



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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(Great Slave)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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Mr. Bob Bromley
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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tuesday, October 7, 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. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland.

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Mr. Clerk, I understand that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Hon. Anthony W.J. Whitford, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills. Would you please attend to the Commissioner.

Assent to Bills

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (Hon. Tony Whitford): Pleased be seated. Monsieur le président and Members of the Legislative Assembly, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories I am pleased to assent to the following bill:

Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2008–2009

Merci beaucoup, merci and quyanainni.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Point of Order

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make a point of order in relation to an answer provided by the Premier, the Hon. Floyd Roland, in response to Oral Question 428-16(2) on October 6, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to Rule 23(m), which states that a Member will be called to order if the Member “introduces any matter in debate that offends the practices and precedents of the Assembly.”

Page 30 of the unedited Hansard from October 6, 2008, reads: “I offered some opportunities for improvement from the last bit of criticism I had about strategic initiative committees. I got a response from the Chair of P&P on that. I guess that offer wasn’t good enough either.”

In his response Mr. Roland, the Premier, referred to matters pertaining to a confidential exchange of information that he had with members of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning. The Premier’s reference to these matters and discussions offends the long standing convention of committee and Cabinet confidentiality, which extends to committee documents, transcripts and correspondence.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I will allow a bit of debate on the point of order. If you want to speak to the point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were having a discussion in the House yesterday about the Members’ desire to be more involved in the activities and actions of this government that are initiated by the Cabinet and by the Premier. In response to that — I suppose in an effort to defend the government’s record — the Premier made reference to an offer that was for Regular Members to participate on certain committees.

As Chair of P and P I was tasked to respond to the government, the Premier and Cabinet that we did not wish to participate on those committees. I think that particular bit of information was not in any way otherwise in the public realm. With our style of government I think it’s very important that we draw a distinction between those matters that are tabled public documents before the House and those pieces of correspondence and communication that take place in relation to our committee work and our interaction with the government through our committee work.

I do believe that the Premier erred in making reference to that. As a Member asking a question, I was not in a good position to defend the reasons that decision was made. I don’t think it should have been divulged in the way it was. I think this could lead to a blurring of the lines with respect to this type of communication, which should remain confidential.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the point of order, the Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The response I gave in question period yesterday that the Member has chosen to raise as a point of order.... In fact, when you look at the way we do our business as the Government of the Northwest Territories, in this forum there are many times there is reference to the direction the government or myself as Premier or one of the Ministers takes. In trying to defend our positions, we have to at times reference and let the people of the Territories know more of what's happening.

I think it's fair debate to respond to issues raised in this House that Members make a point of or raise. Maybe I wasn't crafty enough to not reference a letter from the Chair of P and P. I didn't go into detail about what that was. The simple fact is there are times in this House when we make reference to ongoing discussions or try to respond to Members on issues that do come up that need, I guess, weight on both sides of the issue being raised.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, I was referencing some correspondence I had received and on that basis responded. As people see this debate, and they only do see a small part of the debate of this House, they need to see both sides of the equation. I used that as information. If I've offended the Member in that area, I would apologize.

The simple fact is that Members have as well at times made reference to correspondence we've given to them, and we haven't stood up and said you can't speak to that issue. The fact is that our correspondence between us, at times, is the centre of that discussion. It would be pretty hard to have any form of debate or discussion or even responses to Members if we weren't from time to time able to respond to correspondence we did receive from Members.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that in trying to respond to the Member, all I did was put more information out there that all Members are aware of in this House.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the point of order. Seeing there is no further debate on the point of order, I will take it under advisement and return at a later date with my ruling.

Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 91-16(2) GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ENERGY PRIORITIES

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time this afternoon, as the Chair of the

Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, I will table this government's Energy Priorities Framework.

This document outlines the priority actions that we need to undertake to address our short and long term energy needs. Our initiatives are presented in five key action areas as set out in the 2007 NWT Energy Plan:

- energy conservation and efficiency;
- alternative energy and emerging technologies;
- energy development and supply;
- energy policy and planning; and
- reducing the Government of the Northwest Territories' own energy use.

Heading into the winter season, NWT residents are facing higher costs for energy. The immediate and most effective response we have to addressing this challenge is to conserve and to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, businesses and public buildings.

Since the release of the NWT Energy Plan the GNWT has invested over \$1 million, largely through the Arctic Energy Alliance, to ensure NWT residents have the tools and information they need to manage their energy use. We have also invested significantly in finding ways to cut our own energy costs and in putting alternative energy technologies in the hands of our residents and communities.

However, as a government, Mr. Speaker, our approach to high energy costs must be balanced between these types of short term actions and the development of long term solutions to our energy challenges. We must invest in ways to reduce our reliance on imported diesel and develop our own local energy sources.

For this reason the priorities framework that I am presenting today also outlines initiatives such as:

- the development of our hydro potential;
- expanding the use of biomass;
- developing wind energy;
- investigating our geothermal potential; and
- pursuing the use of Northwest Territories natural gas to heat and power our communities.

The upcoming 2009–2010 business planning process will provide all Members an opportunity to discuss the potential for significant investments in these alternative energy sources.

In the coming weeks we will be releasing two additional documents for public discussion in support of our energy priorities framework. The draft NWT hydro strategy proposes a number of actions to support the long term development of our world class hydro potential, and a discussion paper on the review of electricity regulation, generation and distribution will engage residents and communities in a broad discussion on the principles upon which our electricity system is based.

Mr. Speaker, these documents are part of the broad and coordinated approach to meet the stated priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly:

- to pursue initiatives that will reduce the cost of living and, in particular, rising energy costs;
- to work proactively with residents, communities and industry on means to address and mitigate climate change; and
- to advance alternative energy initiatives.

I look forward to receiving the continued input of all Members of the Legislative Assembly on these initiatives and to working together to advance our government's important work towards a sustainable energy future for all residents of the Northwest Territories.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 92-16(2)
FUEL PRICING IN YELLOWKNIFE

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week a number of concerns and questions were raised by Members about the pricing of fuel in the Northwest Territories and the degree of competition in the Yellowknife retail fuel market.

The first step in assessing a situation should be to review the available information. The Department of Finance has compiled information on gasoline and diesel fuel prices in Yellowknife and other major cities in Canada from its own database and from outside sources. Unfortunately, these numbers are not available for heating oil.

The department conducts quarterly price surveys of Yellowknife gasoline retailers as part of its administration of the Petroleum Products Tax Act. These surveys show frequent differences in gasoline prices. In fact, every survey since 1995 has shown price variation among Yellowknife retailers.

Information published by MJ Ervin, an independent company reporting weekly fuel prices across Canada, shows that the difference between Yellowknife prices and Edmonton prices has been

shrinking over the past nine years. For the past year the difference has averaged just over 20 cents a litre.

Although transportation is a major reason for the difference, taxes, labour costs, utilities and construction costs all contribute to the difference. These numbers also show that prices in Yellowknife are much less volatile than those in other Canadian locations.

Mr. Speaker, this government is concerned about the cost of living in the North. The cost of energy, including gasoline and heating oil, is an important part of the cost of living. Government regulation of prices makes sense where there is a monopoly, as in the case of electricity, but there is no evidence of lack of competition in the case of gasoline, particularly in Yellowknife.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will be tabling a document that summarizes this information.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 93-16(2)
WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK
OCTOBER 1-7, 2008

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being healthy begins with having a healthy start as a baby. It is now proven beyond any doubt that babies who are breastfed have a head start on maintaining good health throughout their lives.

In the Northwest Territories we are making exceptional progress at promoting breastfeeding as a better way to nourish infants. Annually we join other countries in recognizing World Breastfeeding Week from October 1 to 7 as a way to promote a sense of well-being and to keep breastfeeding a traditional practice and socially accepted norm when it comes to feeding babies.

This year on October 11 the Department of Health and Social Services will partner with community Canadian prenatal nutrition programs, nutritionists, community workers, public health units and Moms, Boobs and Babies in Yellowknife to join the rest of the world by participating in the eighth annual Quintessence Foundation Breastfeeding Challenge.

Breastfeeding mothers will globally unite at 11 a.m. on that day. One aspect of the challenge is for a region like the Territories to be able to say it has the most babies breastfeeding at one site at one time.

In the NWT last year a total of 35 babies from Yellowknife and Fort Smith were part of the challenge. This year we hope to have ten communities registered for the challenge, with numerous mothers and babies signing up to join in.

As of September 30, six NWT communities have registered. I would like to thank the organizers for taking the time to register their communities.

Mr. Speaker, this challenge provides an opportunity to globally celebrate breastfeeding and demonstrate promotion, protection and support for breastfeeding women and their families. It recognizes breastfeeding as the gold standard in terms of nourishment. Its benefits include the lower risk of many diseases as well. Breastfeeding helps healthy brains develop.

Later this year I'd like to ask the public to look out for our NWT campaign posters and T-shirts on which are photos of well known, successful Northerners who all have one thing in common: they each were breastfed. Mr. Speaker, I will be one of them.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 94-16(2)
LAUNCH OF THE SUPPORT TO
ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT POLICY PROGRAM

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, our government's new Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy officially took effect on September 2, 2008. This policy, which is known as the SEED policy, was developed in response to a major review of the department's business programs completed in 2006.

One of the key themes that emerged from our review was that GNWT business programs should provide a chance for growth, employment and self-sufficiency to a wider scope of businesses outside of the Northwest Territories' major centres.

We heard that our programs should focus on the needs of our clients, work more effectively with banks and other partners, and incorporate a streamlined and simple approach. I can assure you today, Mr. Speaker, that the SEED policy meets all these challenges.

This program will better serve the needs of prospective businesses in smaller communities where funding contributions are often difficult to attain through normal banking channels. It allows for support in specific sectors and continues to provide support to those self-employed in the traditional economy, arts and film sectors. It also provides for economic development on an individual community level and includes support for related activities and initiatives such as arts festivals or community economic promotions.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Standing Committee on Economic Development and

Infrastructure for the guidance they have provided through our extensive review and consultation process.

Mr. Speaker, the SEED policy, which replaces the Business Development Fund and Grants to Small Business programs, reflects our Assembly's goal to promote a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices. In particular, it responds to our stated priorities: to promote development that reduces regional and community disparities and to support the development of sustainable local economies through small business and community based sectors.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Minister McLeod. The Hon. Premier, Minister Roland.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 95-16(2)
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Hon. Michael McLeod will be absent from the House today, tomorrow and Thursday to attend the Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Housing meeting in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DIAMOND JENNESS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I'm going to take a page out of Mr. Menicoche's book and stand up every day and talk about the Diamond Jenness Secondary School, like he did about the gymnasium in Nahanni Butte until he finally got a response.

Mr. Speaker, I've had students talk in this House many times about the Diamond Jenness Secondary School. I'm sure Members are all too familiar with the problems that face that school.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, one more time, this is a school that is more than 35 years old, and it has had no significant upgrades done to it. It is too cold in the winter. It is too hot in the summer. It has air quality issues. It had asbestos wrap on the heating pipes, which resulted in the school having to be closed down; this kept being done.

Mr. Speaker, to this day I myself have never actually laid eyes on those air quality reports that were conducted and reported on. I would like to see those air quality reports. I would like to ask if the

Minister of Public Works will table those in the House.

Mr. Speaker, there has been way too much deferred maintenance on this building. There are issues with the foundation. It continues to get worse when it is not attended to. I don't know what it's going to take to get some action on this school. We've had Ministers down. We've gone on tours. We've pointed out all the problems. We've had the renovation or replacement of the school red flagged — whatever that means. I won't be raising any white flags on this one. There's going to be no surrender. I want something done about Diamond Jenness.

We've got money for all kinds of other things. The students and the educators in Hay River deserve better than what we try to educate our students in at Hay River. We already have other school students in Hay River taking up the classroom space in the boardroom of one of our local hotels. I mean, we have some serious issues. Like I said, we seem to have a lot of money for other things.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not trying to prescribe the solution. I'm not saying it's the replacement of the school. Perhaps it is a major mechanical upgrade. That is a formula that has to be worked out and planned to be worked out by PWS. What we do have in hand is a functional review of this building that says this building is in serious need of attention.

Later today I am going to have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to find out what he is going to do about the conditions that exist at the Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BOARD REFORM EXERCISE

Mr. Hawkins: The die has been cast, Mr. Speaker, and this government seems to have set in motion the decision to implement the regional services board model as a quintessential advantage of board reform. I agree there are too many boards out there, and we should examine their mandates and strive for efficiencies where we can find them, especially during times of fiscal crisis and restraint.

What's odd about the situation is that it's no different from the repeated request made by me and many other Members for program review before slicing and dicing. What is interesting here, as usual, is that any decision that requires a soft glove approach becomes one of urgency and is greased through the system. I want to highlight my official concern and caution, as I can hear the Finance Minister resharpening his boning knives,

which have only recently become dull on our public service because of the lack of direction.

The intent behind consolidating health and social services, education and housing boards may not be bad in principle by itself, but when considering all of those mandates under one regional board, the problems start to surface on their own. I fear that this government has come up with an implementation model and put into motion an implementation process without costing this issue by realizing at what cost.

Can anyone provide any analysis of the costs of this change? I doubt it. Can anyone provide any analysis of the efficiency of this change? I doubt that too. The Finance Minister, as always, seems convinced of the virtues of his direction and is full of wishful thinking about the implementation of this task facing him.

I look forward to hearing about what he has identified as a proposal here in Yellowknife for three school boards, a local health authority and, of course, the Stanton Territorial Hospital. I also look forward to the engagement of our public stakeholders in an open and transparent manner about the problems we face with this approach and how they plan to solve these problems with their approach.

Mr. Speaker, I only hope that board reform or government policy isn't mandated by either wishful thinking or any magic eight ball. I prefer community based boards that respond to community based needs on their structures. I'm concerned that people will lose faith, local control and input if everything is rolled up into a regional board.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest a caring and a modest approach, one the Finance Minister is characteristically not familiar with. I support board reform and efficiency, but don't take the community relationship out of the factor just to save a few dollars.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LACK OF NURSING SERVICE IN WRIGLEY

Mr. Menicoche: [Statement delivered in aboriginal language and then in English.]

Mr. Speaker, one long standing issue facing the community of Wrigley has been a lack of permanent nursing and policing services. The government's position has been that until there are police stationed in Wrigley, Health and Social Services would not station a permanent nurse there.

The situation has changed, Mr. Speaker. There is now a guarantee that there will soon be policing services in that community, and I want to thank the Minister of Justice and the Government of the Northwest Territories for that.

On the same note, I do have to say that the Department of Health and Social Services has indicated that they will not be moving forward with placing a permanent nurse in that community. The funding is available to station a nurse in the community, so why the delay in meeting and agreeing to the commitment that was previously made?

Wrigley has been without permanent nursing services for many years. Communities with residents deserve some level of assurance that they can receive essential health care when they need it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the goals we established at the beginning of this Assembly was a commitment to help foster vibrant and healthy communities and individuals. How can we possibly meet that goal if our smallest communities are denied access to locally available, basic health services?

Wrigley and other small communities in the NWT deserve better from this government. I urge the government to live up to its commitment to the people of Wrigley and station a permanent nurse in that community. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANGILALUK SCHOOL EXPANSION

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last year I have had the honour as the MLA of Nunakput to travel across this beautiful territory. Since then I have seen many stunning schools. Don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker; the students deserve these comprehensive facilities, but so do we.

In the Nunakput community of Tuktoyaktuk, at Mangilaluk School, we are seriously overcrowded. Mangilaluk School desperately needs an extension to accommodate the growing needs of the community — where you have the vice-principal of the school, the counsellor and the classroom assistants all sharing the library, where you have students having to wait for or be refused use of the library because it is being used, where you have the school supplies being stored in a sea can donated by NTCL, where you have a bathroom for both men and women, where the teachers have to eat their lunch in the hallway. This is the situation at Mangilaluk School.

This is the shame of the government. The community schools are supposed to be a focal point of the community, where activities and gatherings and, most importantly, where learning takes place, but when a school lacks even the most basic standards, the whole community suffers. That, Mr. Speaker, is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, students should be able to go to a school they enjoy and feel comfortable in. Educating is not only books and tests; it's the building, the environment, the teachers, the community.

One of the government's pledges was to provide good and equal education for all residents of the Northwest Territories, but when it comes to smaller communities, schools are far below large centre standards such as Yellowknife's. I wonder when this government is going to put their money where their mouth is.

Mr. Speaker, trades and learning skills must be promoted by this government. What better way of promoting these skills than a home ec, shop or industrial technical learning expansion centre? When the Territories begin some megaprojects, we are going to need thousands of northern skilled workers.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Is this government going to wait until we have to teach geometry in the hallways and the bathrooms and staff have to eat their lunches in a donated sea can, until students and counsellors have to talk about their personal challenges in the library and not in a private space? Or is this government going to commit to the building expansion of Mangilaluk School that the community needs so badly?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDERS FACILITY IN FORT RESOLUTION

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [Statement delivered in aboriginal language and then in English.]

I would like to talk about the elders facility in Fort Resolution. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have raised this issue previously, and it is a very important issue for the communities.

Currently, ailing elders are sent out in the community for care and assistance. With some effort by the government and the community the

situation can be changed to allow the elders to remain in the community. This is something the community has been requesting for a long time.

Mr. Speaker, I know this facility would require some renovations to meet the special needs and codes required for such use. When elders are sent away, costs are incurred. These costs could be converted to cover the costs of upgrades and caring for and providing assistance to elders who remain in the community.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, there will always be cases where the elder must be sent out, but for the most part many of these elderly patients could be cared for in the facility by the community, by local workers and the families. Leaving the community means leaving the comfort zone they have been used to all their lives. Many times they are placed in a completely foreign and impersonal environment. Family and friends do not have the means to travel and visit, leaving the elders alone for extended periods of time and staying with only strangers.

Mr. Speaker, the support of family and friends plays an important role in the day to day well-being of the elders. It's no secret that without this support, the condition of many of these elders soon gets progressively worse. Eventually their will to live is gone. Recently we had a case where an elder was moved to Yellowknife. He and his wife of 55 years were inconsolable. When they finally got to see each other, all they could do was hold each other and cry. In this day and age this cannot be the best government can do.

Mr. Speaker, I know we are in the environment of cutbacks, but some costs are necessary, and this is one such situation. As the government it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure the elderly are properly cared for in their home communities and that the dignity to live out their final days in their own environment is not taken away from them.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CAR SEAT SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since last November when my son was born, my wife and I have had to install, take out and reinstall car seats to safely transport our son. Like other parents, we read the instructions and do the best we can to install the car seat. Currently in the Northwest Territories there is nowhere a parent can go to have a car seat inspected to see if it has been recalled or properly installed.

This is a concern, because car crashes are the number one cause of death for children from birth to 14 years. In a recent report submitted to the federal Health Minister, Tony Clement, Dr. Kelly

Leitch reported that there are over 6,000 head injuries per year — a figure that she states is grossly underestimated — and that the vast majority of these are caused by car accidents. Her recommendation is that each territory and province have a site where parents or grandparents can go to ensure their children or grandchildren are transported safely in a vehicle.

Again, Mr. Speaker, today there isn't one place, whether it is in Yellowknife, Hay River or Inuvik, where parents can go to have that seat checked for proper installation. Currently there is a proposal that has gone forward to the Department of Health and Social Services asking for some funding to bring a trainer to Yellowknife and to Inuvik to train 16 people in becoming St. John Ambulance's car seat installation educators. The successful participants would then become educators in their home communities.

The course will also include a discussion on how to offer community based clinics and a discussion on the use of used child seats and loaner programs. The successful participants of the training will educate others on how to properly select and install child seats. The goal will not be to have them become installers but, rather, educators, to spread the knowledge as widely as possible across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, funding this project and this proposal makes sense. I'm not sure why we are continually finding excuses not to fund the training program when we know there is a gap in service. It will make the transport of our greatest resource, our children, much more safe and also provide those parents who need advice or guidance with an outlet to ensure they're selecting the right car seat and installing it properly for their children. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DOWNSTREAM IMPACTS OF TAR SANDS DEVELOPMENTS

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I attended the world premiere of the Akaitcho Territory Dene First Nations film *Tu Beta Ts'ena*, which is "Water is Life." At that film we were introduced to Terry Woolf, who did the filming, Alex Czarnecki, who was the director, and Norm Glowach, who wrote some original songs for the movie.

Also during the film, the facilitator was encouraging members of the audience to go out into the foyer after the meeting and get copies of some letters they had prepared to be distributed to the Premier of the Northwest Territories, the Premier of Alberta

and the Prime Minister of Canada. As part of my Member's statement I would like to read from the letter they are directing to the Premier of the Northwest Territories. It goes as follows:

"Dear Premier Floyd Roland,

"I just viewed the premiere of *Tu Beta Ts'ena*, "Water is Life", a film production of the Akaitcho Territory Dene First Nation. This documentary confirms my concerns that there must be an immediate halt to new tar sands development and extensive study of the cumulative impact of current oil and gas development prior to further exploration.

"We need to know the cumulative effects to assess the impact of this industrial development on the water, land, animals and people who live downstream from the tar sands in the Northwest Territories and Northern Alberta. I am shocked to learn how little consultation there has been with people living downstream. Responsible development is a matter of justice. I urge you to protect the health, culture, environment and economy of the Northwest Territories by joining the growing call for a halt to new tar sands development and adequate study of the cumulative effects of development to date. Your constituents deserve no less.

"I look forward to hearing what you are doing to protect this important ecosystem and people who live here."

Mr. Speaker, I imagine that many of these letters will be sent to the Premier over the next couple of days, and I encourage him and Cabinet to take them seriously.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REORGANIZATION AND RENEWAL OF NWT POWER CORPORATION

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are all painfully aware that we will have to swallow an increase to our power rates this winter. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation is the provider of power to most NWT communities, but it does not enable progress in the area of power generation for communities. It creates problems for us.

There is a fundamental problem with the mandate of the corporation and the regulatory regime it operates under. We're bombarded with messages urging us to conserve energy, to do all possible to reduce consumption for the benefit of both the environment — the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions — and the consumer — less energy

used equals lower electricity costs. I agree that we should be trying to conserve for both of these reasons.

But hold on. This logic is counterproductive if our power comes from the NTPC. The more we reduce our energy consumption, the less power we use. The less power we use, the more NTPC revenues drop. The more their revenues drop, the more riders they add to our bills. When NTPC cannot generate enough revenues to meet their expenditures, they ask for a rate increase or rate riders to make up for their lost revenue. And the bottom line is that the dollar figures they put on our power bills go up.

Where in this scenario, Mr. Speaker, is the incentive for any NWT homeowner to want to reduce energy consumption? Until we change this system, we can never get ahead. Either the environment will take a beating or our residents will take a beating, and lately it seems that we as residents are taking a worse beating.

Calculation of NWT power rates must be completely revamped with a view to fairness and equity, and I am glad to hear that there is something coming forward for us to respond to. Capital costs for upgrades to power generation in one community have to be applied to all communities across the territory, not just the individual community where the infrastructure is built.

NTPC itself must be renewed and reorganized. A culture of efficiency and effectiveness must be instilled. Cost saving has to be priority number one for this company, and there are lots of possibilities where savings can be found. The corporation can eliminate management bonuses, trim administrative fat and get creative with technology and innovation, for starters.

Only after NTPC has clearly demonstrated that all avenues for cost savings have been explored can it be allowed to consider power rate increases for its users. It is the duty of the Power Corp to do all it can to minimize the impact of power generation costs on the....

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

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the duty of the Power Corporation to do all it can to minimize the impact of power generation costs on the average Joe or Jolene. I am, unfortunately, still waiting for that day.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENT ON
REORGANIZATION OF THE NORTHERN
ECONOMY TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to respond to the Minister's statement on some of the progressive energy initiatives that this government is showing, and I want to compliment them on that. I look forward to contributing to those further and to reviewing them through our climate change committee and so on.

But, Mr. Speaker, we really need to follow these initiatives within a context, and that context is: how did we get to this situation? We have an economy, a system of government, something here that has failed us and allowed this to become a critical situation. It's not just here; it's around the world. To me that tells us that we not only need to restructure some energy initiatives, but we need to restructure our economy and how we do business to improve the services to our people. For example, we need to pursue one that really is more concerned about our local economies, one that deals with our societal and environmental well-being and the opportunity for every individual to fulfill his or her potential.

We don't want to just deal with these issues through subsidies and by shipping the cost onto government, obviously. What would a restructured economy look like? To me, we should know by now that as a basic environmental issue, we should be carbon neutral in all our development activities. This is entirely possible. I think we will be hearing more about that. We want to be increasing local self-sufficiency and skill levels. Again, there are many opportunities here. We need to see that basic needs — food, energy, shelter and so on — are provided increasingly through largely local production using regional resources.

Mr. Speaker, there are many opportunities for this sort of thing. I think that until we commit ourselves to restructuring our society and the way we pursue these initiatives, we won't achieve our goals. We are going to be moving from crisis to crisis, as we are with our energy. Water, for example. We have a lot of serious concerns coming up. Our food and energy prices are going up. Our housing is going up. Our youth are crying out for leadership. Let's provide it and do a comprehensive restructuring approach towards systems that actually work for our people.

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

**Recognition of
Visitors in the Gallery**

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize, first of all, RCMP Deputy Commissioner Rod Knecht. Also Inspector Roger Miller of Edmonton, Chief Superintendent Tom Middleton of G Division, and the deputy minister of Justice, Bronwyn Watters. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize a constituent of mine from Tsiigehtchic, Roger Mazon. Roger is a well known artist in preserving a lot of our traditional art. I'd like to welcome Roger here and also spend a moment to recognize my partner in crime, Mr. Lee Selleck, in the gallery.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Chief Superintendent Tom Middleton, a friend, neighbour and constituent. Thank you very much. Welcome.

Mr. Speaker: If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. We 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 Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 430-16(2)
ELDERS FACILITY IN FORT RESOLUTION

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I talked about the elders facility in Fort Resolution and the need to have the department take a serious look at working with the community to maximize the use of this facility.

Today I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me when this facility was built?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have it exactly here, but I understand the building was built by the NWT Housing Corporation in, I'd say, the last ten years or so.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, this facility was initially planned to be a centre for 24 hour elderly care. Can the Minister tell me what the initial plans were for this facility when it was first built?

Hon. Sandy Lee: My understanding is that the building was built by the NWT Housing Corporation to be sort of the gathering centre and to support independent units surrounding the Great Elders Facility. Historically there has been no programming determined or O&M funding provided for that facility.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I have been working closely with the Member to increase the services there for seniors. Recently we had an initiative to provide \$22,000 to run a day program there; we have a contract with the seniors society there. As well, we have confirmed funding from Aboriginal Diabetes programming where we'll be able to provide meals for seniors five days a week.

I understand that that's not 24-hour care, but it is certainly a big step toward having that centre used more as a gathering centre and a support centre for the seniors in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Beaulieu: I talked about the costs incurred when an elder is transferred to another community, like Hay River, Fort Smith or Yellowknife. Can the Minister tell me what the total cost to the department is for one elder to be taken out of Fort Resolution and cared for in Hay River, Fort Smith or Yellowknife?

Hon. Sandy Lee: The elder in question who was taken away was in need of intensive care. We did have him in the community with the family, but his needs were so high that he could not be taken care of there.

I do understand and appreciate the need for the community to keep their elders, especially in their last years. We want to be able to accommodate that as much as possible. But there are some seniors with acute needs that need to be taken care of, and those services are not available except in major centres.

My understanding in terms of 24-7 care for seniors is that in order for us to provide those services economically, we need to have at least a ten-bed facility in order to have enough of a staff makeup and to use resources wisely. The Great Elders Facility has about four bedrooms. I want to tell the Member that I am trying to see what we can do in that facility to use those units. I'm looking at all options and working with the Member on that.

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

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not really getting the answers I'm looking for. However, if the Minister has looked at all options, would it be possible for the Minister to tell me if they have looked at the option of what it would cost to the

department to upgrade this facility to be used for 24 hour care?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, we would then have to add six more rooms. There are four rooms in there right now. For the YACCS dementia centre that we're building, we're spending \$500 per unit. Second of all, in order to accommodate ten seniors, we would need at least 12 to 15 staff. That would be about \$1.5 million to \$2 million of O&M funding. Right now that is not what we have planned for the Great Elders Facility, but I am looking at all possibilities to see that that facility is used as an elders centre and that programming is increased there. We have already introduced two more programs in that area. I am committed to working with the Member to see that that facility is used as much as possible to serve the needs of seniors in that community.

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

QUESTION 431-16(2)
DIAMOND JENNESS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement today, I'm very concerned about the condition of the Diamond Jenness Secondary School and where it is in terms of this government's priorities — a year of new school openings and some very large budgets, shall we say, to go to address the needs of educating students in other communities and other regions. Could the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment please advise what the status is of this government addressing the substandard conditions at Diamond Jenness Secondary School?

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, those are the issues that have been addressed. We did visit the community school. Thanks to MLA Groenewegen for giving us a tour, and also to the principals. That's part of the capital projects that we will be discussing over the next few days here. There is an education plan underway as well. That is the ongoing work that is happening between our department and PWS. Those are the discussions that will be undertaken here in the House on the capital projects.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I do thank the Minister for attending the school in Hay River with us and going on a tour of that facility. As a result of those visits, though, we were told that the Diamond Jenness Secondary School replacement or renovation had been red flagged. I understood that to mean that it had been designated as having some significant

priority in the list of capital demands that this government is dealing with.

I'd like to ask the Minister: when we were told red flagged, what did that mean?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Those red flagged projects in the past have been targeted as one of our priorities. We have those existing projects in the communities — the schools that are being built, the schools that are being renovated or worked on. Those will be the committed projects. The red flags are other projects waiting on the list. Hay River's Diamond Jenness School has been targeted as a priority for this government to initiate work on that part of the renovation. It will be part of the discussions that we're going to be having on capital projects here in the next few days.

Mrs. Groenewegen: One of the things that has precipitated some immediate action on the part of this government with respect to capital infrastructure for education has been catastrophic events like fire, flood, collapsing roofs, things like that. The only thing that has come to light in Hay River which caused the closure of the school on a temporary basis was air quality. There were air samples taken and sent down South, and it was eventually determined that the school was safe to reopen.

I'd like to ask the Minister: has he actually seen the results of those air quality tests, and would he be willing to table them in the House?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: On the air quality tests that were initiated by PWS, the report has been done. It has been shared with the Member, I do believe. Maybe I'm mistaken on that. Certainly, those reports were taken into consideration when we were going through this process as being a priority project. I personally, as the Minister, have not seen the document itself. It's within the Department of PWS. I need to sit down with the Minister of PWS to go through the actual results and the information.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could be corrected, but I believe that the Chair of the education authority had asked to see those actual reports, and I had asked too. Perhaps the education council has received them subsequently, but I have never seen them.

Again, I'd like to ask the Minister if he is confident that the school is safe and the air is safe regardless of those asbestos issues that were there. Would he be willing to confirm that for the people who use that facility by tabling those air quality reports in this House?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Certainly, I will make a commitment in this House to meet with the Minister responsible for the review, PWS. Once that is initiated, whatever I can share with the Member and the local DEA, I'll certainly do that. At this point I need to sit down with my counterpart at PWS to discuss it further.

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

QUESTION 432-16(2)
STAFF HOUSING FOR
TEACHERS IN AKLAVIK

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister of Education is in regard to the housing crisis we have in Aklavik by way of staff housing. I received a letter from one of the teachers in Aklavik who was given notice that they're being evicted from their existing residence, which was being provided through a local company.

I'd like to ask the Minister: what is the Department of Education doing to remedy the situation to find alternative accommodations for teachers in Aklavik?

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we've been alerted that one of the communities is having a shortage. There was notice of the closure of a building. The Member already approached me on this particular issue. I did instruct my staff to follow through on it with the local superintendent in the Beaufort-Delta. My staff is working closely with the superintendent and the local DEA to try to resolve that issue.

It is a private contractor that holds the unit, and it is due for closure next month. We're doing what we can as a department to work with the community to find solutions. It is a development corporation arm that the units are under, so we need to work closer together on that.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, this issue is not new to this House; I have brought it up several times. This issue has been out there. Those units that are in our communities are old government staff housing units. They're almost 40 years old. The government sold those units, and the companies that did take them on continue to retain them as staff housing. As we all know, the costs of operating and maintaining old facilities continue to escalate, and the costs of heating and providing power to these units is not being recouped.

I'd like to ask the Minister: has he looked at working with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

with regard to the Corporate Loan Guarantee Program to assist real estate or other companies to provide housing and be able to access this program? That could improve the cost of operations for those units so they can reduce costs and hopefully find a solution that's agreeable to both groups — our teachers and the people providing these houses.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: That is one of the areas that we are focusing on as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We're working with the Housing Minister on this particular case. As the Members would know, we are in a housing crunch in the small communities, especially the most isolated communities. Dealing with staff housing for teachers.... They're struggling to find suitable units, and it is our concern.

We're doing what we can to try to come up with a solution. One of the solutions, possibly, will be a loan guarantee from the NWT Housing Corporation. We are pursuing that. We are focusing on a potential pilot project in one of the communities. We're meeting next week on this particular case to try and move forward on this item. We are going to reach out to other jurisdictions as well in the other small isolated communities. Aklavik will be one of them, and other communities as well. We're doing what we can as a department to work closely with the Housing Corporation and the community.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, this issue has come up by way of the Beaufort leaders meeting. It has come up through motions and resolutions and meeting with the Divisional Board of Education. Again, as a government we do have to have some means of accommodating those areas in the Northwest Territories where we don't have the private sector involved. I think if that means getting back into staff housing, I guess that's what we're probably going to have to do.

I'd like to ask the Minister: do you have a universal plan for looking at housing to accommodate professionals in the northern part of the Northwest Territories? That is a unique challenge in that part of the jurisdiction that we are responsible for.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, that will certainly be part of the planning process. It's not just the ECE department; it's also Housing and Health and Social Services — the nurses. We have a variety of professionals living in the communities. We need to form a group within Beaufort-Delta and other regions, where there'll be Chairs to meet on this particular item, because it is a serious item that we need to deal with. It is a need in the communities, and also it's our need to have those teachers or nurses placed in the communities.

I'm also meeting with the Chairs of the regional boards in December. That is one of the topics on

the agenda. It's always an issue that we're dealing with. Certainly, this will be one of the issues that we need to deal with.

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

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the urgency of this matter I'd like to ask the Minister if he can keep me, the Divisional Board of Education and the principal of Aklavik informed on any progress that's being made on this matter. Like I say, I am getting calls from the teachers, and they feel that they are basically having to not only deal with the stress of teaching but now have to worry about where they're going to sleep at night.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he can speed this thing up and try to find a solution to the problem as soon as possible. Thank you.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly keep the Members posted, particularly the Member for the Aklavik area. We need to look after our teachers; we need to look after our professionals. And it's not only us. The NWTTA has also stressed concerns over this. I've met with them. So there are all different parties involved in this particular case. Once we make progress, we'll keep the Members posted on what's happening, the progression. We'll hopefully find a solution for this case. Next Monday is approaching already, and we need to deal with that. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 433-16(2)
TU BETA TS'ENA "WATER IS LIFE"
DOCUMENTARY FILM

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in follow-up to my Member's statement with respect to the *Tu Beta Ts'ena*, "Water is Life" film that was premiered last night.

During my discussions with a number of people in the audience after the film, it was easy to tell that people were very passionate about this film. I think it is very important for this film to get into as many places as possible so people can get to see this film. It would be good for this government to get it into all of the schools.

So my question to the Premier is: would he commit to purchasing copies of the film from the Akaitcho Territory Dene First Nations and getting that film into every one of the schools in the Northwest Territories so that our youth can see that film?

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'd be prepared to try and see what we can do to get this information out to all the students in the Northwest Territories. We ourselves are undertaking a number of initiatives to get on top of the water situation, more so than we have in the past, through partnerships with provinces in western Canada as well as re-energizing the Mackenzie River Basin Board that was put into place a number of years ago. So we'd look at opportunities along with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to see what we can do in this area.

Mr. Abernethy: That kind of sounded like a yes. That's good. Just so you know, the film is \$30 a copy, so it shouldn't cost us too much to get enough copies for all of our schools. And since we're talking about schools in the Northwest Territories, I think it might also be good to ensure that we get a copy of that film into every high school that falls within the Mackenzie River water basin. I think we're going to need as much help as we can get, and we might as well get some of the youth of Alberta helping us fight the tar sands.

I'd like to see if the Premier would be willing to commit to getting enough copies so that we can get them into the high schools that fall within the Mackenzie River water basin outside the Northwest Territories as well.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, first things first. We need to get our house in order, and we're doing that. Again, I'm glad to know that the price of the movie is \$30. We can work with the appropriate departments to try and make sure that we get this information and the movie out to as many students in our schools as we can. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 434-16(2)
BOARD REFORM EXERCISE

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be to the Minister who's responsible for the Strategic Initiative Committee on Refocusing Government, and that will be Minister Michael Miltenberger.

Mr. Speaker, referring back to my Member's statement, of course, I'd like to know what this Minister has done to examine the costs of rolling up most of these boards into a regional services model. If he has an idea of what that costs, will he make it public?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is aware, we've been doing extensive work on this particular subject since we were formed as a government. I intend to come forward in this session with a major statement on that issue, and I'll be prepared to put that information before this House at that time.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, has the Minister done any work or examined the efficiency of what this roll-up will mean to most boards and regional service models as well?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I ask the forbearance and patience of the Member. When I come forward with this statement before the House, I will lay all that information out, as well as other areas that the refocusing committee has been working on, like the program review.

Mr. Hawkins: What work has been done to examine the relationship of aboriginal governments and their regions so that when we take self-government models and overlap them with these regional boards' jurisdictions...? What work is being done to examine that type of relationship and the problems that this will cause if we proceed with a regional based board model?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I appreciate the Member's enthusiasm for getting ahead of the parade, but I'll just once again ask him to have patience. I'll be coming forward with a Minister's statement that will speak to those issues. Then we can engage in any number of questions that the Member may have.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, when this Minister's statement that seems to answer all questions comes forward, will it also talk about when public consultation will happen and how that will involve the public, as opposed to how these taxes have not involved Members as effectively as possible and have only involved certain members of the public, that kind of discussion? Will it have that detail?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, the statement I'll bring forward will lay out the work done to date, what we see as the work yet to be done, a timeline for doing that type of work and rolling out the implementation with target dates set in there.

In regard to the taxes the Member was apprised of what was going on. There has been a significant mail-out across the Northwest Territories. We've consulted with a multitude of organizations. We've had a two day round table, and we're still soliciting support until the middle of next week. We look forward to bringing forward a very comprehensive

piece of work that lays out the results of all that effort. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 435-16(2)
REORGANIZATION AND RENEWAL
OF NWT POWER CORPORATION

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corp. I spoke in my statement about the need for the Power Corp to exercise judgment and cost savings in everything that they do. I'd like to ask the Minister what cost saving measures are in place for this fiscal year to minimize the impact of corporation expenditures on electricity rates for poor little consumers like us. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, the Power Corporation, along with myself and a number of other Ministers, is looking at a number of initiatives that can help with individuals here in the Northwest Territories. We're bringing that paper forward to Members for consideration. Within the Power Corporation itself we have to, as would be done any time we go before the PUB for a general rate application for rate riders, prove up the numbers, as they say. So there are a number of initiatives that are undertaken.

I'll commit to get more details for the Member on just purely what the Power Corporation has been doing, and I'll try to get that information as soon as I can.

Ms. Bisaro: I thank the Minister for the response. I have to take exception to his statement to prove up the numbers. I think that if you go to the right person, they can make numbers say whatever you want them to say, whether it's for or against. That's no slight on accountants, by the way.

I'd like to further ask the Minister what reporting or monitoring mechanisms exist for the Minister's use or for the department's use to ensure that the corporation is exhausting all possibilities for cost savings.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, my direct role with the Power Corporation is more with the board and the chairperson in discussing initiatives that come forward, concerns that are raised. For example, I had an opportunity to meet with the board in Norman Wells and inform them of the concerns that would be raised by Members and by

people of the Northwest Territories when this winter arrives. After a general rate application is approved and the notice of rate riders is out there, as the Power Corporation and as Minister responsible, we send the message. We have to look at the way we do our operations. We can't leave any stone unturned in trying to find ways of mitigating the impact on individuals in the Northwest Territories.

Ms. Bisaro: I appreciate that the Minister is working through the board, but that leads me to my next question. I appreciate that the Minister has advised the board how Members feel, how residents of the Territories feel, that we're having a hard time with these increases in the cost of our electricity.

I'd like to know from the Minister, if he's working through the board, what monitoring or what sorts of reporting mechanisms exist so that he feels secure in the knowledge that the board is exhausting all possibilities to save costs.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, because of the direct relationship with the Chair of the NWT Power Corporation board and the fact that we are the sole shareholder, any information that is being put forward when there are incidents of outages and so on include quite a number of things that I get updated on regularly as we progress forward.

The other initiative ongoing, long term, for example, is the hydro development that we're looking at doing. As highlighted by Minister Bob McLeod earlier, there are a number of initiatives we're jointly working on in trying to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels in the Northwest Territories. A long term picture would be expanding hydro development in the Northwest Territories. Again, we realize we're going to have to look outside the box, I would say, of how we've operated in the past, try to find new ways of stabilizing costs and find partners out there that would help us in delivery of that power in the Northwest Territories.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his answer. I appreciate the long term vision and the steps that are being taken for the long term, but my concern is more on a day to day basis and the fact that the corporation is probably not operating as efficiently as I believe it should — well, I don't believe it is.

My last question to the Minister is to ask him what steps he's taking to revise or eliminate the bonus system for the NTPC management.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I did raise the issue of bonuses with the chair of the NWT Power Corporation board and was informed that they did a review, had an external review of

their system, and they were putting together a package. I haven't seen anything beyond that.

Again I would express our concerns from the Legislative Assembly that the bonus system or the merit system that's out there needs to withstand public scrutiny. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 436-16(2)
MANGILALUK SCHOOL EXPANSION

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have questions for the Minister of Education regarding the overcrowding of students and staff at Mangilaluk School.

Can the Minister commit to visiting my community of Tuktoyaktuk to see this firsthand after session? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I will commit in this House to visit the school in the Member's riding and other schools as well. That's one of the commitments that I've made. I need to visit all schools, if it's at all possible during the life of this Assembly, just to see for ourselves what the students and the staff and the resource people and the parents are going through. That's the commitment I've made. Sometime after session we can make arrangements and a time to meet.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Minister. You almost answered my second question. I was going to invite you to a community meeting in the community of Tuk to meet with the residents and talk about the situation at Mangilaluk School.

Just to have it clear and on the record, you're going to be coming to the community of Tuk first, and then we'll go out to visit all the other communities.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we make those arrangements every time we meet with the communities, whether it be the schools or other departments if they come along. We meet with certain resource people. We do initiate a public forum, as well, and community meetings, leadership meetings. So, certainly, those we'll take into consideration when we visit the community. Mahsi.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Would the Minister be willing to work with me and my community to make this a priority?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, certainly, there are issues we need to deal with in all

communities. This is one of the areas I would like revisit and meet with Mr. Jacobson on and identify areas of concern and issues, whether it be the school or the community, and have more discussion at the community level, as well, when we are meeting with parents or the leadership and vice versa. I need to listen to some solutions as well, so that is why we are here: to work with the Members. I certainly will commit to working with the Members on this matter. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 437-16(2)
REORGANIZATION OF THE NORTHERN
ECONOMY TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier today. I want to follow up in a larger context on some of the line of questioning of my colleague Ms. Bisaro.

I appreciate the Premier's idea of needing to think outside the box as far as the NTPC. In the larger context of things — and context is everything, you know — we are facing a global water crisis, climate change; the rate of species loss is accelerating; the devastation of marine foods is well documented; and so on. Now we're facing an economic crisis, increasing fuel costs, et cetera.

Does the Premier agree that today is a good day to reconsider how we do business and to make fundamental changes to improve and restructure our systems so they perform much better?

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as the Member has put it so well, it is hard to disagree with a statement or a question that's.... We want the system to work better. We agree as we look at the global environment and the economy that there is a need for change. We have to look at that ourselves, as the Government of Northwest Territories, in our approach. The issue will be: how can we start that shift happening? I think we're starting to do some of that.

For example, in the upcoming business plans we are going to be looking from the energy side trying to expand the way we deliver energy in the Northwest Territories. I would say it would be hard to disagree with what the Member is saying. It's a matter of how we turn that corner: the implementation side of changing the way we do business.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Premier's rigour in looking for ways to disagree and not finding any there. Given our increasing reliance upon imported everything — i.e., our increasing

subscription to the global economy and the increasing volatility of the global systems and so on — does the Premier agree that this major shift in the Northwest Territories to improve our ability to be self-sufficient and insulated from those things should really take the triple bottom line approach and strengthen our self-sufficiency using local resources to develop our local economies?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I can see now where the Member is going. The fact is that we do have to look at our own economies at the community level. We have heard quite a number of times in this Assembly about the need for sustainable development in our smaller communities and looking at what type of business we can get into.

One of the things we do have to look at.... I think we can go right back to the history of the Northwest Territories. There used to be gardens in just about every one of our communities that provided food and the basic necessities for a lot of the families and some of our own.... Well, not our own at the time; the federal system that was in place. So things of that nature. The need and the necessity is something we are going to have to look at again across the Northwest Territories, especially with the high cost of living here in the North.

Mr. Bromley: Thanks to the Premier for those comments. I appreciate his agreement that there are some real needs there, and this is one way to do that. I am interested in some specifics.

We're losing our young entrepreneurs; we're going more to the big box stores and so on. Somehow they seem to become portrayed as northern businesses. It's really the fundamental, systemic things that need to change. We need to have honour systems and so on for our elders. We need to really start to realize that traditional knowledge has real and practical value as well as to use modern technology. I am interested in what specific things we can do. This government is trying to change the ways that we can change in really fundamental and meaningful ways rather than debating the minor things that don't really get us anything.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I think the fact that some of our debate in this House is about having the proper consultation, and the approach we use, and the change we need to see here in the Northwest Territories.... An example of some of that change is that earlier today Minister Bob McLeod announced the SEED policy, the program coming into effect helping small businesses in our communities.

It's that type of approach that we see happening, yet we realize we still have some traditional economies out there that we need to continue to

support, like the trapping program and trying to get back into, for example, the Take a Kid Trapping program that Minister McLeod's department is part of. So, Mr. Speaker, we are taking some steps, and we do have some concrete examples.

More importantly, as we go towards the next business planning cycle, if Members have specific initiatives they would like to see incorporated into our business plans, it would be that approach where we can start to implement that. Again, that takes the will of the House. Some of them can be fairly different approaches, but I think it would be wise of us to start looking at those types of approaches.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. A final short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you for those comments, Premier. I wonder if it might be a good time in our talk about devolution and so on.... You know, I can't say that I have really been a great admirer of the federal success at managing our resources, because of all the context I provided earlier in this question. I am hoping that this government will do a much better job when we do get responsibility, and perhaps it's timely to start a public process.

Would this Premier consider implementing a public process to start the territorial debate on the basis we are going to manage our resources, to do a much better job than our federal and global governments have done?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I believe that on a number of fronts we are engaging the public in how we look at business in the North.

For example, even though we may not have the legal responsibility of water management or some of the land areas we are discussing with the federal government, we as the 16th Assembly have engaged with aboriginal leadership on coming up with a water strategy, and we want to work with that. The Minister of ITI has the economic discussion table that will remain open. We have the Minister of Finance having his tables open on the revenue side of the equation in the Northwest Territories. So there are a number of fronts we are having continuous public input on in those areas as we develop our own strategies made in the North.

I think the Member's point should be taken as well: the fact that we in the Northwest Territories need to bring those authorities here so we can make a decision and have our own designs put in place for how we develop in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 438-16(2)
CAR SEAT SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It gets back to my Member's statement, where I was speaking of children and children being our greatest resource.

We need to ensure, as a government, that we give parents the tools that are necessary to select and install car seats properly. As I mentioned in my statement, the number one cause of death among children in this country is car accidents. The safety of our children in this territory should be the priority of the government.

I would like to begin by asking the Minister: why is there not one site in the entire Northwest Territories where parents can go to ensure that they select and install a child's car seat properly?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, the government and the Department of Health and Social Services take safety issues very seriously. We do public promotion, and we distribute vests, injury prevention measures. In cooperation with MACA and Transportation we distribute helmets for safety. In fact, we have distributed about 125 car seats. We have community health reps at the community level who work with parents to show them and teach them how to use their children's car seats safely.

The way these are made.... It's a modern machine and a lot more user-friendly than they used to be. I understand that there is a person in Yellowknife who would like to have more opportunities to have the training. I'm looking to see if we could deliver this program in house, where anybody in Yellowknife who's interested could come and learn.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, if it's such a priority of the Minister's department, I'm wondering why they keep putting off the funding to get the training. It's not just in Yellowknife. The training would take place in Yellowknife and Inuvik with community based individuals so they could go back to the community and spread that knowledge to communities across the Northwest Territories. Trainers are hard to find, and that's been identified. They have a trainer who's set and ready to go to provide these courses: two in Yellowknife and one in Inuvik.

I'd like to ask the Minister if she will assure this House and the people of the Northwest Territories that she'll come up with some funding to ensure that these training programs take place. Because a trainer is hard to find.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Member is as aware as anyone else here that we need to be responsible with our dollars. We should be doing as much as possible within the budget we have, which is certainly the challenge that Health has.

When he asks why we are not providing funding.... Yes, we did not agree to fund a \$30,000 proposal to have these two programs in Inuvik and Yellowknife, but that doesn't mean that this program is not being delivered. What I said is that the community health reps in all of our regions are already engaged in working with parents with infants on how to use their car seats. In fact, the government distributes car seats.

Now, I appreciate that there is one lady in Yellowknife who is looking all over the place to get a trainer on how to use a car seat. I can see there's some need in Yellowknife to accommodate that. Being fiscally responsible in the environment that we live in, I am looking at seeing how we can deliver this in house. That's certainly part of the mandate of the department, and we are engaged in health promotion and safe practices and healthy living throughout the year. This will be part of the program.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I can probably think of a number of things in the past year where the department has wasted \$30,000 at the drop of a hat. I've discussed some of those issues with the Minister previously. What I'd like to get a better understanding of is, if we leave this up to the department.... We all know how slow government moves. The program might not ever happen. This is something that can happen, and it can have positive results for parents across the territory.

I want to ask the Minister — this has been in place for a year: why haven't they funded a program like this to ensure the safe transport of our children in our territory?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if I'm making my point clearly here. The fact is I don't think it's prudent or responsible for the government to be funding a third party proposal at \$30,000 to bring somebody in to do two training programs on how to use car seats if we can find resources from within.

What I'm telling the Member is that we have the entire health promotion section that works on injury prevention and how to use helmets safely. We rent out vests so as to prevent boating accidents, we distribute helmets for safe practices, and we do distribute car seats.

I think it's not correct to say: why aren't you funding this money? What I'm saying is that it is part of the mandate of the department. We work on safety throughout the year. I am working with the

department to see, if there's a need for this, how we can do this within. I believe we can do that without spending \$30,000, which, I'm sure the Member would appreciate, is better fiscal management.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, by the time the department's done with this in house thing, I'm sure it's going to be more than \$30,000, and that's the issue that I take.

Yes, I'd like to see it done. I think they can do it with \$30,000; I don't think the department can do it with \$30,000. Once they spend a year studying it and they hire two staff to look at it, it's going to be much more than \$30,000.

The big difference with this is that these people who are trained are going to go back into the communities. I'm wondering how the Minister can say that her in house solution is going to train people to go back out into the communities. They're going to be trained to deliver this back home in their own communities. How is the department going to deliver on that?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, let me say it again. We have CHR's that we pay for every day. They work for us. They're all over the communities. Part of their job is to distribute car seats, and we have distributed 125 car seats. They teach the parents how to use them. All I'm saying is that we are already doing that. We will continue to do that, and we don't need to find extra funding for that.

Now, I'm just answering this issue that I think has come to the attention of the Member as well. We have had a proposal from a lady in Yellowknife who would like \$30,000 to deliver this program. We e-mailed her back and said that we're going to look into that and get back to you. She e-mailed me on September 26. I have not had a chance to get back with all this information. I don't think it's prudent for us to look at outside sources when we can do it within. We're already doing it. We're already protecting the safety of our babies and children.

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

QUESTION 439-16(2)

LACK OF NURSING SERVICES IN WRIGLEY

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services with respect to my Member's statement. The provision of consistent, dependable health care to all our communities is a goal of ours and the territorial government's.

The issue is about Wrigley and its lack of a community nurse, which has been requested ever

since the last time they had that service there, whatever the circumstances were that led to the departure of the nurse at that time. To return a nurse, the case has always been that there has to be safety in place; there has to be community policing.

Over time I have worked hard and got the agreement of the House, and the government agreed to restore community policing to Wrigley. Consequently, that was a very huge step. That was a big win, because that meant Wrigley would get a nurse.

Upon getting that, we went to the Department of Health and Social Services and said: okay; when are we going to put the job out and word out that there's going to be a community nurse position open for Wrigley? The reply was that there isn't one.

I'd like to know what possible reason there is for not following through with the provision of this essential service for the community of Wrigley. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to visit the community of Wrigley in May with the Member. We had a very productive meeting with the local leadership wherein one of the things that the chief and council asked for was to have a permanent nurse there.

I have had discussions with the Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority. We do have a fully functioning board and administration there, and their advice at this time is that Wrigley, for a community of its size and needs, has adequate services. They are recommending that we do not have a nurse placed there. Having said that that is their position, I would like to make a commitment to the Member that I will have further discussion with the board and see what is possible.

Mr. Menicoche: Absolutely, I'm glad that the Minister wants to follow through this commitment of restoring nursing services to Wrigley. Just with respect to Dehcho Health and Social Services, they are a very efficient and effective board for our region. I, too, commend them for that.

I also know Wrigley's got a facility. The nursing position is within their budget, and all they've got to do now is allocate that person year and move them to Wrigley. I'm not too sure what the difficulty there is now that there's going to be some safety there.

I still do not know what the possible reason is for not following through with the commitment to restore nursing services. I would like the Minister to address that once again.

Hon. Sandy Lee: There aren't any reasons that I haven't said already. I would like to just state that again that Wrigley is under the administrative oversight of the Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority. They allocate how their money and their PYs are divided among all of their eight communities, I believe, that they serve — or maybe even more. They feel that the services they are providing right now to Wrigley are actually more than what they provide for another community within their region of similar size, so there are no plans to put permanent nurses there at the moment.

I understand in the past that one of the concerns was that there was no RCMP protection in Wrigley. I understand that there will be RCMP protection going in there as of 2011. We have some time from now until then to look at how we could improve the services not only in Wrigley but in the surrounding communities. I would like to make the commitment again to the Member that I will continue to work with the authority and the Member to see how we can address this.

Mr. Menicoche: The provision of any type of services for Wrigley is essential. I believe the recent Statistics Canada figures state that Wrigley is one of the ones with a declining population. That's exactly because there is a lack of services. There is still that lack of services today, and I believe they are essential.

I would just like to know, as well, the commitment level. I know that there was a commitment for freeze-up and break-up. I would like to know the length of those periods when the nurse can be there. Will the nurse have more periodic visits? Once again, provision of consistent, dependable, professional health care is critical to the health of our people and our community. Mahsi.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I would be happy to look into the possibility of increasing the time that the nurse visits the community of Wrigley, especially at the time of freeze-up and breakup. I know that the community was very happy to have a nurse there during the time we were there. I understand that the people feel more comfortable when they have a resident nurse. I will review the hours of other services that are provided in Wrigley and see how we could improve that. We have a continuing discussion with the authority, and I will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister put her finger on it exactly: having that dependable, reliable service in the community makes people more relaxed and, I believe, more healthy.

Once again, I would like the Minister to comment on working towards having full time nursing. If it is working towards 2011, I would be very happy to work with her, along with the community, toward more frequent, consistent visits. Thank you.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I thought I stated earlier in the answer to the first question that the authorities who look after the staffing, the PYs and the service levels in Deh Cho, have told me — and I have talked to them following my meeting and my visits to Wrigley and other communities in Deh Cho — about the issues that were raised in the community, one of them being having more nursing services in Wrigley.

They told me then and they have told me lately that they believe that the nursing services in Wrigley are at or above the level they should be — for the size of the community, that is. Now, I understand that the community would still like to see more of that, and we have other communities in the Territories that would like to have their nursing services increased.

I am in the process of reviewing the human resource makeup of especially our small communities. I have already stated in this House that I am willing to work with the strategic investment committee, or joint committee, or whatever that makeup will be of the committee for rural and small communities. I think that this is something that we need to look at not only for Health and Social Services and Human Resources but in other areas as well, to see how we build capacity in small communities. That's another area that I am willing to work on.

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

QUESTION 440-16(2)
DRUG COVERAGE FOR PATIENTS
WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Some time ago a family received a letter. My request was to find out some details about medical coverage for a drug called Rituxan. This drug actually helps people with MS. It has been showing significant promise for people who have been suffering with this.

In the letter it basically says that you need to go through your physician to get approval for this. Well, this family went to go get this type of approval, and they've been refused approval for a drug that actually will help bring back quality of life. Mr. Speaker, what more does the Minister need to make sure that the system works for people who need this coverage? Thank you.

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We get this kind of request often. There are disputes between patients who feel that they need medication and a doctor who may feel that they need the medication, but there is an independent committee that reviews the list of pharmaceutical products or drugs that we should approve. It is the committee that makes a decision on whether a drug should be approved for insurance or not. That is the process that's in place, and I don't know what else to say to that.

Mr. Hawkins: It is really nice that there's a committee in place, but that doesn't do much for the family that has a family member who is suffering from MS. This drug is a well known drug that demonstrates progress and promise when you have this disease. As I'm sure most people know, this is quite a debilitating disease. There is only one direction it goes. When we have a drug that shows promise, I think we should be latching on to it.

I guess my real question really comes down to how we get access to this. I have a letter here from the Minister. My original question was: is this covered? The Minister's letter comes back saying all you have to do is ask for it to get it approved. What more do we need to do?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I am guessing — maybe I shouldn't guess, but I am assuming — that this patient is under.... Assuming there is some medication for the person's condition, he would not be without treatment. The dispute is on a specific grant, or there are some experimental drugs that the patient may want to take, and governments across the country have not always approved and agreed to fund some of the medications that are on the market.

I don't know that. I haven't had communication from the Member on the latest one, as he was rejected on that. I do have to look to see and make sure that we are providing the patient with as much care as possible.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Minister Lee. Time for question period has expired, but I'll allow a supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister saying she will go back and review this file? What is the Minister saying? I just want to be clear on the record that I want to find out what the Minister is willing to do in regard to this family, which feels very strongly that this drug is useful and considered mainstream and normal in other places and shows promise. What is the Minister willing to commit to do on this potential project or on this file? Thank you.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I am willing, if the Member provides me with the name of the family and the drug brand again, to review the file. I'm not saying that I can override the committee's decision, but at least I can look into making sure that if this medication is not suitable or they're not willing to approve it, what other options are there. I just want to make sure that his constituent is taken care of as much as possible. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you. Just for clarification, the Minister said she doesn't have the ability to override the committee. I'm not suggesting by any means that we override the committee on one specific case. That turns into a slippery slope regardless of the issue.

What authority does the Minister have to put this drug on the extended health benefits list? If it shows promise, why aren't we investigating this to make sure we have access to it? Thank you.

Hon. Sandy Lee: As of now I don't have enough information on the person or the condition or the nature of this drug or why it should not be approved. I just don't have enough information. So I'm making the commitment to the Member that if he wishes to provide me with that information, I'd like to get more of the facts and see what the options are. Thank you.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions.

Unanimous consent granted.

QUESTION 441-16(2) CAR SEAT SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues, for your indulgence this afternoon. I just had a couple of other questions I need to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I know she spoke earlier of the CHR's providing this necessary service at the community level. I want to ask the Minister what level of training and expertise the CHR's have in inspecting the installation of car seats for children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that these community health representatives distribute car seats. They know

how these car seats are used; they work with parents on how to use car seats safely. We are already doing that work. It's part of what they do with parents and young moms. I would be happy to look into the further details of the program, but that's the information I have now.

Mr. Ramsay: Do these CHR's at the community level have any training to look at the safe installation of car seats for children?

Hon. Sandy Lee: The CHR's have been distributing car seats to families. They have distributed 125 car seats all across the Territories. My information is that they know how those car seats work, and they teach the parents how they work. They are qualified to provide this. If there's a need for Yellowknife, I am willing to look at helping Yellowknife social services authorities see if we could have similar programming.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's one thing to be handing out car seats to people; it's another thing to make sure that they're installed properly and functioning properly and that the children are being transported in a safe fashion.

I don't think the Minister answered, and I'll ask it again. Have the CHR's themselves received training in the safe installation of car seats for children in the Territories?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, even the proposal that's being put forward about this person who was to provide the training.... There is no unanimity, no agreement, on what exactly an adequate program is.

The department has reviewed the proposal, and we feel that the proposal is not the one that we need to accept at this time. If the Member wishes, I would be happy to look into seeing how we deliver these safety programs in our communities, and I would be happy to get back to the Member on the details of the programs that our CHR's provide. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 442-16(2)

CABINET STRATEGIC INITIATIVE COMMITTEES

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Premier if he could list for us again what information we've been working off of as Members with respect to the strategic initiative committees, Cabinet committees, Ministerial committees that were formed. Thank you.

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of initiatives and times that I've communicated to Members of the Assembly and to the public regarding the actions we are undertaking as a new government and the direction we are trying to set and some of the changes.

For example, Mr. Speaker, in the Budget Address I gave information on the fact that we would be dealing with the strategic initiative committees. In the letters that I sent to the Ministers on their mandates, I copied those letters to the Chair of P and P and outlined all the initiatives there. Building Our Future, Refocusing Government, Managing This Land, Maximizing Opportunities, Reducing the Cost of Living, approaches to regionalization of government, reductions, oversight and federal engagement: all were some of the areas that different Ministers had. That was copied to Members. As well, we've had a number of times when we've sat down and offered briefings and had briefings around these strategic initiative committees.

Mrs. Groenewegen: The Premier is absolutely right: we have had an exchange and a dialogue on these strategic initiative committees. The one that has come to light most recently, which I'm a little bit curious about and do not recall having seen it referred to before, is the one on the regionalization of government. Could the Premier perhaps outline what the mandate of that particular committee would be?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Again, that was when I wrote to Ministers on their strategic initiatives. In highlighting all of those areas — that was back in January — this one, approaches to regionalization of government, was looked at. In one of my statements in this House I referenced the fact that this regionalization of government would look at the GNWT and how it can increase flexibility and responsiveness at regional and community levels. I pointed to the possibility that the honourable Member for Sahtu may oversee that. We're again re-evaluating who would be leading that initiative. We haven't structured it. There have been no terms of reference put forward at this time. Instead, we contacted committee in the past on the rural and remote communities' work that would plug into this as well.

Mrs. Groenewegen: So the particular strategic initiative committee on the regionalization of government was not one of the original five? Or was it a subcommittee of one of the original five? Because the ones that the Premier formerly noted — Refocusing Government, Maximizing Opportunities, Building Our Future, Managing This Land — were definitely part of the original five. We

were aware of who the ministerial lead would be on those and who else would comprise the rest of those particular initiative committees. So what's the status of the one on the regionalization of government at this time?

Hon. Floyd Roland: This was one of the ones that was communicated to Ministers, and those letters were forwarded to Members of the Assembly. The approaches to regionalization of government was one of those. We haven't put the energy into that file, because most of the energy has gone into the Refocusing Government initiative.

In my Budget Address back in May I also referenced that this was work we would be looking at. There hasn't been a lot of energy put into that, as we were, again, putting the energy into Refocusing Government and a number of the other initiatives. We still have to come up with the terms of reference. That is one of the ones we'd like to get to work on, and we'll have to discuss that approach within Cabinet and with Members.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the order paper.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker: We will return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a dedicated Yellowknife volunteer, although I can't see her. She's up behind me somewhere. Ms. Ruby Trudel is here today.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Ms. Ruby Trudel, a Yellowknife South constituent. Nice to see you here.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2009–2010. I also wish to table the following document entitled the Yellowknife Gasoline Prices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Document 93-16(2), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2009–2010, tabled.

Document 94-16(2), Yellowknife Gasoline Prices, tabled.

Hon. Bob McLeod: I wish to table the following document entitled Energy Priorities Framework, Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee.

Document 95-16(2), Energy Priorities Framework, Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, tabled.

Mr. Abernethy: I wish to table the following document, a letter to the Premier regarding the *Tu Beta Ts'ena* "Water is Life" documentary that was premiered last evening.

Document 96-16(2), Letter to Premier on documentary film production "Water is Life," tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 22-16(2)
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO OCTOBER 15, 2008

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, October 9, 2008, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on October 9, 2008, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, October 15, 2008.

And further, that any time prior to October 15, 2008, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 19 DONATION OF FOOD ACT

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 19, Donation of Food Act, be read for the second time.

Bill 19 provides that a person who donates food or distributes donated food is not liable for disease, injury, death or other harm resulting from the consumption of that food unless the person intended to harm the recipient or acted recklessly in donating or distributing the food. Similar provisions apply to the directors, agents, employees and volunteers of corporations involved in the donation or distribution of food. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is on the floor. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate that my colleagues would like to hear "question," but I have a few comments that I'd like to make first. I'd like to just say at the outset that I am totally in support of this bill. I think it would be a little strange if anybody realized that I was not.

Many of us have known for quite some time that perfectly good food often goes to waste. Usually it goes to the community dump, generally due to policies and standards established by food businesses and restaurants. We also see an awful lot of food that goes to waste because we have too much food and too few attendees at any number of social functions.

Some people seeing this need have started to rescue that food, ensure that it is fit for consumption and then pass it on to needy organizations. In Yellowknife the Salvation Army and the Centre for Northern Families are a couple of recipients, as examples.

This bill will enable this good work to continue, and it will allow a fledgling program in Yellowknife to expand well beyond its current size. That will be to the benefit of all residents of the NWT at some point in time. They will provide liability protection to persons or organizations who donate or distribute rescued food.

Lastly, I am in support of the bill, and I would ask for the support of all Members of this House.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleague Ms. Bisaro for bringing this bill forward. I also support it. We live in a day

and age when few have much, and there is a segment of our population, in fact of our world, that has very little. This is an opportunity, I believe, to share in a meaningful way.

I was raised in a family business, which was a grocery store and meat market. We had a big family to take stuff home to when it was past its best before date. Many times there's really nothing wrong with these things, yet merchants and food outlets cannot sell things beyond a certain date — really perfectly good food that just is overripe. It's a shame. It's an absolute shame in our society to see such things go to waste. So to bring forward a progressive piece of legislation like this that would allow people to have their needs met with something which otherwise would be thrown out is very encouraging to me. I wholeheartedly support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to support my colleague Ms. Bisaro, and I was very pleased to second this bill. I think this is really all about respect. It's all about doing business in a different way. We spend a lot of energy to get food up into our country here from afar, and to be throwing away two-thirds of the food is really disrespectful. It's a waste of energy, and it doesn't provide a good example to our people.

I also would like to recognize that this is a good example of the public responding to a situation, bringing it to our attention and working hard. I am always very happy to respond to their initiatives. I hope this government is too.

Just my kudos for bringing this bill to this stage. I'm looking forward to supporting it.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am going to support the bill. I want to thank Ms. Bisaro for bringing it forward and Ms. Trudel, who through her hard work and determination has pushed this thing forward.

It's legislation that is commonplace in other jurisdictions across this country. It's something that I think the Northwest Territories, in passing legislation like this, will be getting with the times.

I feel that far too much food is wasted. As my colleague Mr. Bromley alluded to, it costs a tremendous amount of money to ship food to the Northwest Territories in the first place, and what food we do get here should get into the hands of those who need it most. This legislation is designed

to protect those people who are going to donate the food. I think it's certainly a step in the right direction.

Again, I want to thank both the mover and the seconder and also Ms. Trudel for her hard work in this initiative. Mahsi.

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

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to support this bill and to thank Ms. Trudel as well for bringing this to our attention and being the champion for this in the public.

Waste is an unfortunate by-product of how business is conducted, and I feel that this bill will offer businesses a level of comfort so they feel comfortable and safe in providing this food. I think this is a good idea. I think this is going to offer an awful lot of support to those people in the community who need it. I think it's a good bill.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Health and Social Services and on behalf of the government I would just like to put it on record that the government supports this bill. We have indicated that support to the Member in other venues, and we make the commitment that we'll work with the Member to make sure that the details are worked out and supported by the Department of Health as we move forward.

I believe I'll be making a formal presentation at the consultation process in committee, but I just wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In brief, I just want to say I'll be supporting the bill. This represents protection for those who have community spirit. Again, this creates some type of generosity and certainly provides them the protection to do that. In that regard, I see it as a decent step forward for community minded individuals who want to help out in the ways they can.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Bill 19 has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 19, Donation of Food Act, read a second time and referred to a standing committee.

Mr. Speaker: Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Northwest

Territories Capital Estimates 2009–2010, Tabled Document 93-16(2), and Minister's Statement 80-16(2), sessional statement; with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. I have two items for consideration of Committee of the Whole: Minister's Statement 80-16(2), Sessional Statement, and Tabled Document 93-16(2), Capital Estimates. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 93-16(2) NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2009–2010

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

Motion carried.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

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

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress.

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 10 AN ACT TO AMEND THE PHARMACY ACT

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 10, An Act to Amend the

Pharmacy Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 10 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act, read a third time.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

BILL 13
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

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

Mr. Speaker: Bill 13 has had third reading.

Motion carried; Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, read a third time.

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

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there'll be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning at 4 p.m. today.

Orders of the Day for Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Returns to Oral Questions
- 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

- 6) Acknowledgements
- 7) Oral Questions
- 8) Written Questions
- 9) Returns to Written Questions
- 10) Replies to Opening Address
- 11) Petitions
- 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
- 18) First Reading of Bills
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Minister's Statement 80-16(2): Sessional Statement

Tabled Document 93-16(2): Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2009-2010

- 21) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22) Third Reading of Bills
- 23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 8, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

