have not concluded the process yet. We are almost a year into our mandate. So it is something that is under consideration, and we will be coming up with a decision very soon here. It is something that we have to recognize, though. Yes, we need to be doing something based on merit, and we have to also recognize that we need to try to be competitive in a whole lot of areas, along with wages. Thank you.

Mr. Abernethy: I am not sure I understood that exactly. Does that mean that yes, something is being done or a policy is being put in place to ensure that all senior managers who are getting bonuses will have deserved it through exceptional performance?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the process we are involved with right now is one we've looked at in the federal system, and that would be a substantial increase in salaries, and then reduce the merit pay. But we are not prepared to give a substantial increase in salaries to our senior staff, so we are looking within our existing framework to put something together. I would be prepared to sit down with Members at the appropriate time to go through details of a review. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 388-16(2)
PROPOSED REVENUE OPTIONS

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is flirting with a trend to encourage business as well as people to leave. We've all heard about the silo of government, and I am just curious. I'm just trying to get a sense. Does the Finance Minister, Minister Miltenberger, understand that there is a cost of living committee out there?

My question to the Minister of Finance is: how do his potential tax initiatives dovetail with the cost of living committee, which is intended to lower the cost of living of the average citizen up here? How does it dovetail? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The revenue options that are being talked about are two taxes that have been referred to, resource taxes. There is potential for payroll tax increases. There is potential for other taxes, like taxing further alcohol and tobacco. We are also looking at revenue options that include signing up for the Territorial Nominee Program for immigration that would allow us to bring, at the very least, 150 new people to the North every year to take the jobs that are currently going vacant. As well, we are looking at working with the mines through the SEAs to start capturing the fly in/fly out population. So they dovetail very nicely.

We're also as a government, as the Premier indicated, prepared to invest significant amounts of money through having a balanced budget, being able to get the revenues and reduce government costs to make significant investments in alternate energy: wind, biomass, mini-hydro, expansion of the hydro grid. Those are all things that are going to directly impact, in the mid and long term, the cost of living in communities. So there's a very good dovetailing fit.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is all well and good, but we have to assume someone can still be here to be able to afford those.

This is starting to look like a tax shift, just like the Liberal plan by Dion. We're going to tax on one end but encourage both on the other. It's confusing, it's ridiculous, and I think it affects the bottom line of common-sense people at their kitchen tables.

Looking at the blend between the tax initiatives and the cost of living, what effort is this Minister putting in to make sure government is functioning properly through a program review that looks at the basis of how we spend our money?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: In the last budget there were funds identified and voted to set up a

program review committee as part of the Refocusing Government initiative. We're going to be coming forward with a plan, as the Premier indicated, about restructuring boards and agencies.

The issue of tax shifts. If we can move away from income taxes and taxes on that type of income to consumption taxes, I think that's a good shift. And we want to look at making sure that those with the most are going to be prepared to pay more than those who have the least.

But very clearly, we have a whole number of initiatives that are tied in to this particular effort.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, would the Finance Minister agree a good place to start, when he considers his tax initiatives and the cost of living, would be maybe to start collecting on some of the IOUs — that money owed to us by the federal government, that \$100 million of health money for NIHB? Wouldn't that be a good start to this rather than firing people or adding new taxes?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about a government that's going to be affordable. We're talking about looking at revenues that currently haven't been realized, like trying to grow the population.

We've been tasked to try to hit targets. The Members have indicated, through the last process, that doing it all on the backs of reductions of expenditures and programs is not the way they're prepared to consider. So we're looking at other options.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're trying to be as broad thinking about this and as careful and as measured as we can be.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, who is really going to pay this? It's not going to be the rich, because they can afford those big, fancy accountants. It's not going to be the poor, because they don't have anything to take. So this is going to keep coming down to the middle class groups that will keep paying this.

And you know what? You haven't broadened the base. I've not heard of one single initiative in my lifetime so far out of this Finance Minister that will see us broaden the base. What is he planning to do for us to see real results in broadening the tax base of people of the Northwest Territories?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I've been Finance Minister for July, August, September, two months of which the Member was on holidays and I was working. But rest assured, Mr. Speaker, the intent is.... I'll ask the Member for some indulgence here, not to get ahead of the process. We've asked for

feedback. We're going to come back with what we've heard. We're going to look at the whole gambit of options that we have, and we want to lay that out and we want to have the full discussion with committee to make the right decisions. There are going to be tough decisions to be sure. We have a very high level of service in this territory and a government that is providing those services, and we have to be prepared to look at all those things.

I will just ask the Member to allow the process to run its course so that we can actually put something definitive on the table to have an informed discussion on.

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

QUESTION 389-16(2) PROPOSED REVENUE OPTIONS

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance.

It was a year ago today that Members were elected to the 16th Legislative Assembly, and shortly thereafter we got together as a group of 19 MLAs and went through a strategic planning exercise where we tried to map out a strategy for the next four years.

One of the main concerns during that meeting was the cost of living and how the government spent its money. Many Members, I remember, were asking for a zero based review and program evaluations, and here we are a year later. Earlier the government had committed to a reduction exercise of \$135 million over two years, and as far as I know, they're not going to come anywhere close to that reduction number. I find it ironic that now they're looking at finding an additional \$40 million out of taxation.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance why program evaluations and review of government spending government-wide wasn't conducted prior to engaging the public and engaging Members of this side of the House on these new tax initiatives. To me it's backwards. We should examine our spending first, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have to do both. Money was voted to in fact undertake the program reviews that the Member has talked about now for some time in this Assembly and in the previous one. They're getting tooled up to do the job. We've briefed committee. We've laid out some of the work plan. We're looking to work with committee to make sure that we have the best work plan possible. In fact, the plan would be to have some Members possibly on the

refocusing committee to make sure we're doing the proper work.

At the same time, we clearly heard the debate, frank and intense, from the last budget process, which indicated very clearly that the issue of program reductions, the expenditure reductions, was one that caused a certain amount of concern by the other Members.

So we've regrouped. We've come forward with ways that we can still try to hit the targets or as close to the targets as possible to keep us on the right track.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I applaud the government, actually, in looking at the formation of this policy review shop that they're going to have. But I think given the fact that it's inside government, it's going to be bureaucratic, it's going to be slow, and it's going to be cumbersome. I'd like to ask the Finance Minister if the government has any plans to get some outside help to come in to analyze government spending and do zero based reviews. It doesn't have to happen government-wide, but if we could do a department or two a year and try to get a handle on where our money is going, where it's being spent, I think that would be a better approach than trying to go out and get it out of the pockets of Northerners.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, we look forward to working with the Members, the committee members. There's been a clear signal that they would like to have Members on the refocusing committee because of the issue with boards and agencies, because of the program review issues. We've laid out the work to date. Funds have been voted. There's been a five member staff that's been put together. We're working out a work plan. Clearly, this is a complex issue as you start looking at analyzing and doing zero based reviews and program reviews. There are some very big pieces of government out there. We look forward to working with the Members. As we indicated, here's the work plan. Let's see what we can get done and how do we make this work, because it is going to be a complex, ongoing, long-term process, as the Member indicated.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, the next question I have for the Minister of Finance is: of the \$135 million that was proposed to be reduced over two years, exactly where is the government in terms of finding that \$135 million today?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, we concluded the budget a number of months ago. We're doing capital, in fact, in the next number of days here in this session, and then we're going to be coming forward with the business plans that will be laying out year 2 of the reduction exercise.

At the end of the day, with the revised targets, we'd be aiming for closer to \$111 million when you look at revenue as well as reductions.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: I know the Finance Minister is new to that role, but he's been here for a number of years.

You know, given the fact that we don't have a resource deal with Ottawa, devolution is slowed down, has the government got a direction in terms of equity investment in resource extraction areas in our territory? Are we going to go there? Because in terms of finding new revenue sources, I think we need to start investing our money where we can make some money. So I'd like to ask the Minister that.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, clearly — clearly — that's an option: for the government to buy into business. Of course, first we need to have the money to do the investment. We have a limit here of \$500 million, but we are looking at all the options, and we want to be as creative as possible. We're interested in setting up, as the Members pushed for it since the last Assembly as well, things like a heritage fund that will allow us to plan for the future. Clearly, we want to look at all the opportunities that are out there, but we are limited by the funds and resources we have available, in addition to trying to make sure we keep the government operational.

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

QUESTION 390-16(2) PROPOSED REVENUE OPTIONS

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the question I'm asked a lot after this discussion came out on the revenue options is: when? I'd like to ask the Finance Minister: when would the earliest implementation time be? I mean, are we looking at six months, a year? There are people out there who are even thinking we are going to be doing it this session. So just for comfort, for a lot of people out there listening, when is the earliest possible implementation were these proposals to go ahead?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, the plan as laid out was to find \$10 million in new revenue for the '09–10 budget that was laid out initially last year. We are going to be aiming for that target, with a subsequent \$30 million for 2010–11 and going forward. All the work that is being done is getting pulled together, so it will feed into the business planning process. Departments will come forward with the work that has been done. I will come

forward as the Minister of Finance with the work, the feedback, the revenue options, including suggested areas where there could be tax increases, but also lay out, we think, some very productive high potential revenue options.

Mr. McLeod: I thank the Minister for that. I notice in the discussion paper that there is mention that 18 per cent of employment income in the NWT was earned by non-residents. How much money are we actually talking about being earned by non-residents and leaving the territory?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I don't have an exact figure, but it would be millions of dollars. The Member for Kam Lake had some numbers that he has used, but it is a significant amount of money. It is leakage south that we want to try to capture and keep in the North.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I noticed in the discussion paper that there seems to be no option to try to capture that money. I think that's a target we should aim at and leave the personal income tax part of it, which hits people who are staying in the Northwest Territories, contributing to the Northwest Territories. I could go on forever, but I won't. I'd like to ask the Finance Minister: do we get anything out of the 18 per cent employment income earned by non-residents?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, the payroll tax is one small attempt to capture some of that wealth that is now flying over as they go back to where they may be living in the south.

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

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we also talk about money leaving the Northwest Territories, and we talk about a \$30 per person fee. We do not have the authority, according to the document, to tax resources, which I still can't believe. Do we have the authority to tax industry for the number of workers they have who are non-residents of the Northwest Territories, and if we don't, would they consider that an option too?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, one of the proposals was a potential \$30 levy on all southern air travel. But, clearly, especially with the mines right now, there is a socioeconomic agreement, bilateral in nature, that we are working with. The Minister of ITI is engaged in those discussions, and the issue of the fly in/fly out, having workers in the North, is at the top of the list to assist us.

The estimates are that if we can work closely with the diamond mines, then we can start bringing, we believe, up to 100 workers a year, to have them, in fact, start living in the North, because there is going to be enough incentive for them to do that. This has

a tremendous ripple effect. The 100 workers, they tell me, statistically would be more like 300 if they have families and they move to the North. So as the Member for Kam Lake has said repeatedly, there is a huge benefit here. We just have to do the right thing to capture that.

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

QUESTION 391-16(2)
IMPACT OF TAXATION MEASURES
ON SMALL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the impact and effect the high cost of living is having on families in the smaller communities. I also talked a bit about the proposed taxes and how they can also impact their efforts to make a better living for themselves.

I'd like to ask either the Premier or the Minister of Finance if, while looking at options, the Minister or Premier, the Cabinet, has considered the impact of taxing our citizens, as far as retaining those families in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated already, we are very clearly aware that there are upsides and downsides. While we may generate some revenue, there are going to be implications and consequences. We are looking very carefully at all the decisions we are going to be making and the suggestions and recommendations we are going to be bringing forward.

We are very sensitive to the issue of the cost of living in small communities. We have set up a committee to in fact address that issue. We do not want to engage in counterproductive exercises here in government. So, yes, we are going to be very careful in measuring how we do this to make sure that at the end of the day the cure is not worse than what ails us.

Mr. Beaulieu: Prior to even the consultation process, I am assuming there has been some thought given to this. I would like to ask the Minister if Cabinet had examined leaving as much disposable income as possible in the pockets of the citizens, letting the natural economic process of the multiplier effect take place.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, that is entirely in keeping with the comment I made earlier. If we can focus on consumption areas and try not to put too heavy a burden on the income of individuals across the board but make it more focused on areas where there are consumption issues, where there are choices, then that would be better.

Once again to the cost of living, we are very sensitive to that. We hear the concerns every day. Ministers are working on their respective committees, trying to come up with ways to address that. We are going to make some long-term investments in energy alternatives, as well as the significant resources we want to invest in biomass and wind and geothermal and those types of things. We are trying to be consistent and not counterproductive.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if Cabinet examined the negative impact on the cost of living and employment of our citizens as far as looking at other jurisdictions to determine whether additional taxing is the way to go.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, that's part and parcel of the work that's currently underway. We're going to be bringing forward a package on the next phase of reductions. We're going to be bringing forward a package that deals with the revenue options, both bringing people into the North and growing the economy, as well as looking at those areas where increased taxes may be advantageous.

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

QUESTION 392-16(2)
PERFORMANCE BONUSES FOR
SENIOR POWER CORPORATION OFFICIALS

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today my colleague from Hay River South mentioned the application for a rate increase that the NWT Housing Corporation has put forward to the Public Utilities Board. My question is for the Premier.

Given that the rate increase, if it does in fact occur, will actually increase the cost of living for every resident of the Northwest Territories, I'm curious whether or not bonuses have been provided to the senior managers of the NWT Housing Corporation for the 2007-08 fiscal year.

An Honourable Member: You said Housing Corporation.

Mr. Abernethy: Oh, I meant Power Corporation.

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NWT Power Corporation has indeed filed an application to the PUB for rate riders to deal with the cost pressures around fuel to deliver the services. The board operates at arm's length from this Assembly through the NWT Power Corporation Act. They have gone out to seek outside sources to

look at the method of bonus or merit pay that they would deal with, and they've come back with an area.... I believe they're in the process of finalizing what and who would qualify.

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

QUESTION 393-16(2)
PROPOSED REVENUE OPTIONS

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to continue with some questions for the Minister of Finance. It's easy to be critical, but I think sometimes you also have to offer some suggestions. I'd like to ask the Minister if the government has ever entertained what it would mean to our population if we did away with the personal income tax here in the Northwest Territories. Instead of increasing it, what if we did away with it? What would that mean, and would they be able to deliver that type of analysis for our consideration?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that work has been done, looking at, if not getting rid of income tax completely, a type of flat tax. I can commit to share that information with the Member and with committees.

Mr. Ramsay: I think it's creative things like that that we need to look at. We need to be attracting people here, and we need to be competitive. So we need to be looking at everything.

One of the things I was hoping to ask the Minister today, and I think he's heard it loud and clear.... There's no appetite, whether in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Fort Smith or Hay River for that matter, for tax increases that are going to add to the cost of living here in the Northwest Territories. There's absolutely no appetite for it. It's already expensive enough to live here.

I'm wondering if the Minister could commit to taking the proposed initiatives that will increase the cost of living for our residents and putting them on the shelves for the time being. Let's start discussing some other options. Those ones have no place here.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: What we have in the North is a very high level of service by this government with some of the best programs, I believe, in the country, be it for seniors, health, the SFA or some of our housing programs.

The question is, it's not just taxes. The issue is the type of government we want and we think we can afford. What are we prepared to pay to have that government and those types of services? Very

clearly, we're going to come forward with all the work we're undertaking right now. There will be a full chance for committee to engage in the discussion. We're doing the preparatory work to get all that pulled together. As we move into the business planning process, I'll be coming forward with all that work so we can have the full discussion.

At this point I think we have to keep our options on the table, both with reductions and revenue options, which include growing the territory and the economy as well as possible tax considerations.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister of Finance, but I think if we're going to have an overall view of everything, we need to have all of our cards on the table. Until the government goes out and does the analysis of our spending government-wide, we won't be able to do that. Today we don't know the value of the dollars we are spending. That type of analysis hasn't been done. Until it's done, I'm not sure what we're going to gain by going through this process, or any other process for that matter, budget to budget, unless we get a handle on where we're spending our money and how effective every dollar is that we're spending. We need to do that level of analysis.

Like I said, it doesn't have to happen overnight. It could be one or two departments a year. We have to start somewhere in order to make a difference, and I'd like to see that happen.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I appreciate the Member's concern. We have committed to and the Assembly has voted money for a process that we are now undertaking. The plans have been laid out. We're prepared to work with committee to make sure they're the best plans possible.

I'd also point out that every year this Assembly, through the work of the committees and the government, votes a budget. If this Assembly makes determinations that the government is too big or that there are changes needed, then the authority to make those changes is here.

We came forward with a number of options last year. There was significant debate. We've regrouped. We're going to come forward with another package geared to those reductions. As well, we're going to come back with other options in terms of revenue.

This Assembly has the authority in this hall to make those decisions. If the determination is made that we're going to shrink government by 25 per cent or we're going to make a decision, then that's the way our institutions are set up. We're bringing forward our best work here to say that this is what we need to have a sustainable government. We're looking forward to working with committee and Members to in fact achieve that goal.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think the Minister is correct in what he's saying, but I just have to say what we saw last budget session. That happened because of haphazard cost cutting measures government-wide. There was no rhyme or reason to what happened in February.

I'm saying something needs to happen so that level of analysis, the detailed information, does take place so we can all make decisions collectively. I just didn't see that happening. When you just hand it over to your DMs and tell them to cut \$6 million in this department, \$7 million in that department, you're just going to get back the product they want you to get back. There's no political direction there. So I think we need to take the reins back.

I'd like to ask the Minister again: will he commit to some type of zero based spending review government-wide? It doesn't have to be every government department today, but we have to start somewhere.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, that commitment has already been made. There's a program review that's been set up. There's been money voted for their operation. We've laid out the work plans, the terms of reference for the committee. We've committed to working with committee to lay out the planning and engagement so they, along with Cabinet, have an oversight role to play.

As the Member indicated, that's a process that's going to take time. This is a large, complex organization with many, many component pieces. In the meantime we have another business planning process cycle now upon us. We're going to be doing capital. We're going to be moving into the business planning process. We're going to be coming forward with further suggestions on what the government is proposing in terms of reductions and revenue options. Clearly, we're going to have to work through this process as we wait for this program review process to kick into gear. We can't wait, so between us we're going to have to come up with a way to have a sustainable government.

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

QUESTION 394-16(2)
BENEFITS AND COSTS OF
NORTHERN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is on some of the statements in the sessional statement presented by our Premier. I'd like to start by briefly saying that we want to "develop our vast oil and natural gas resources as

soon as possible to the maximum benefit of Northerners.”

To me this is an absolute oxymoron; this is the definition of an oxymoron. They do not go together. We have no ability to levy royalties and so on. Can the Premier explain to me where he sees the truth in that statement?

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

Mr. Roland: I am taking a big breath, Mr. Speaker. The Member is asking where the truth is in the statement. I don't know where he's heading with that. He has his own beliefs as to where we should go as a government, and my stance is on positions I put forward.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that our economy and the heating of our homes in the present day require resources. We have those resources in the Northwest Territories. In fact, we have resources that would help the climate change initiative if we were to switch to alternative natural gas instead of home heating oil, for example, and diesel fuel for generation of electricity through power plants.

When you look at the opportunities that come with that and the opportunities that the aboriginal business corporations are involved with now and want to be involved with.... They're looking to take part in activities that would see development in the Northwest Territories.

Yes, as a government we need to also take the necessary steps, and we are. We will be coming forward with the business plans with a significant investment package that would see us start investing in alternatives rather than maintaining the status quo. We're starting to do that, but we do live in an environment that requires resources. The world is hungry for them, and we need revenues to operate government programs. If we can't reduce, we can't tax people. We need economic development, and we have that potential in the North. That's simply what's being stated.

Mr. Bromley: To me that clearly shows a lack of understanding about what the costs are of these sorts of developments when we do not have the ability to levy the taxes and the oil fees that we require to get those benefits.

I ask the Premier: given the rate at which we're mining our diamonds and shipping them out of the Northwest Territories, and along with that the labour to develop that and so on, does the Premier think we're getting maximum benefit from our current mining of diamonds and the complete using up of this resource as fast as we can?

Mr. Roland: Again, we do have to operate with what we have available under our authority as the

Government of the Northwest Territories, but the facts will speak for themselves. Prior to any significant reinvestment and capital projection in the Northwest Territories by the private sector, which drove up our GDP as the fastest growing jurisdiction in Canada for a number of years, the fact is that our corporate income tax has grown significantly since the business has taken part in the Northwest Territories. In fact, our personal income tax has grown through the revenue base because we have more people on the job in the Northwest Territories.

Those are facts that would speak for themselves, that there are some benefits that do accrue to the Northwest Territories. On top of that, through the aboriginal organizations and governments, they've signed socio-economic agreements, or IBAs, as well, that have the direct benefit that we can't measure.

Yes, we need to get more from the development of our resources. That's why devolution and resource revenue sharing is there and, in fact, why part of the discussion paper does highlight the fact that we can introduce new taxes in the Northwest Territories, but that would require new legislation.

Mr. Bromley: Again, what are the real benefits we're getting? I'm not questioning that we're getting some benefits here, but we need to weigh those benefits against the cost. I see the costs accelerating faster than the benefits: 500 homeless women in the city of Yellowknife. This didn't happen a number of years ago, for example, before the diamond development.

I'd like to know what this Premier is going to do to get a real grasp on benefits and costs and to develop local economies. What is the Premier going to do, Mr. Speaker, to develop local economies in ways that truly benefit our residents and not necessarily the large corporations that are funneling our resources out as fast as they can at the maximum rate possible with minimum benefit to the Northerners?

Mr. Roland: Mr. Speaker, our first budget starts the plan of investing in communities and in the people of the Northwest Territories, whether it is making sure that they can take the jobs that workers now take or whether it is the fact that we're going to help aboriginal corporations enter into the business economy that is out there. There are a whole number of things that we are doing as the Government of the Northwest Territories through those strategic initiatives that will have a positive impact as we progress.

Mr. Speaker, we can also look back at when industry shut down on us. I'll use the Mackenzie Delta. We've got a number of times the pipeline was talked about and shut down. What was left

there? There was no economy, but there was still the homelessness issue. There was still the fact that people could not afford to live in their communities and they came to government for support.

So, Mr. Speaker, the facts do speak. We have benefited residents of the Northwest Territories, and income support levels, for example, can even show that. When there's an economy, there is less of a draw on that side of the equation. We have to come up with the right balance through a transition phase. There's still going to be a drive to develop those resources in the framework, and we're trying to change that as best as we can.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is again ignoring the opportunities we have to develop our local economies. The reason places like Beau-Del are left high and dry, so to speak, when the oil and gas industry leave, is that we have not developed those local economies. We are totally dependent on this export economy. We need to develop appropriately scaled businesses that deal with our basic needs.

How is the Premier going to ensure that the next time the oil and gas industry leaves, these communities, small communities, are left with a vibrant economy?

Mr. Roland: Mr. Speaker, I think this also reflects more on the idea of devolution. People of the North who call us — those born here, raised here; those who moved here and now call it home — have more say in how we do things in the North. This Assembly can direct how we spend the budget dollars we approve in this Assembly. This Assembly, Members of this Assembly, not just me, can say if we should in fact aggressively pursue an agriculture policy that the Member spoke about earlier and put that in place and if we should be part of the fish marketing group or if we should step out on our own and develop our own economy in that way.

Again, the North is riddled with history here, where we took independent people, who were able to fend for themselves and provide for themselves, and developed programs because somebody from outside of the Territories and the country said, "You need to change things; don't do it that way anymore," and our fur trapping industry went down. It shut down vibrant economies and communities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, while that was happening, the people adapted and started going to a wage economy. Now we are saying: "Wait a second. Let's not look into that economy. Let's look at other things." I agree we need to look at other things, and this

Assembly through the membership here has the authority to direct in these areas.

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

QUESTION 395-16(2) CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL TAXATION OPTIONS

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in regard to process. Are we going to spend a ton of money looking at forms and consultation and legislative drafters? That all costs money. I think that as a government right now, as we all hear, we don't have much of it.

As a government we've already instituted legislation by way of resource pacts. That was done back in the 13th Assembly. It was drafted and ready to go. It had a hotel tax that went through a whole, thorough review. It was drafted and drafted, ready for the House.

I'm wondering if the government has considered, before we go on this long, exotic tour of the Northwest Territories and talk about taxes and find out at the end it was.... Is there a possibility that the Minister of Finance can come forward to this House on those tax initiatives that have been already worked on so that we don't have to have a long drawn out process that's going to cost us money — bring those initiatives to this House, debate it on this floor and see exactly what flies and what doesn't?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, this is not going to be a long, protracted, hugely expensive process. It's going to conclude October 15, and we're going to spend a few weeks pulling it all together so that we're ready for when we start in mid-November with the business planning process.

Yes, there was work done on a mining tax. It was preliminary work in nature, but we're going to look at all the options that are there. We're going to come forward with our best recommendations and proposals in terms of revenue options, reductions and then potential tax increases.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, around the House since the 13th Assembly.... We had initiatives by the Ministers of Finance back then. We had Mr. Handley do the initiative in regard to a hotel tax. That took a whole process of consultation, public hearings, the whole works. At the end of it all it didn't even proceed to the House.

Because of the experience we've had in the past on these legislative initiatives looking at tax reform, we

should learn from our mistakes and not waste public funds on doing stuff that we know is not going to fly. Already, from the public outcry that we hear....

I'd like to ask the Minister again: would you consider bringing forward those legislative initiatives that have already been worked on in regard to tax initiatives to the Members of this House so we can debate it in this House and also give us an opportunity to see where the support is on this side of the House so that we don't waste a lot of public funds?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: We will come forward with the full package for committee's review, what we think is viable and what we think is not. We're going to come forward with the options in terms of being able to, we believe, grow the population in a modest but significant way that's going to add to our economic base over time.

In addition, we're going to come forward, as Members know, with year 2 of the reduction exercise. We're prepared, and we're going to have that full discussion with committee, looking for their advice and feedback.

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

QUESTION 396-16(2)
POWER CORPORATION OPERATING
COSTS AND PERFORMANCES BONUSES

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to our Premier, Floyd Roland, who is the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corp. I'd like to ask our Premier today: have the power rates in the Northwest Territories ever gone down?

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the NWT Power Corporation goes before the Public Utilities Board, it does put in for requests, whether it's a general rate rider or a rate application and approval. There are times when within the PUB's overview of what's being asked, rate riders are put in place. When those rate riders come to their time allocation, they're backed out of the equation.

For example, the ones that are being looked for now are looking at a timeline of potentially 18 months. They potentially have the impact of about \$12 on the average consumer across the Northwest Territories. There's the example of when it goes down, but the general trend has been upward.

Mr. Hawkins: I didn't really hear the answer. I heard that if the rate rider they want doesn't get

approved, it has to be taken back. It's seen as a shell game that appears as if it went down, but it didn't. My question really is, once again: have the actual base rates, including the riders, et cetera, over the long term actually gone up or gone down?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Maybe the Member's cold is affecting his hearing.

I did say that the long term has been a general trend upward through that. When the Power Corporation, for example, Mr. Speaker, goes out for a resupply on fuel in our most remote northern communities, we end up paying the price at delivery. Then when we don't have enough dollars to meet the requirements, we have to put an application in for general rate application changes.

Over the years the trend has been, as with everything else in the North, a higher cost, whether it's employees we have to pay because we need to keep them on site or the cost of fuel or replacement of assets that either come into disrepair through age or fire sometimes.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, now that we've clearly defined that power rates haven't gone down, wouldn't you think that management bonuses would be tied or reflective of the direction that the rate is going?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Let's draw a direct comparison to the Government of the Northwest Territories and our public service. The fact is that every year it costs us more money. Whether or not there's an increased workload, a new negotiated settlement drives up our costs. Those that are within the purview or the benefit of that are affected.

Some people are not within that, so we make these allowances so that they're adjusted. But we have a competitive process we need to be in, and we try to adjust accordingly. The Power Corporation, as I stated earlier, has gone outside to review how it deals with the merit pay situation. Again, because they are at arm's length, part of that process is incorporated under reviewing the costs of doing business with the PUB when they do go forward for substantiation of increased costs.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why aren't bonuses tied to rate increases? In other words, if rate increases keep going up, why do bonuses keep going up? Why do bonuses keep getting awarded?

Hon. Floyd Roland: For the record I should state that in my initial takeover of this file I have asked the question about bonuses and what's being done and have requested further information.

The simple fact is that when you look at corporations across the country, there are processes in place that are governed by policies that are established on what can and can't be done. I can share in the discontent of Members of this House with the board to say that should be one of the last things that gets reviewed, but it is part of a process that's been in place for years. We have to be competitive in what we're trying to do.

As we're doing this — and I'll commit to Members here — the whole process of how we deliver energy, through electrical generation to delivery to the structure of the Power Corporation.... I met with the board and I told them that the fact we're passing on the cost of living to individuals means we can't leave any rock unturned in reviewing how we deliver programs and deliver electricity in the Northwest Territories. I've passed that message on, and we're going to have a look at how we do things in the Northwest Territories around power generation and delivery.

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

Returns to Written Questions

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

QUESTION 17-16(2):
EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY THE 2008–2009
BUDGET REDUCTIONS
(B. MCLEOD)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 17-16(2) asked by Ms. Wendy Bisaro on Wednesday, June 4, 2008, regarding the ratio of female and male employees affected by the 2008–2009 budget reductions.

The numbers and percentages of male and female affected employees are proportionate to the breakdown of female and male employees within the public service where the workforce, excluding casuals, is comprised of 63.6 per cent females and 36.4 per cent males. The numbers are very representative of the public service workforce.

The numbers and percentages are based on the number of affected employees on August 13, 2008, and include those employees in positions where an internal competition to determine which position would be affected is required. The numbers do not include employees who have terminated their employment or have accepted new positions.

- 1) Of the total number of affected employees there are 21 women.

- 2) Women represent 66 per cent of the total affected employees.
- 3) Of the total number of affected employees, there are eight single women.
- 4) Single women represent 25 per cent of the total affected employees.
- 5) Of the total affected employees there are three single men.
- 6) Single men represent 0.09 per cent of the total affected employees.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 19-16(2):
SUMMER STUDENTS HIRING PROCESS
(B. MCLEOD)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 19-16(2) asked by Mr. Robert Hawkins on Monday, June 9, 2008, regarding the summer student hiring process.

Summer students are hired as casual employees and are subject to the same terms and conditions as other casual employees. Between April 15 and August 15, students are given a higher hiring priority for casual employment with the GNWT than non-students registered in the same affirmative action category. Departments that request a summer student are provided with access to a list of available individuals which is filtered by their affirmative action status and field of study. Departments are advised that the affirmative action status applies to summer student employment and encouraged to hire in accordance with the policy where priority students can be matched to summer employment opportunities.

The start date of each summer student hired for the 2008 summer season varies from April 1 to July 7, 2008. Later this afternoon, at the appropriate time, I will table the document 2008 Summer Student Employment Start Dates.

Approximately 63 per cent of summer students hired in 2008 were previously hired through the Summer Student Employment Program. Of these, 32 per cent have been hired three or more times.

The number of summer students that will be attending a post-secondary institute for the first time this fall is 26.

The number of summer students that are finished post-secondary schooling and will not be returning in the fall is difficult to determine as a number of students who complete their initial diploma or degree continue on to pursue their education either in another field of study or in a graduate program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 21-16(2):
 ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT SPECIFICS IN
 MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
 (LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 21-16(2) asked by Mr. Beaulieu on June 10, 2008, regarding information on aboriginal employment statistics for Municipal and Community Affairs.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the information I have previously provided to Mr. Beaulieu via written correspondence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 22-16(2):
 RETURN OF SERVICE BURSARIES
 (LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 22-16(2) asked by Mr. Abernethy on June 10, 2008, regarding return of service bursaries.

Since the implementation of the Health and Social Services return of service bursaries, 361 individuals have been supported at a total cost of \$3,165,331.

To date, 80 Northerners are currently enrolled in school. The value of the return of service bursaries awarded to these individuals totals \$1,073,343 with an accumulated return of service commitment of 1,248 months.

Of the 361 individuals supported, 157 have completed their return of service obligation, amounting to 1,794 months of service at a cost of \$803,058.

Forty-nine individuals are currently employed in the Northwest Territories and are working towards meeting their return of service obligation. The total value of these awarded bursaries is \$896,421 totaling 1,583 months. To date, 757 months have been repaid.

Seventy-five individuals have defaulted, in whole or in part, on their return of service obligation. Combined, these individuals received \$392,509 and committed to 956 months of return of service of which only 205 months were returned. The amount of money that is outstanding totals \$317,221.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 23-16(2):
 USE OF LOCUM AND AGENCY NURSES
 IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
 (LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 23-16(2) asked by Mr. Hawkins on June 12, 2008, regarding the use of locum and agency nurses in the NWT.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has contracts with three different agencies. Each of these agencies charges a "finders" fee, which is a fee for locating the nurses that will work in the Health and Social Services authorities. The nurses are then placed on the Health and Social Services authority's payroll and are provided with compensation in accordance with the Union of Northern Workers collective agreement.

The "finders" fees for each agency are as follows:

Canadian Health Care Agency

- Community Health Nurse \$150/day
- Nurse in Charge \$175/day
- Hospital – Specialty \$125/day
- Hospital – General Duty \$100/day

Nightingale Nursing Group

- Community Health Nurse \$150/day
- Hospital Nurse \$125/day

Multi Options Nursing Inc.

- Community Health Nurse \$ 93/day
- Nurse Practitioner \$125/day
- Hospital Nurse \$ 78/day

Due to the increased costs associated with filling nurse vacancies through these contracts, the utilization of agency nurses is a last resort for Health and Social Services authorities. However, with the high demand for nurses and other health care professionals throughout Canada and internationally, the Health and Social Services authorities are often unable to hire nurses through the regular GNWT recruitment methods.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document providing information on the utilization and costs of agency nurses over the last two years for each Health and Social Services authority in the NWT.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 24-16(2):
 COSTS OF HAULING GRAVEL
 (LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 24-16(2) asked by Mr. Krutko on June 13, 2008, regarding the costs of hauling gravel.

A total of 11,065 cubic metres of crushed gravel was hauled from Inuvik to Aklavik to repair road related damages occurring from the 2006 flood. The total cost of this portion of the flood restoration

work was \$1,448,105.50, which included quarrying, crushing and stockpiling the materials in Inuvik and then barging the materials to Aklavik. In addition, the Department of Transportation incurred internal costs of approximately \$23,600 to manage the acquisition and transportation of these materials.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 25-16(2):
COSTS OF REGIONAL OFFICE OPERATIONS
(MILTENBERGER)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to a Written Question 25-16(2) asked by Mr. Robert Hawkins on June 16, 2008, regarding the cost of regional office operations.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document that provides the operating budgets for each individual regional office within the Department of Executive for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 fiscal years.

QUESTION 26-16(2):
COSTS OF NWT POWER CORPORATION
OPERATIONS
(ROLAND)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 26-16(2) asked by Mr. Hawkins on June 16, 2008, regarding the cost of NWT Power Corporation operations.

- 1) a) The Public Utilities Board (PUB) approves NTPC's revenue requirement at the corporate level (as opposed to the community level), and as a result, the income statement is recorded and audited on a corporate-wide basis and not by community. In order to be responsive to your question, the corporation has prepared the requested information on a community basis; however it is for illustrative purposes only. Certain costs such as interest expense, head office, operations support and year end adjustments and revenue (e.g., interest income) not directly attributable to any specific community have been allocated using assumptions based on the allocation methodology that is reviewed by interveners and approved by the PUB during phase 2 of the general rate application process.

Rates are set based on forecast sales and expenses. The rates in effect for the 2004-05 and 2005-06 years were set during the 2001-03 General Rate Application (GRA) based on forecasts done in 1999-2000. The rates in effect for the 2006-07 year were set during the 2006-08 GRA based on forecasts done in 2005-06.

Revenues and expenses in the income statements by community are based on the actual revenue and expenses for the year.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the Income Statement by Community.

- 1) b) NTPC receives payments from the GNWT under the residential Territorial Power Support Program (TPSP). The GNWT also makes TPSP payments to Northland Utilities (NWT) Ltd. and customers who qualify and apply under the commercial subsidy program.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the payments received by NTPC from the GNWT under the residential Territorial Power Support Program (TPSP) by community for the years ended March 31, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005. These amounts do not include any payments under the TPSP to Northland Utilities or under the commercial subsidy program, as it is administered directly by the GNWT.

- 2) c) The corporation has paid a dividend of \$3.5 million to the GNWT for the years ended March 31, 2008, 2007, 2006 and \$3.3 million in March 31, 2005. The dividend is paid out of corporate net income and not on a community by community basis. Total dividends since 1989 have been \$79,373,000 all of which have been used to fund the TPSP.

- 3) NTPC's profit is used for two purposes. Part of it is paid as a dividend to the GNWT to be used to fund the TPSP. The second purpose is to reinvest in assets to serve customers in order to reduce the requirement to fund assets with debt. The profit is based on a fair return on equity as set by the Public Utilities Board after a detailed review during the GRA process. The PUB determined that the fair return on NTPC's invested equity for the 2007-08 year was 9.25 per cent allowing NTPC the opportunity (it is not a guaranteed return) to earn approximately \$9 million.

The need for NTPC to make a profit is contained in its incorporating act, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act (NTPCA), its regulations and the Public Utilities Act (PUA). The regulations to the NTPCA created equity in NTPC when the GNWT purchased the shares in NTPC in 1988. This provided the beginning of the equity that NTPC's return (profit) were based on.

The NTPCA limits NTPC's borrowing to three times equity; therefore, it is necessary to have equity and profits to be able to borrow and continue the utility's operation. The NTPCA provides for NTPC to pay a dividend to the GNWT to fund the TPSP. Dividends are paid from profits.

The NTPCA provides that NTPC will be regulated by the PUB which will establish the rate base, rate structure and revenue requirement of NTPC. Under the PUA, the rates that NTPC customers pay are set by the PUB at a level that is "just and reasonable" for the customers and one that will provide a "fair return" for the utility.

Fair returns include excess revenue (profit) that is necessary for the operation of the utility. The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized a public utility's need to make a profit on its services and a fair return on its investment and its assets. In considering what constitutes a "fair return" for a public utility, the Court stated:

"By a fair return is meant that the company [public utility] will be allowed a large return on the capital invested in its enterprise (which will be net to the company) as it would receive if it were investing the same amount in other securities possessing an attractiveness, stability and certainty equal to that of the company's enterprise. [*Northwestern Utilities v. The City of Edmonton* [1929] S.C.R. 186 at page 192]."

In 2006 the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed why a utility can earn a profit, stating "the regulated company must be able to finance its operations, and any required investment, so that it can continue to operate in the future. [*ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. v. Alberta Energy and Utilities Board et al.*, [2006] 1 S.C.R. 140 at paragraphs 62, 63].

With regard to public utilities, the U.S. Supreme Court has also recognized that "it is important that there be enough revenue not only for operating expenses but also for the capital costs of the [public utility] business.

These include service on debt and dividends on the stock." [*Federal Power Commission et al. v. Hope Natural Gas Company*, 320 U.S. 591 (1944) at page 591].

Sections 28 and 29 of the NTPCA demonstrate the Legislature's intention that NTPC could earn a profit as these sections provide that the utility must declare dividends from time to time on its common and preferred shares.

As affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in *ATCO*, "the PUB approves or fixes utility rates which are estimated to cover expenses plus yield the utility a fair return or profit." [*ATCO* at paragraph 65]. When determining those rates, the Board considers many factors, some of which are set out at section 51 of the PUA:

- a) the cost of the property of a public utility used or required to be used to provide service to the public within the Territories at the time that property was first devoted to public use, and to

the prudent acquisition cost to the public utility, less depreciation, amortization or depletion;

- b) the necessary working capital of the public utility;
- c) all revenues and costs of the public utility;
- d) any excess revenue (or a deficiency of revenue) received by the utility; and
- e) the cost of any franchise tax or fee charged by a municipal taxing authority.

Both the NWT Legislature and the Supreme Court of Canada have recognized a public utility's need to earn a profit. This is necessary in order for NTPC to earn enough income to maintain assets (i.e., replace and repair broken equipment), to acquire new assets (like the Bluefish Hydro Station), to pay a dividend to its shareholder.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 27-16(2):
TRANSFER ASSIGNMENTS
IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE
(B. MCLEOD)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 27-16(2) asked by Mr. Robert C. McLeod on June 17, 2008, regarding transfer assignments in the territorial public service.

A transfer assignment can be used to provide an opportunity for an employee to gain a broader range of work experience, knowledge and skills to meet the changing demands of the work environment. It can also be used to address an operational pressure and make use of an employee's expertise. This is done by providing short-term assignments to employees in their home department or another location within the public service.

Some transfer assignment opportunities are advertised and filled through competition, either Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) wide or within a specific department. In other cases, such as development transfer assignments for long-term employees or short-term assignments to address operational needs, running a competition is not appropriate.

The Department of Human Resources does not have statistics on the number of transfer assignment opportunities that were filled through competition in the last two years. General information on transfer assignment is published each year in the Public Service Annual Report.

Over the past two years, April 2006 to March 2008, there have been 619 transfer assignments in the GNWT. Of these, 183 were for indigenous

aboriginal employees and 103 for indigenous non-aboriginal employees.

Of the 619 transfer assignments, 113 were to management jobs. This included 23 transfer assignments for indigenous aboriginal people and 13 for indigenous non-aboriginal staff.

Only 33 of the transfer assignments were to senior management jobs. Three of the transfer assignments were for indigenous aboriginal staff and four were for indigenous non-aboriginal staff.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 28-16(2):
FRAMEWORK FOR
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES
RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS
(LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 28-16(2) asked by Ms. Bisaro on June 17, 2008, regarding the Framework for GNWT Response to Homelessness.

As described in the Homelessness Framework, the GNWT plans and develops initiatives that support the housing continuum for homeless individuals. The GNWT provides \$1,395,628 annually to existing emergency and transitional housing options in the Northwest Territories (NWT). In addition, the GNWT has committed to provide funding for Bailey House and the Small Community Homelessness Fund (SCHF).

To date, the leading factors in directing homelessness initiatives are community input and community capacity. The SCHF provides funding to support the creation of emergency or transitional housing options for communities outside of Yellowknife. The annual budget for this fund is \$200,000. In 2007–08, the communities of Fort Providence, Wrigley and Hay River Reserve created additional emergency and transitional housing units.

In Yellowknife the GNWT is supporting the planning efforts of the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition (YHC). Since the inception of the Homelessness Framework, funds have been dedicated to the construction and operation of Bailey House, a transitional home for men. The GNWT contributed \$1,748,000 to the construction of Bailey House and committed \$200,000 annually for ongoing operational expenses. The YHC continues to plan for additional housing options, including transitional housing for women. Once the YHC submits a request, the GNWT will then determine if funding is available for additional projects.

In 2006–07 the funds for the NWT Housing Survey were redirected to the creation of the SCHF. This

decision was based on an MLA request to the former Minister of Health and Social Services. In response to community need, the funds were invested in programming as opposed to research.

A Territorial Homelessness Assistance Fund committee was established to review and provide funding allocations for the Emergency Financial Assistance Fund and the Emergency Travel Assistance Fund. The committee is made up of representatives from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Department of Health and Social Services, and sheltering agencies. The committee approved 21 assistance applications in 2007–08 and has approved 14 applications to date for this fiscal year.

To improve coordination on homelessness initiatives within the GNWT, an interdepartmental committee has been established. This committee meets on a monthly basis and is responsible for jointly supporting homelessness initiatives, administering the SCHF, advising and preparing materials for the Minister responsible for Homelessness, responding to NWT and publicly raised issues, communicating with service providers, increasing capacity, and coordinating funding information to service providers. The efforts of this committee have greatly benefited the joint knowledge of departments on the overall response and the momentum of projects related to homelessness.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 29-16(2) asked by Mr. Ramsay on June 17, 2008, regarding unfunded programs and positions at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

Currently there are no unfunded programs at Stanton Territorial Hospital. There are, however, 22 unfunded positions working within the programs at Stanton Territorial Hospital at an average cost per position of \$85,000 to \$95,000. We are reviewing all unfunded positions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 30-16(2):
SPORT RECREATION AND
YOUTH DIVISION TRAVEL SUMMARY
(LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 30-16(2) asked by Mr. Jacobson on June 17, 2008, regarding sport, recreation and youth division travel summary.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the information I have previously provided to Mr. Jacobson via written correspondence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 31-16(2) asked by Mr. Jacobson on June 17, 2008, regarding funding provided to sports and recreation partners.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the information I have previously provided to Mr. Jacobson via written correspondence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 32-16(2):
AUTISM POLICY INFORMATION
(LEE)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 32-16(2) asked by Mr. Hawkins on June 18, 2008, regarding autism policy information.

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) does not operate under a policy that is specific to autism. Services for children with disabilities are delivered within the context of the integrated service delivery model, which allows for access to rehabilitation services, referral to specialists and, if necessary, voluntary support agreements through the Child and Family Services Act. These services are based on the child's needs, not their diagnosis. Families, service providers and Health and Social Services Authorities (HSSAs) have urged the Government of the Northwest Territories to avoid a silo approach that limits access and creates discrepancies in services families can access for children with varying disabilities. The services that are offered in the Northwest Territories (NWT) are individualized to the needs of the child, and service providers receive training specific to methods and interventions that are applicable to Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A framework for services for children with disabilities is being developed. The DHSS, in partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Stanton Territorial Health Authority (STHA), are currently consulting with service providers, families, and HSSAs to determine gaps in existing services and a recommended service delivery model. The framework is examining models of service delivery in other jurisdictions and adapting this knowledge to a NWT context. The framework will describe

existing services, access points, coordination mechanisms and additional services that are being added to the continuum as a result of approved appropriation funding. As well, further recommended additions to services are being included for future planning.

Since services are based on the child's needs and not their diagnosis, there are no arrangements or agreements with service organizations providing treatment specific to autism. However, the DHSS does provide base funding to four HSSAs for the delivery of rehabilitation services, such as occupational therapy, speech language therapy, physiotherapy and audiology. The STHA receives funding for the child development team to provide rehabilitation intervention for children with complex needs. As well, HSSAs receive base funding for the provision of voluntary service agreements. Through contribution agreements with HSSAs, service organizations such as the Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Association for Community Living are funded to provide services such as respite services, support and interventions. STHA has a contract with Capital Health in Alberta for the provision of services that are not available in the NWT. Generally, this agreement covers more acute services, such as intensive care unit care, but also covers specialized rehabilitation and assessments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 33-16(2):
GNWT SUBSIDIES BY COMMUNITY
(MILTENBERGER)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 33-16(2) asked by Mr. Bromley on June 18, 2008, regarding GNWT subsidies by community.

Information has been compiled that indicates that the GNWT spent approximately \$54 million on subsidy programs for 2007-08 fiscal year. The subsidy programs include:

The Territorial Power Subsidy program for both residential and commercial customers;

- 1) Heating oil and gasoline subsidies through the Petroleum Products Division;
- 2) Senior's Fuel Subsidy;
- 3) Public Housing Rental Subsidy program;
- 4) Homeownership Repair Program;
- 5) Homeownership Rental Program;
- 6) Homeownership Mortgage Program;
- 7) Non-Government Organizations Mortgage and Rental Subsidy;
- 8) Subsidized band council leases;

9) Subsidized occupancy agreement for the Native Women's Association.

At the appropriate time, I will table a document that identifies the expenditures incurred on each of these subsidy programs for the 2007–08 fiscal year at the department and community level.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 34-16(2):
INFORMATION ON POSITIONS AFFECTED
BY THE 2008–2009 BUDGET
(B. MCLEOD)

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 34-16(2) asked by Mr. Glen Abernethy on Thursday, June 19, 2008, requesting a comprehensive list of all positions being deleted as a result of the 2008–2009 budget and a listing of new positions that were approved and created.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table two comprehensive lists. The first list includes the positions that are being deleted as a result of the 2008–2009 budget and contains: the status of the positions in August 2008, whether or not the positions were vacant on June 16, 2008. The second list, prepared by the Financial Management Board Secretariat, consists of new positions created and approved with the passing of the 2008–2009 budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 35-16(2) asked by Mr. Hawkins on June 19, 2008, regarding contract information with the Government of Nunavut.

Stanton Territorial Health Authority (STHA) provides a number of services to residents of the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut, including rehabilitation services through travel clinics. These services include speech language pathology (SLP) and occupational therapy (OT). These arrangements for services have been in place since the division of the Northwest Territories (NWT) and the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

In the case of rehabilitation services, the arrangements with Nunavut involve all Kitikmeot communities receiving visits twice per year by SLP and OT. Each of these visits takes place over a four to five day period, depending on travel requirements. There are additional time requirements associated with these travel clinics for preparation and follow-up. In the 2007–2008 fiscal years, OT provided a total of 80 service days to

Nunavut, and SLP provided 60 service days. All of the OT and SLP staff share in the provision of services to Nunavut. STHA also sees Nunavut client as inpatients: 154 for OT in 2007–2008; 16 in SLP in 2007–2008; and outpatients: 38 in OT and 19 in SLP in 2007–2008 with travel clinics providing a continuum of that care.

Invoicing for these services occurs regularly to the Government of Nunavut. The daily per diem for SLP and OT for travel clinics is \$1,200. In addition, the actual travel costs are billed to Nunavut. Officials from the Department of Health and Social Services and Financial Management Board Secretariat are involved in discussions with the officials from the Government of Nunavut to collect outstanding receivables, to which there may be potential for write off.

The staffing levels for SLP and OT at STHA are:

- seven full-time equivalent (FTE) - SLP
- 0.5 FTE - SLP program assistant
- 8.3 FTE - OT
- 1.0 FTE - OT program assistant
- 1.5 FTE - OT aide

Historically, the SLP positions have had at least one vacancy over the last two to three years, and at some times two vacancies, primarily due to maternity leaves. Unfortunately, SLP are extremely difficult to recruit, as there is a shortage of these individuals nationally. In contrast, the OT area has been fairly stable with little turnover and very few vacancies over the last several years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, 2008–2009. I further wish to table my Return to Written Question 25-6(2), entitled Budgets for the Department of Executive Regional Offices, and Return to Written Question 33-16(2), entitled GNWT Subsidies by Community.

Document 75-16(2), Supplementary
Appropriation No. 2, 2008–2009, tabled.

Document 76-16(2), Budgets for the Department of Executive Regional Offices, tabled.

Document, 77-16(2), GNWT Subsidies by Community, tabled.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 19-16(2) I wish to table the following document entitled 2008 Summer Student Employment Start Dates.

Document 78-16(2), 2008 Summer Student Employment Start Dates, tabled.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 34-16(2) I wish to table the following two documents entitled 2008–2009 Position Reductions and Summary of Active Positions and Growth. Thank you.

Document 79-16(2), 2008–2009 Position Reductions, tabled.

Document 80-16(2), Summary of Active Positions and Growth, tabled.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table four documents. Further to my Return to Written Question 21-16(2) I wish to table the following document entitled Aboriginal Employee Statistics, Sport, Recreation, and Youth Division, Municipal and Community Affairs. Further to my Return to Written Question 23-16(2) I wish to table the following document entitled Use of Agency Nurses in the Northwest Territories. Further to my Return to Written Question 30-16(2) I wish to table the following document entitled Travel Summary: Sport, Recreation and Youth Division, Municipal and Community Affairs for the Fiscal Years 2005–2006, 2006–2007, and 2007–2008. Further to my Return to Written Question 31-16(2) I wish to table the following document entitled Funding Allocations NWT Sport and Recreation Partners. Thank you.

Document 81-16(2), Aboriginal Employee Statistics, Sport, Recreation, and Youth Division, Municipal and Community Affairs, tabled.

Document 82-16(2), Use of Agency Nurses in the Northwest Territories, tabled.

Document 83-16(2), Travel Summary: Sport, Recreation and Youth Division, Municipal and Community Affairs for the Fiscal Years 2005–2006, 2006–2007, and 2007–2008, tabled.

Document 84-16(2), Funding Allocations NWT Sport and Recreation Partners, tabled.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Further to my Return to Written Question 26-16(2) I wish to table the following two documents entitled Territorial Power Support Program, Payments Received by the NTPC, and NWT Power Corporation, Income Statement by Community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Document 85-16(2), Territorial Power Support Program, Payments Received by NTPC, tabled.

Document 86-16(2), NWT Power Corporation, Income Statement by Community, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 14, tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 42.23(2) of the Public Service Act I wish to table the annual report of the Equal Pay Commissioner for the Northwest Territories for the period of July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008. Pursuant to section 99 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act I hereby table the annual report for the calendar year 2007 of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Document 87-16(2), Equal Pay Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly of the NWT Annual Report for the Period July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, tabled.

Document 88-16(2), Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the NWT 2007 Annual Report, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Item 14, tabling of documents, Mr. Clerk.

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a response to Petition 2-16(2), tabled by Mrs. Jane Groenewegen on May 26, 2008. I also wish to table a response to Petition 3-16(2), tabled by Mr. Kevin Menicoche on May 26, 2008. I wish to table a response to Petition 4-16(2), tabled by Mr. Kevin Menicoche on May 16, 2008. I wish to table a response to Petition 5-16(2), tabled by Mr. Kevin Menicoche on May 26, 2008. I wish to table a response to Petition 7-16(2), tabled by Mr. Menicoche on June 2, 2008. Finally, I wish to table a response to Petition 8-16(2), tabled by Mr. Menicoche on June 2, 2008.

Document 89-16(2), Response to Petition 2-16(2), Reductions in the Public Service; Response to Petition 3-16(2), Regional Position Reductions in Sport, Recreation and Youth Area; Response to Petition 4-16(2), Fort Simpson Airport Maintenance Services; Response to Petition 5-16(2), Cutbacks to Public Services in Nahendeh; Response to Petition 7-16(2), Cutbacks to Public Services in Fort Simpson; Response to Petition 8-16(2), Fort Simpson Airport Maintenance Services, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 17-16(2)
REFERRAL OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT
80-16(2), SESSIONAL STATEMENT,
TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, October 3, 2008, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Minister's Statement 80-16(2), Sessional Statement, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MOTION 18-16(2)
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT
TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, October 3, 2008, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that this Assembly formally revoke the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the Hon. Norman Yakeleya as a Member of the Executive Council.

And further, that this Assembly recommend that a new Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council.

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Notices of motion. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

MOTION 19-16(2)
REFERRAL OF TD 75-16(2),
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION
NO. 2, 2008-2009,
TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, October 3, 2008, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Tabled Document 75-16(2), Supplementary Appropriation

No. 2, 2008-2009, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Motions

MOTION 17-16(2)
REFERRAL OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT
80-16(2), SESSIONAL STATEMENT,
TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
(MOTION CARRIED)

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Abernethy: WHEREAS Minister's Statement 80-16(2), Sessional Statement, has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the Sessional Statement requires further consideration;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Minister's Statement 80-16(2), Sessional Statement, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Minister's Statement 80-16(2) Sessional Statement is referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MOTION 18-16(2):
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT
TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(MOTION CARRIED)

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Ms. Bisaro: WHEREAS pursuant to Section 61.(1) of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of Members of the Executive Council;

AND WHEREAS pursuant to Section 61(2) of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, the persons appointed hold office during the pleasure of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Assembly, pursuant to these powers, has chosen the Honourable Norman Yakeleya to sit as a Member of the Executive Council;

NOW THEREFORE, I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that this Assembly formally revoke the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the Honourable Norman Yakeleya as a Member of the Executive Council;

AND FURTHER, that this Assembly recommend that a new Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to request a recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Question has been called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour please stand.

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Roland, Mr. M. McLeod, Mr. B. McLeod, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. R. McLeod, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed please stand. All those abstaining please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 16 for, none opposed, none abstaining. The motion is unanimously carried.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Speaker: Item 17, motions. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

MOTION 19-16(2):
REFERRAL OF TD 75-16(2),
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION
NO. 2, 2008-2009,
TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
(MOTION CARRIED)

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

Unanimous consent granted.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: WHEREAS the Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, 2008-2009 document has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the supplementary appropriation document requires detailed consideration;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Tabled Document 75-16(2), Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, 2008-2009, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Tabled Document 75-16(2), Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, 2008-2009, referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

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. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 23, Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the Day for Thursday, October 2, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 5) Returns to Oral Questions
- 6) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 7) Acknowledgements
- 8) Oral Questions
- 9) Written Questions
- 10) Returns to Written Questions
- 11) Replies to Opening Address
- 12) Petitions
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion

- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 - 17) Motions
 - 18) First Reading of Bills
 - 19) Second Reading of Bills
 - 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- TD 75-16(2): Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, 2008–2009

- MS 80-16(2): Sessional Statement
- 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 Thursday, October 2, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 3:44 p.m.