



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**16<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Thursday, October 9, 2008**

Pages 1631 to 1654

**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

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**Hon. Paul Delorey**  
(Hay River North)

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**Mr. Tom Beaulieu**  
(Tu Nedhe)

**Ms. Wendy Bisaro**  
(Frame Lake)

**Mr. Bob Bromley**  
(Weledeh)

**Mrs. Jane Groenewegen**  
(Hay River South)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**  
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(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Floyd Roland**  
(Inuvik Boot Lake)

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*Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and*  
*Intergovernmental Relations*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power*  
*Corporation*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**  
(Sahtu)

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Thursday, October 9, 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, Mr. Yakeleya.

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

Prayer.

**Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Colleagues, before we continue with Orders of the Day, I would like to take this opportunity to provide my ruling on the point of order raised by the Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen, on Tuesday, October 7, 2008.

**Speaker's Ruling**

**Mr. Speaker:** Mrs. Groenewegen rose on a point of order in relation to a response provided by the Premier, Mr. Roland, to Oral Question 428-16(2) on October 6, 2008. Mrs. Groenewegen raised the point of order after reviewing the unedited Hansard for that day and therefore did so at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Member for Hay River South referred to rule 23(m) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, which states that a Member will be called to order if the Member "introduces any matter into debate that offends the practices and precedents of the Assembly."

Mrs. Groenewegen stated that Mr. Roland, in responding to her question, made reference to matters pertaining to a confidential exchange of information contained in correspondence between the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning and the Premier. Mrs. Groenewegen referred to the following comments made by Mr. Roland from page 30 of the unedited Hansard of October 6, 2008:

"I offered some opportunities for improvements from the last bit of criticism I had about the strategic initiative committees, and I got a response from the chair of P&P on that. I guess that offer wasn't good enough either."

Mrs. Groenewegen felt that Mr. Roland, in making these comments, contravened the convention of committee confidentiality.

On October 7, 2008, I opened the floor to debate on the point of order and heard from both Mrs. Groenewegen and Mr. Roland.

In speaking to the point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen stated that the Premier erred in making reference to a confidential document that was part of an interaction between committee and Cabinet.

Mr. Roland, in his remarks, defended his response as a reply to issues that were raised publicly in the House. The Premier did admit to alluding to a letter from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning but stated, "I didn't go into detail about what that was."

Colleagues, three issues come to light in reviewing this matter. The first is that previous rulings have dealt only with the confidentiality aspect of discussions that have taken place at an in camera meeting of a committee. It should be noted that correspondence coming out of these meetings is also considered confidential.

The second issue centres around the principle of not divulging committee information prior to it being reported in the House. I quote here from *House of Commons' Procedures and Practice*, Marleau and Montpetit, at page 879, where they state, "Committees make their views and recommendations known to the House by way of reports." Marleau and Montpetit also add, at page 885:

"It is not in order for Members to allude to committee proceedings or evidence in the House until the committee has presented its report to the House. This restriction applies both to references made by Members in debate and during oral question period."

The third and final issue is to point out to Members that, in fact, a breach of confidentiality is an issue of privilege and not simply one of process or procedure. In support, I quote here again from Marleau and Montpetit at page 838:

"Divulging any part of the proceedings of an in camera committee meeting has been ruled by the Speaker to constitute a prima facie matter

of privilege. Alleged breaches of committee confidentiality should properly be raised as a matter of privilege."

Members, after careful review of rule 23(m) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly and of the unedited Hansard for October 6 and 7, 2008, I do not find in this instance that the Member has a point of order. There was no breach of confidentiality here, because the Premier, while making reference to the existence of a letter, did not divulge the contents of that letter.

I have heard many Members rise in this House to defend our consensus style of government and comment on its effectiveness. Members must also be aware that the functioning of our unique form of government depends on the ability of all Members to understand and respect the important role confidentiality must play in the relationship between committees and the Executive Council.

Mr. Roland, do you have a point of order? What is your point of order?

### Point of Order

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, at the earliest opportunity I rise on a point of order from the events of yesterday's Committee of the Whole discussions, under section 23(i) of our Rules of the Legislative Assembly, where a Member imputes false or hidden motives to another Member.

Yesterday in Committee of the Whole Mrs. Groenewegen, in the unedited Hansard of Wednesday, October 8, 2008, page 62, in questioning the Finance Minister, asked this question: "was the MLA who approved the negotiated contract the MLA for Inuvik, the Premier and the Chair of the Finance Management Board?"

Mr. Speaker, I would say that in her line of questioning leading up to that event, it's quite clear that Mrs. Groenewegen is threading the needle, as I would put it, in pointing out that as the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake signed a letter supporting the negotiated contract in the last Assembly — and in this Assembly for the first eight months I was the Chair of the Financial Management Board and the Premier; I believe the only one in the history of the Northwest Territories — by putting that line of questioning out there, she has tried to, in fact.... I would feel that this is written now forever in the record books: that she's imputing a motive on my behalf that I had a position to make something happen.

I must set the record straight, Mr. Speaker, that yes, I did sign a letter of support for that negotiated contract, but I also followed the rules for declaring a conflict of interest at any subsequent moment.

Mr. Speaker, under 23(i) I would say that Mrs. Groenewegen and her line of questioning leading up to page 62 was questioning my motives and my position as the Member with authority in that particular project.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. I'm going to allow a bit of debate on this point of order. To the point of order. Mr. Roland.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I and Members on this side of the House follow the process of the House. At times, yes, we may stray, and that's when Members call us into line. We respect the roles of Regular Members, of Cabinet of how we do our work. Some Members have been in this Assembly for a multiple number of terms. Mrs. Groenewegen is one of them. She is very adept at presenting a case and leading a line of questioning, as I've come to know her work in this Assembly.

But most important to the process, as we do our work as Members of the Legislative Assembly, a number of times we fill different roles within this government. Timing of those roles can also overlap when different terms of the Assembly end.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, when you look at that line of questioning on an Inuvik project, which is two schools and which has worked its way in the system, the line of questioning she led up to was, I would say as I read this, directly pointing to me as MLA for Inuvik Boot Lake at the time and in my present roles. It was questioning the facts of what the motive was and how a project of that value, as she was pursuing yesterday, could make it and continue to make it through the system. That's what I've had to draw from her line of questioning.

I believe that as Members of this Assembly we have to respect the rights, roles and process that this Assembly has put in place. I would say that the Member has crossed that line in the line of questioning she put out on record without any substantiation. In fact, by her line of questioning she has indeed imputed a false motive to the process and my role as the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, thereby putting into question my role as Premier and the Finance Minister of the day.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the point of order, the honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening very carefully so that I would fully understand what Mr. Roland's point of order was. I understand he's saying that I was imputing some motive, obviously something not good, in my line of questioning.

As a Member of this Assembly I have a duty, a right and an obligation to ask questions and bring transparency and accountability to the decisions of

this government. In my line of questioning yesterday with regard to the Inuvik school I was trying to get to the issue of process on this. I have a lot of questions about that project. I still have a lot of questions, and I will pursue more questions.

I'm not a Cabinet Member, so I'm not privy to the processes that would actually take place behind closed doors in the confidentiality of the Cabinet room with respect to a Member declaring a conflict or how they'd be involved. I listened to the deputy minister outline the negotiated contract policy, and he said that would necessarily include a letter of support from community leaders, including MLAs. I then wanted to understand that process better. I did not intend to impute any motive. I still want to clearly understand how this project came about.

It is interesting to me that if the Premier, as an MLA, would provide a letter of support that would be considered by Cabinet. What would follow after that in terms of any kind of protocol or rule is not known to me. I have been in Cabinet, but I wouldn't recall, because we didn't deal with a lot of negotiated contracts. That's not something I knew. So I was asking questions. I was not trying to answer them or impute any motive. Obviously, this was perceived by the Premier, as he's raising a point of order today.

I guess I will have to leave a few.... I have many questions about this project. Without getting into the detail of that.... I mean, it is the largest capital project in the history of our government. It is my job to ask questions, and I just think it's the job of the government to defend those decisions and answer those questions clearly.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the point of order. Seeing there are no further comments on that, I will take this under advisement and review Hansard and the comments made and come back with my ruling at a later date.

Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

### Ministers' Statements

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 99-16(2) CHANGES TO THE SENIOR HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today about an Income Security program that is unique to the North and that has recently been improved. The Senior Home Heating Subsidy provides support for fuel, including wood, wood pellets, fuel oil, propane, natural gas or electricity for heating to seniors who own and live in their own homes. It was designed to help elderly Northerners deal with the higher cost of living. The

Senior Home Heating Subsidy provides a direct and clear improvement to the quality of life for seniors.

The benefit is fairly simple. Taking into account household income, eligible seniors receive a set amount of fuel based on the zone they live in. This ensures that if the cost of these fuels climbs, the benefit remains the same.

This spring we increased the budget for this subsidy by \$200,000. As a result, we have been able to implement two key changes that are retroactive to April 2008. Eligibility for this program is determined through established income thresholds in three cost of living based zones within the NWT.

Our first change to this program has been to increase the income threshold for each zone by \$10,000, allowing more seniors to be eligible to receive the benefit.

The second change to the program is in the way income is calculated to ensure that from now on, federal disability benefits are not included.

In August of 2007 this government committed to changing our philosophy around Income Security programs to ensure Northerners had adequate benefits, allowing them to move towards self-reliance. I will continue to share and celebrate with you as we make changes such as those I have mentioned today. Mahsi cho.

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

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 100-16(2) 2008 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, in my statement today I would like to highlight the NWT Aboriginal Business Conference, which will be held next week in Yellowknife, October 14 through 16. As Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment I appreciate how this annual forum can contribute to the development of small businesses.

The theme of this year's conference is Establishing Economic Cooperation. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the staff of the Denendeh Development Corporation, who organizes this annual event. This year they expect up to 200 participants in attendance at this conference.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Manley A. Begay Jr., who is the director of the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy in the Udall Centre for Studies in Public Policy. Dr. Begay is a senior lecturer and associate social scientist in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Arizona.

Some of the conference workshops will include renewable resources and tourism; First Nations' housing; and mining, oil and gas exploration and partnering. Under the human resources and community sustainability presentations speakers will discuss training the community workforce, transferable skills, aboriginal business development and local hiring practices.

Delegates will hear business cooperation success stories as well as participate in business development workshops focusing on starting a business, financing a business and navigating financial statements presented by the NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation.

Sharon Venne, chief negotiator for the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, will talk about living and working on Akaitcho land, and discussion points will focus on renewable resources such as fisheries, forestry and tourism. Aboriginal Involvement in Exploration will examine mining processes and community processes.

The conference will also provide guidance to young entrepreneurs and a workshop called Preparing to Participate, as well as opportunities to hear perspectives from young entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of this 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly we have identified the goals and priorities that will guide our work over the next four years. These goals include a strong and independent North built on partnerships and a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices. Over 200 delegates at this forum will contribute to the building of a diversified, sustainable NWT.

This territory-wide conference is an excellent opportunity for our businesspeople to network, gain new insight on their objectives and discuss with others the opportunities that are available. Here they can recharge their business batteries and learn what our governments and financial institutions can do to help their business to grow.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Mr. Robert McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 101-16(2)  
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION  
COMMISSION UPDATES

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to share some positive service focused information about the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, which I'll now refer to as WSCC.

The WSCC Governance Council sets employer assessment rates each year to reflect industry claims experience and to ensure employer assessments are adequate to fund current costs as well as projected costs. Effective January 1 the 2009 average assessment rate will remain \$1.71 per \$100 of assessable payroll. The governance council continues its commitment to keep employer assessment rates stable and affordable. Our rates remain one of the lowest in Canada.

On September 24, 2008, the governance council held its annual public meeting. At this meeting, open to stakeholders, the WSCC's current strategic priorities and goals, as well as accomplishments and progress to date, were highlighted. The governance council requested input on the WSCC's priorities and goals to ensure future planning meets the needs of stakeholders.

Following the public meeting the WSCC held an open house. Recently completed renovations fulfill the Auditor General and standing committee recommendations to be a more welcoming, service focused organization for stakeholders. Tours of the new open reception area and safety classrooms were well attended.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the WSCC won first place in the audiovisual productions category at the 2008 American Association of State Compensation Insurance Funds communications awards. AASCIF is an association of workers' compensation insurance companies, and its membership includes agencies in 27 states as well as ten Canadian workers' compensation boards. Presented annually, the AASCIF communications awards recognize the most creative and effective communications programs created by workers' compensation agencies across the two countries. The WSCC placed ahead of California and Ontario to take top honours for its video safety game Go Safe — The Safety Game.

We should be very proud of this prestigious award and congratulate the WSCC on its accomplishment. Go Safe — The Safety Game is being widely distributed across the Northwest Territories to schools and industries. I encourage my fellow Members to contact the WSCC for a copy of the award winning game.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 102-16(2)  
ABORIGINAL JUSTICE

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Last month I attended a meeting with my counterparts from across Canada. We discussed many issues related to justice and public safety, but the one that



will likely be of particular interest to this Assembly was the issue of aboriginal justice and policing.

I called for improvements to policing in our small and remote communities and highlighted the challenges of northern policing. There was considerable support from the provinces and territories as well as the federal Minister, Mr. Day. Many said that they have similar issues, especially in their remote and northern communities. I emphasized the need for additional funding to increase the number of aboriginal officers in our workforce and to reintroduce special constables as a significant component of our force.

We all know the statistics. The territories have very high crime rates. Here in the Northwest Territories our rate is six times the national average. We want to recruit more RCMP officers from the communities. That would give us officers who speak our languages and are fully aware of local issues.

As Members are aware, we have been asking the federal government to fully include the NWT in the First Nations Policing Program. Most RCMP positions in our territory are funded 70 per cent by the Government of the Northwest Territories, with the remaining 30 per cent from the federal government. This program would allow us to convert some of our positions currently held by aboriginal members to be funded 48 per cent by the Government of the Northwest Territories, 52 per cent by the federal government.

This is the same way aboriginal police in southern Canada are funded. Right now we only have four positions that are funded this way. We believe we could have many more. The savings could be reinvested in policing at no additional cost to the Government of Northwest Territories.

We know that we will be affected by the RCMP's backup policy more than the provinces. Most of our detachments are in small communities that have only two or three officers. Many communities in the South have detachments with a staffing complement that already meets the backup policy requirements. Backup is a national issue for the RCMP, and we are still waiting to learn the details about what we will be required to provide for the officers in our communities.

One thing is clear, Mr. Speaker. Although larger jurisdictions may absorb the additional costs more easily, this government will need to make substantial investments in policing. I have asked Minister Stockwell Day to pursue a Northern Policing Framework that will recognize the unique challenges of policing in the North and provide funding for aboriginal policing. These officers would continue to work in our communities — aboriginal people policing aboriginal people.

Through our community justice program this government has made investments in traditional models of justice: sentencing circles, crime prevention that includes the whole community, elders helping youth to become responsible adults. Now we want to increase the number of aboriginal officers and reintroduce special constables as a significant part of our police force. This will help to address the pressures of implementing the backup policy while improving policing services and reducing crime through early interventions.

None of us know what will happen in the federal election, but you have my word that I will continue to push these policing measures as Minister of Justice. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Before I go on to Members' statements, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a special day for one of our Members. It happens to be Mr. Lafferty's, the Member for Monfwi's, birthday today. Happy birthday.

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COST OF LIVING SUBSIDIES FOR ELDERS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to continue on with the Member's statement I presented yesterday to the House in terms of working with the elders in the Sahtu region.

I have reviewed some of my correspondence to previous governments, previous responses by Ministers and previous Member's statements I made in regard to having this government own up and step up the plate in terms of helping their elders. I do want to say thank you to the Minister I heard today in terms of the increase to the fuel subsidy. That certainly goes a long way with our elders. However, I believe there is more to do for our elders.

I thought about this last night. When I heard the Minister responsible for Seniors say they are willing to move on to a discussion with a secretariat for the elders in terms of combining the programs and services for our elders, I thought: I will just leave it alone and get on to another issue, as there are other issues in the Sahtu that could be certainly raised in the House. But I said: no; the elders have given up too much of their lives, too much of their knowledge, too much of their guidance for me to take no for an answer from the Minister and this government.

I also did some research. The federal government committed, I think in 2005, \$13 million to set up a national secretariat for elders. These are old people in our communities who have given up their lives and have for 30 or 40 years given their knowledge and guidance to young leaders. It is our obligation, as well as our responsibility as young people, to carry on and to look after them. They have lived on the land. If they had that type of attitude on the land about sharing, we wouldn't be sitting here today.

A lot of our communities owe a lot of support to and responsibility for helping our elders, especially this government here. We take an elder who has a power bill, NTPC bill, northern bill, taxation, and have him apply to the Housing Corporation for renovations to his house, ECEC for the fuel subsidy. The elders have all this information. The information they're getting is in English, without their native language to have a prospectus on how they should do it.

Again, I am going to ask a question to the Minister on what types of plans they have in place to put together a secretariat that will make it easier for the elders so that one day they could certainly continue support us in our initiatives.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONSOLIDATION OF BOARDS AND AGENCIES

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was mentioned by the Premier in his sessional statement and it has been mentioned by the Finance Minister several times that a revision of NWT boards and agencies is under consideration. We have over 700 boards and agencies in the NWT for a population of only 43,000 people or so. That's the size of a small city elsewhere. We have far more boards than are necessary, and I believe we can experience considerable savings to the budget's bottom line as a result of consolidation of these boards.

There are many options that are available to us. The community services board model used in Behchoko by the Tlicho is serving them well. The same model might work in other areas of the NWT, but it will not work everywhere. Another option is to consolidate all health boards into one with regional representation. The same could be done with education boards. There are many other combinations and hybrids of our current system open to us if we get creative. No option should be dismissed outright.

But consolidation of the boards in the city of Yellowknife will be especially difficult; I would suggest almost impossible. The two education

boards in Yellowknife, for instance, have been autonomous, effective organizations for over 60 years. They only receive 70 per cent of their funding from the GNWT; the remainder comes from local taxation. That makes them unique and demands special consideration for them in any revision plan. Combining the health, education and housing authorities of the city of Yellowknife will create an organization bigger than most government departments. I hope the Minister plans very carefully for any changes to Yellowknife boards.

But, Mr. Speaker, for any revision process to have validity, there has to be significant consultation with the existing boards and agencies. It needs to be much more than a questionnaire sent in the mail. Personal conversations are required. The government must actually listen to what our board members have to say. We might be surprised at what we hear.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, it's mandatory that wide consultation take place with these same boards after a draft plan for revision has been developed. People need to be able to comment on the details of a plan that will significantly impact them. I commend the Minister for taking the initiative to implement board revision and look forward to the results of his work. I, too, am anxious to contribute my own comments.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENTS OF NUNAKPUT RESIDENTS

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to devote my Member's statement to recognizing appointments and awards in the Nunakput communities of Sachs Harbour and Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Speaker, first I wish to congratulate Mr. Joey Carpenter on his appointment to the Inuvialuit/Inupiat Polar Bear Joint Agreement Commission. This appointment is another milestone in Mr. Carpenter's long, extensive public service to his community and to the people of the North. I know that Mr. Carpenter is honoured to accept this appointment, but the people of Nunakput and the North are equally honoured to have him represent us on this international commission that's dealing with very important issues.

Mr. Speaker, the situation and fate of the polar bear has gained considerable international awareness. Aboriginal people in government and interest groups all have concerns on the issues and wish to evaluate discussion. Mr. Carpenter, as an example of this, has indicated there are families in his

communities that rely on polar bear harvesting for 80 per cent of their livelihood. In addition, Banks Island has one of highest numbers of polar bear harvestings in the world. Mr. Carpenter's contribution to the commission in regard to traditional knowledge and its harvesting activities concerns will be invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, another person I wish to congratulate is one of my relatives, Ms. Mardy Voudrach, a recent recipient of the 2008 Council of the Federation Literacy Award. The award recognizes her outstanding achievements of excellence and literacy at the national level. Our small region and small community of Tuktoyaktuk is honoured to have our very own Mardy win this award.

Mardy as a child was stricken with meningitis; however, she has overcome these challenges in her life with determination and perseverance. I have known Mardy all my life, and I know that she has changed me for the better. Her passion, her commitment and her love of life make me a better person.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I am pleased that the council encourages literacy excellence and rewards outstanding accomplishments. I am very deeply honoured that this award went to Mardy.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to wish you and your family and all my colleagues a happy Thanksgiving and good quality time with our families this weekend.

One other thing is my goddaughter, Cristie Anderson, who is recovering from knee surgery in Stanton Territorial Hospital. I will be going to visit her today.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT TRAVEL

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am raising the topic of safety for students in the NWT. We all know that intercommunity sports and recreation events are an important part of a student's life experience.

Mr. Speaker, I have many fond memories of travelling with Mr. Rick Tremblay when I was kid to communities for basketball, wrestling and cross-country events. As we all know too well, coaches,

team managers, chaperones and parents often take their teams to other communities in the NWT and Alberta. They make use of their own cars and minivans and sometimes rent vehicles and buses.

Sadly, I need to recognize the tragedy of seven lost lives last year in an accident in New Brunswick. Typically, the investigations into these kinds of incidents point to poorly maintained vehicles, overly tired drivers, bad weather, poor safety practices by passengers. In response to that event, the province has now taken steps in establishing guidelines about students travelling, including vehicle types, vehicle inspections and driver training.

Mr. Speaker, before the alarm bells need to go off in our territory, I hope our government will consider acting. The government in New Brunswick is proposing and eventually establishing their guidelines as enforceable regulations under their Education Act.

I suspect the NWT practices are not much different from other places in Canada. Hard working teachers and parents volunteer their time and efforts and vehicles to make huge positive contributions in their children's sports activities. We all have heard stories about northern travel, about broken down vehicles in cold winter and passengers without winter gear. We know that ambulances are not easy to find on many NWT highways. We all know that coaches often do double duty coaching and chaperoning all day long at hockey arenas, and then they drive home in the dark when most of the athletes and students are sleeping because of their exhausting day and weekend.

I think that it is time for the NWT Minister of Education to work hard with his partners and establish some northern guidelines for student travel. These guidelines would assist everyone to take the right amount of care and the right kind of standard to make sure our students are travelling safe.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Education Minister would agree with me that parents and teachers want to know their children are as safe as they possibly can be when travelling to events with the school teams. That I wholeheartedly support.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS IN TU NEDHE COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. Speaker, since being elected MLA for Tu Nedhe in October of last year, I have worked with

numerous Ministers and both communities to get a clear picture of the infrastructure needs of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e. After learning that no project has been allocated to Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e over the next three years, or the balance of this 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, I'm now pursuing a mandate to increase infrastructure dollars in my riding.

According to the plan, the community of Fort Resolution will receive zero dollars, while Lutselk'e will receive \$55,000 to finish this year's project. In other words, Mr. Speaker, of the 100 and some odd million dollars being allocated, Tu Nedhe will be receiving some holdback dollars. Mr. Speaker, I'm not asking that we shift infrastructure dollars from a higher priority to some other higher priority communities but, rather, that we revisit the allocations made to Tu Nedhe.

A couple of weeks ago while visiting Lutselk'e I walked into a government owned office and I had to step around pots and cans that were strategically placed on the floor to catch the rainwater coming through the roof. If this is not a clear example of problems our smaller communities are facing with their infrastructure needs, I have to ask: how bad do things have to get?

This government plans to spend \$20 million in energy programs. The GNWT should make it a priority to allocate some of that money to Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e for items such as wood stoves, insulation and other energy efficient projects so that my constituents can feel like the GNWT is paying some attention to them.

Mr. Speaker, community infrastructure was handed to the communities through the New Deal in 2005 and was initially delivered to hamlets and charter communities. Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution are neither; however, I have heard from each of the communities, and both agree that the Department of MACA has been doing very well working with them, and they have been a big help.

Mr. Speaker, my goal is to work with the communities and the Minister to look at infrastructure dollar amounts in the Tu Nedhe riding.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. It seems that my riding is a low priority when compared to other communities. I have a highway that is below standard. I have dust problems in both communities, drainage problems and much needed chipsealing in both communities and much, much more.

In this respect the government is failing my communities. The goal is simple, Mr. Speaker: to increase infrastructure dollars in the Tu Nedhe riding. The solution is a cooperative approach with the Minister, the communities and myself to develop a new infrastructure plan for each community. Later today I will have follow-up questions for the Minister of MACA. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROCESS GOVERNING NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the House I asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about the status of the contract for the Inuvik school. He informed us that the contract had been awarded. Later in the Committee of the Whole we found out that the awarding of the contract was only really a letter of intent to the contractor with details yet to be worked out. We were told that the letter of intent does not bind this government to the project as planned or designed.

The binding agreement will be in the form of a signed contract. Mr. Speaker, we have a shortage of capital dollars. Projects that communities are in dire need of have been pushed back or completely disappeared, so it is incumbent on this government to make the most financially prudent decisions possible when it comes to our capital infrastructure budget. It is also incumbent on our government to distribute and share these limited dollars in the fairest way possible throughout our territory in all sizes of communities.

For that reason departments must be able to defend decisions made for the rationale for the priority placed on certain projects and for the amount that we are prepared to pay to acquire these projects. To our duty for accountable and transparent government it is our job as Regular Members to ask questions about contracting processes and decisions.

Just because a contract is negotiated, in my opinion, is not sufficient to deem the details to be confidential until after the contract is signed. Because we know that after the contract is signed, Mr. Speaker, it is a little too late for us to do anything about this. Of course, it brings back memories of the Deh Cho Bridge project, where Members were not allowed to have details of that agreement, either, because of the third party interest in that project. Now here we are again, being told that the details of a negotiated contract are also protected by confidentiality until the letter or the contract is signed.

Mr. Speaker, I will be seeking a few things yet in regard to this project in terms of information. I will just put it out there as notice that I would be very interested to see a chronology of all events related to this project. I would like to request a copy of the letters of support for the negotiated contract from the various parties, but I don't know to what date they go back.

Also, I think it would be good to get an analysis on the cost of this school in relation to other schools on a per square foot basis, with all the necessary adjustments for its size, economies of scale and those various things. Those are the kinds of things I'll be seeking on this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUGGESTIONS FOR ECONOMIC AND COST OF LIVING ISSUES

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been a Member of this Legislative Assembly for just over five years now, and I continue to enjoy bringing up issues that are important to both my constituents and residents in the Northwest Territories.

I do believe it is easier to stand over here, day in and day out, and ask questions than it would be to be on that side of the House and answer them. I have been very critical of this government's performance, because it's my job to do so. I am of the belief that if you are going to be critical, you should also provide suggestions on how you could do things better. I continue to find it very frustrating that I can stand here for five years and make suggestions to the government, and at the end of the day I have to wonder whether anyone over there is actually paying attention to what I'm saying.

For example, I've been asking questions and suggesting that a permanent trust fund, or heritage fund, be set up here in the Northwest Territories. It should be an integral part of any negotiation with Ottawa on resource revenue sharing and devolution.

I have also been suggesting that the three northern territories be declared tax free zones in an effort to address the high cost of living, Arctic sovereignty and the inability to retain and attract health and other professional occupations. For starters, Mr. Speaker, the federal government should immediately take the GST off home heating fuel for Northerners. For Northerners, we don't have much choice. Either we pay or we freeze. Where is the letter to the federal Minister of Finance asking and demanding that this be done?

Another suggestion that I have been making is: why is it the Government of the Northwest Territories

seems to be the only one that stands to gain nothing out of the proposed Mackenzie Valley Gas Project? Yet we spend upwards of \$3 million a year getting prepared and over \$20 million to date. Prepared for what? To be taken advantage of? We should be demanding an equity stake in the pipeline. Watching our resources go south while everyone is making money except for the Government of the Northwest Territories is not acceptable. We need to demand that we get access to the gas for our own citizens. Why should it be shipped south, processed and shipped back to us? So we can pay an exorbitant price for it? It makes no sense to me and it makes no sense to the residents, Mr. Speaker.

Those are a few examples and suggestions I've been making to government. I'm standing here every day waiting for someone to grasp something I have said.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm standing here every day waiting for someone to grasp something I have said. Unfortunately, I believe all they hear over there is the criticism. It's time they expand their horizons and actually listen to what I and other Regular Members on this side of the House are saying. We're not just criticizing. We're making suggestions in order that we can make consensus government work. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CERTIFICATION FOR WOOD BURNING STOVES

**Mr. Menicoche:** [English translation not provided.]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many homeowners across the NWT heat their homes with wood or pellet stoves. This is something that the government is actively encouraging people to do in order to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

Many homeowners in our smaller communities who burn wood or pellets are running into some problems. In order to get or renew their insurance on their homes, these wood burning appliances need to be inspected or certified. There is often no local or even regional person to inspect or certify these wood stoves.

A constituent of mine was told these types of inspections were not within the mandate of the Office of the Fire Marshall. His only option was to get a private contractor certified to do wood stove

inspections to come from Hay River. The cost of this inspection was around \$1,400.

Mr. Speaker, this is just wrong. People are caught between not carrying home insurance and paying outrageous amounts of money in order to comply with the required safety standards.

The GNWT provides a number of inspection services throughout its departments, such as electrical and boiler services. Why can't the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs provide wood stove inspection services or work with community governments to ensure that there is someone properly trained to carry out these inspections?

This isn't just an insurance issue. It's also a significant safety issue. If the government is encouraging the use of alternative energy sources such as wood burning appliances, it has an obligation to ensure that people can get them inspected and certified in a timely and affordable manner. I urge the government to address this gap in our service as quickly as possible. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENHANCED TERRITORIAL ARTS FUNDING

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to highlight the work of artisan craftspeople in the Great Slave riding and commend the government on its recent commitment to enhance funding up to \$500,000 for art, as outlined by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment yesterday. This money will go to the NWT Arts Council, to cultural organizations such as the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre, to heritage centres where northern artists' crafts are showcased and to new program planning, development and evaluation throughout the NWT.

As an avid supporter of the arts and culture I am happy to see this government taking these steps. I look forward to continued and enhanced investment in these areas over the years to come and continued partnership between Education, Culture and Employment and Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The Great Slave riding is home to many artists whose creative work provides just a small section of the artistic talent in our territory. Knife maker Edward McRae, photographers Alice McLeod and Bronwyn Watters live in the riding, as well as musicians Moira Cameron and Steve Goff of Ceilidh and Friends. The Great Slave riding is also home to Bill Gilday of the Gumboots, visual artist Rae Braden and painter Brian McDonald. Bonnie

Madsen's murals can be seen on Franklin Avenue, and she also operates a gallery out of her home in the riding that showcases her excellent paintings. The many accomplishments of constituent Keira Kolson, a hip-hop artist and aboriginal youth advocate, show that homegrown artists are capable of great achievements alongside their counterparts in the South.

The Northern Arts and Cultural Centre is the only performing arts centre in the Northwest Territories located in the Great Slave riding. NACC continues to host local, territorial, national and international talent and is an integral part of the territorial arts community. Many young Northerners have discovered the love of performing arts there, and many performers have inspired audiences to pursue their creative goals.

The enhanced funding will support a proposal to administer a new northern theatre arts program, and I look forward to the opportunities that this initiative will offer Northerners.

The Northwest Territories arts community has a great potential and continues to grow. However, as artists in any discipline can tell you, success requires hard work, perseverance and support. We as a government must be sure to encourage and develop northern talent to continue to offer emerging artists as many opportunities as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for his department's commitment to the arts. Creativity is a renewable resource, and few groups of people celebrate our unique northern culture and identity as vibrantly as our artists.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WATER ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY OF DETTAH

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under today's fiscal and environmental challenges we need to be doing things in a more financially efficient and environmentally benign way. With the intake and delivery of water to residents of Dettah, there is a clear opportunity to reduce both financial and environmental costs.

Currently Dettah has to send a truck 16 kilometres two to three times per day to get water from the City of Yellowknife's pumphouse at the Yellowknife River. They have to pay a full time driver and maintain and operate the truck on challenging road conditions. MACA is funding this at \$170,000 annually, supplemented by the Housing Corporation's indirect contribution of \$160,000. Fuel consumed is about 9,000 litres, generating 20,000 kilograms of carbon emissions last year, which flies

in the face of our recognition of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The City of Yellowknife is currently in the process of examining its own system with the option of eliminating this pumphouse and pulling water directly out of Yellowknife Bay. It will no longer make sense to keep the pumphouse just to supply water to Dettah. The energy costs for the pumphouse won't make sense. The energy costs for the water tanker won't make sense. If the city can pull water directly out of the bay, there's no reason why Dettah can't do the same.

Building a small pumphouse in Dettah would save the cost and time of trucking water all the way from the river and would radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It would ultimately provide a cost savings to the community and to those such as the GNWT that fund their current system.

Right now Dettah is paying \$160,000 a year to the City of Yellowknife for water. Because they have to truck it from the river, they have to pay the full time employee. Although maintenance and fuel costs for the truck are around \$30,000 a year, altogether, if Dettah pumped their own water directly from the bay, there is a potential savings of at least \$200,000 a year and possibly much more. Even if a pumphouse were to cost \$2 million, a very generous estimate, the financial payback would be less than ten years, and the reduction in environmental impacts would be significant.

With the city currently in the process of revamping its own system, now is the perfect time to look at a solution for Dettah as well. All that's needed is the commitment and a wise investment from Municipal and Community Affairs to get this done. I have no doubt that our Minister will have that wisdom to move on this opportunity; nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions on this. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read into the record a motion that passed back in the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, which I moved, seconded by Mr. Leon Lafferty, the Member for Monfwi.

"WHEREAS the stated mission of the Department of Health and Social Services 'is to promote, protect and provide for health and well-being of the people of the Northwest Territories;'

AND WHEREAS residents in small communities do not have access to the same level of health and social services programs as residents in large communities;

AND WHEREAS services vary between health authorities meaning that some residents are being better served than others by virtue of where they live;

AND WHEREAS services available in small communities can be restricted to emergencies only or withdrawn completely with very short notice due to staff shortages;

AND WHEREAS some of those staff shortages are related to vacancies or training and can be anticipated and planned for;

AND WHEREAS only providing emergency medical services has serious health consequences for the very young and the very old who need access to preventative health programs;

AND WHEREAS preventative health programs such as diabetes clinics, well baby clinics and other preventative programs are essential to the continued health and well-being of a community;

AND WHEREAS many smaller communities do not have access to such core programs as mental health and alcohol and drug workers and cannot begin their road to recovery without such assistance;

AND WHEREAS one of the foundations of the Canadian health care system is universality and the Department of Health and Social Services and its subordinate health authorities are choosing to ignore this principle;

AND WHEREAS the Minister and the Department of Health and Social Services are ultimately responsible for the provision of these services to the Northwest Territories residents...."

Mr. Speaker, my point is that this motion was passed in the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and we're talking about the same issues now in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. No one should have to have an issue outstanding for that long period of time and should realize that this has to have some unique responses. It's got to be essential by way of programs and services, and it is affecting the lives of people in the small communities with regard to health care and core services.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. These motions that are passed in Assemblies time and time again have to change. We have to ensure that motions really mean something when we pass them in this House with regard to services to our people. It is affecting the quality of life of our residents, the quality of life in our communities and the well-being of those communities to sustain themselves and have healthy communities.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services about this particular motion and those aspects of this motion, because we have to do something. This is an urgent matter. If we're not treating it as an urgent matter, we may have to take some urgent steps.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mark Bogan of the Great Slave riding. He's an advocate for fathers' rights.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I would like to recognize the pages from the Hay River Diamond Jenness Secondary School who have been working with us this week: Michelle Babiuk from Hay River North and Brette Jameson from Hay River South. I'm not sure if they're here, but I'd like to thank them for a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today, much to my surprise.... I have a stepsister from Ontario who's here visiting. I just saw her for the first time here. Her name is Karen Viaene, and her daughter is Amy Switzer, who is a schoolteacher here in Yellowknife. They're in the visitors' gallery today. Good to see you.

**Ms. Bisaro:** It's my pleasure to welcome the group of students who are up there behind me. They are a grade 6 class from William McDonald School, from the riding of Frame Lake, and they are accompanied by their teacher, Amy Switzer.

These students have been studying Canadian government and have been working with the Federal Election Student Vote Program. They will be voting tomorrow. Word is that if all the kids in Canada voted, we'd know who the Prime Minister would be. I'd like to just mention their names, and these are in no particular order: Clayton Ashlie, Craig Pike, Isaiah Martin, Nicolas Berube, Nicholas Hayward, Peter Palfrey, BJ Coomber, Jamie Le, Joel Haward, Donovan Worsley, Drake Saunders,

Perry Tologanak and Jeremy Stannard. I hope you guys are having a good time up there. Welcome to the Leg.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I'd like to recognize the two pages from Fort Resolution: TJ Fordy and Morgan Unka.

**Mr. Speaker:** If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. We hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 455-16(2) COMMUNITY SPECIFIC INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I talked about infrastructure needs in the Tu Nedhe riding. I talked about how there seems to be a lack of attention to the riding. As a follow-up to my statement I'd like to ask questions of the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, it's been three years since the implementation of the New Deal. Can the Minister provide me with a detailed evaluation of how the New Deal has been working in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to provide the detailed evaluation at a later date, as soon as I can get that from the department.

I can tell the Member that MACA is working with the community of Fort Resolution in particular. They are initially looking at changing their status from a settlement to a hamlet, which will enable them to own assets. They will be able to get a lot of money from the New Deal. They're also planning on going into Lutselk'e later on this month to meet with the community there to see what options they can put together for them.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Will the Minister commit to reviewing the situation and working with other Ministers to see what can be done as far as the whole deferred maintenance for community infrastructure?

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** MACA is working with the communities to identify negative impacts of lack of maintenance. They are working with the communities to develop capital plans so that the



funding will be allocated to take care of those impacts as required.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister conduct a meeting with me and each of the communities to discuss the development of the new community specific infrastructure strategy? There seems to be a vast difference between the smaller and the larger communities as far as community infrastructure goes. If the Minister could commit to that.

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Certainly, I will commit to meeting with the Member and each of the communities to discuss it. In my initial briefing and meeting with the folks from MACA last night I did give them the direction that when we look at allocating infrastructure funding, I'd like to try to find the balance where all communities receive their fair share of funding.

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

QUESTION 456-16(2)  
SAFETY GUIDELINES  
FOR STUDENT TRAVEL

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I raised a matter that I take very seriously and I find very important. The matter really is about student safety while they're travelling.

I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment: would he look into the matter of making sure there are safety guidelines for all travelling students, and would he work with his partners at the school boards to make sure something could come forward as soon as possible?

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we do take safety as a first priority in any trips that are going on, these sports trips for students or community trips. Most of the time they go on a school bus, and as you know, the school buses are regularly maintained. Those are the factors that come into play.

It's the students' lives we have to deal with, and they are the first priority. I can provide that information to the Member. Whether he wants the schedules of maintenance or information pertaining to that, I can provide that to the Member.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, when they travel by school bus, I certainly hope that they are well maintained, et cetera. What this really comes down

to is small teams. All big schools can afford big school buses, but when you send a small team.... As I recall very intimately, when I travelled in a small group, we used to take small vans and cars, and they sometimes went without any formal guidelines for safety.

Really, what I'm asking is: would the Minister look into things like guidelines that reflect making sure we have a first-aid kit, making sure the driver, who may be the coach, has a certain amount of downtime, and maybe even making sure they have a satellite phone just in case something happens during winter travel. That's the type of issue I'm trying to raise, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister look into that?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, for the transporting of students, whether it be by bus or van, we take the safety precautions of inspecting those vehicles, maintaining those vehicles. We are fully aware of the incident that happened in another jurisdiction. We are taking safety as a priority. Certainly, I can come back to the Member with the information he's requesting. There are certain guidelines on the safety aspect. Each school board could provide that, and I can have that available for the Member.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I am well under the understanding that some school boards have certain guidelines. I just want to make sure that the Department of Education is taking some leadership on this issue and some guidance on the bigger issue. I want to make sure that all school boards have a full understanding of the complexity of this problem and that the territorial government supports those complex problems by making sure they have the appropriate equipment so all kids travel to their events and homes safely.

I'm asking the Minister: would he take the initiative, garner what guidelines some schools have, what some don't have, and create some general guidelines that would be applicable to all schools?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, within the education system, with the Education Act and also the guidelines and policies that we follow, those do come into play even before the trips go out. Identification of the maintenance of the vehicles.... If there are any problems with the vehicles, then they need to work on those vehicles, as well, before they hit the road.

Certainly, most of the school boards and also school authorities have a common practice of regular maintenance on the buses, and they have school vans as well that they maintain on a daily basis. There is a common understanding that there are guidelines in place and that there's a safety factor. It does come into play as the first priority of our educational system.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard I think three times that the schools take care of maintenance, and I appreciate that. That's not the only issue. It's an important issue — don't get me wrong; it really is — but there are more issues. There are issues such as if the coach is the driver. The coach has been coaching all day, all weekend. Then what they do is they drive the team back in the dark, maybe on a cold winter's day, and they're exhausted.

Mr. Speaker, with those types of guidelines I'd like us to sort of take a formal approach, bring them together. It's the guidelines of making sure there's a satellite phone, which I know there isn't. Yes, it's goodwill to have a first aid kit, but making sure everyone does it.... That's the question I have for the Minister: would you take on leadership of drawing up general guidelines that would be applicable to all schools?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** We can certainly gather the guidelines we currently have in place to see if we need to improve in certain areas, whether it be the satellite phone for a long journey from here to Hay River, that type of deal, or Smith or isolated communities, for that matter. Those need to also be taken into consideration.

At the same time, these are important issues we're dealing with. On these trips and journeys it's not only one coach who goes. There are always chaperones. There's always an assistant coach and the students and the peers of the students. We have to keep that in mind as well. It's not only one person who drives. There are other teammates who are going on these journeys as well. Mahsi.

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

#### QUESTION 457-16(2) INSPECTION OF WOOD STOVES

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to follow up on my Member's statement in regard to inspections of wood stoves and pellet stoves in our smaller communities.

I know that in larger centres like Yellowknife and perhaps even Inuvik they've got access to certified inspectors. I'd just like to know the government's position in getting inspectors out to the smaller communities. There's certainly assistance needed for this important matter. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure about Yellowknife, but I don't think there's a wood stove inspector in Inuvik. The insurance company — I know from experience — requires that very stringent inspection process. We have the gas inspectors and the boiler inspectors in many of the regions. I did some checking, and I know that the Office of the Fire Marshal is not qualified to inspect wood stoves. So this may be something we would have to have a look at and see if it's something that's feasible to bring into regional offices.

**Mr. Menicoche:** I'm glad to hear that the Minister is responsive to the needs of the communities. As I said in my Member's statement, on one hand, we're encouraging the use of wood stoves and wood pellet stoves and alternative fuel energy, and on the other hand, we're not making it easy by providing inspectors. People are actually at a great risk level, because there are no inspectors for their homes and they need insurance. House insurance is important for many, many different factors, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, it will fall under MACA, so I'd like the Minister to really have a good look at this. Can the Minister come up with some kind of strategy to provide inspections for wood stoves in the regions and communities?

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** I totally agree with the Member that we do try and encourage the use of wood stoves, so we should have mechanisms in place for people who want to install wood stoves. I know for a fact that existing wood stoves have to almost be opened up to be inspected. With new wood stoves, new construction, it's a little easier.

But the Member's asked if I would look into a possible strategy, and I assure the Member that I will ask the department to have a look at a strategy and see what options we can come up with that would be of benefit. Because we do encourage people to burn wood, I guess we should have mechanisms in place to back that up.

**Mr. Menicoche:** I'm sure glad that we're going to take care of the long term need, but the needs that people can knock on my door and my office are for today.

I'd like to know if the Minister can look at doing some type of travel assistance to get these inspectors out to the communities, because their home insurance policies have now expired. It's just not fair for them to individually pay \$1,400 when government's here and they can make some travel assistance to the inspectors, Mr. Speaker. Can the government look at that?

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Yes, there are a few qualified wood stove inspectors, I believe, and it does, as I think the Member pointed out earlier,

cost approximately \$1,400. I'll assure the Member that I'll talk to ENR and the Arctic Energy Alliance to see if there's some financial assistance that could be provided to bring an inspector into the community and maybe hit more than one unit at a time.

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

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, was looking for a commitment from the Minister. And the commitment would be just that if in the short term, in the immediate short term — October, November — they can look at getting an inspector out to the regions and communities.

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** I wasn't going to try to use the word "commitment." I think I used up my quota yesterday. I have assured the Member that we will look into it immediately to see if there's anything we could possibly do within the next month or so.

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

QUESTION 458-16(2)  
INCOME SECURITY CHANGES  
AFFECTING SENIORS

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment today.

Several times over the last year Members have indicated to the Minister that Income Security changes are required. The one area in particular I'd like to reference is the method of calculation of income for seniors who are living on their own but who may be attended in their own home by a family member because they are unable, physically, to live on their own.

The current policy penalizes the senior's Income Security payment because the family member's income is also included in the household income, and the calculation of payments is based on household income. So my question to the Minister is: when can we expect this policy change in the income calculation for seniors living with a family member who is looking after them?

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, that area has been brought to our attention as a department, and we are looking at options on how to deal with those seniors in their own home or in a public unit.

Just for the fuel subsidy, it will be in their own home. We are looking at where individuals working

at the mine sites are living with their grandmas or their parents. It is based on household income.

At the same time, some individuals, community members, unfortunately do take advantage of that, where they are living with their grandmas or moms or grandparents. They're not paying anything. This way, we're trying to find out where we can work with the senior. Somehow individuals that are not paying have to start paying to some degree. So we are looking at the options.

My department is working diligently in this area, because winter is going to be here soon. We are working as fast as we can on how we can deal with this particular issue, because there are requests that are coming on this particular issue. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, I understand that there are difficulties in this and that there are people who will take advantage of a situation, but when a senior can stay in their own home instead of having to go into a public health institution, an elder care facility or a long term care facility, it's a significant saving to the GNWT. I didn't hear the Minister tell me when this is going to happen. I understand they are working diligently, but I feel that this is a matter that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. I would like to again ask the Minister when we can expect this policy change.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Like I said, we are working on this, especially this month, with the following few more months to go. Then, whatever we come up with, we need to talk to the Regular Members as well, because whenever there are changes, we need to notify the Members on the policy changes. As long as it meets the needs of the communities, the seniors especially.... We need to work with the seniors — how we can help them, especially with a recent increase of \$10,000 for the Seniors Fuel Subsidy. We want them to qualify for that subsidy program, but at the same time, there is a threshold with their household income. So we clearly highlighted that. Like I said, my staff is working on this, and as soon as we come up with a package, we will certainly provide that to Members. Mahsi.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister. I do have to take a bit of an exception, I guess, to waiting for Regular Members. I appreciate that you want to run the policy by Regular Members, but I think this is a situation where seniors are being penalized because they wish to stay in their own homes. They are either disabled, or they are elderly and they need someone to care for them. I feel really strongly that this is a situation that shouldn't be left for six, eight, ten or 12 months until it comes

back to Regular Members and has been vetted by us.

I'd like to ask the Minister if there is any possibility that the department would consider putting a policy in place for a short period of time, basically on a trial basis over this winter.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, this is an important topic for us as well. It has been brought to our attention, like I said earlier. For a short period we would like to share with Members some possible solutions to these areas. I am willing to work with the Member or Members on this particular issue. We have to do this for the benefit of the communities as well. I will continue to work on this and expedite the process where we subsidize seniors so they won't get impacted. Mahsi.

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

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak for all Members, but I am going to guess that I don't believe there is a Member on this side of the House who would object to a change in this policy that is going to assist seniors who cannot live on their own. So I would ask whether or not the Minister could commit to bringing something forward to Members, to committee, before we break this session.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** I will commit to the Member that I'll bring something back to the Member, also dealing with the household income. Whatever changes we make does come with the funding, so we need to take that into consideration as well. We need to find out how much it will cost us to change our policy overall for the Northwest Territories. So we need to do that math; factor that in. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 459-16(2)  
DECLINING HEALTH CARE SERVICES  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to my statement and the motion I passed back in the 14th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the "whereases" refer correctly to the services that are provided in our communities — or in this case, the lack of services. If anything, the service has declined to a point where there are no services in the community of Tsiigehtchic and no programs such as mental health positions in Fort McPherson and also in regard to the medevac emergency service to get people out of our

communities to the regional hospital or elsewhere. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what the department is doing to reinstate programs and services that were in place in our community and why it is taking so long.

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the Member. As the Member is aware, I have been to Tsiigehtchic twice since I became a Minister, and I have had meetings with the community. The Member has talked to me about this issue repeatedly. I do appreciate what the Member is asking me to do, and I have been working on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, right now all of the authorities are directed to operate in such a way that they balance their budgets. For authorities like Beaufort-Delta and Stanton, where they have been experiencing deficits, they are having to look at all the programs they have to see how they can still balance their budgets and deliver the programs. I have directed the department to see how we can extend, for example, the service time for nurses who had been practising in Tsiigehtchic — how we could extend their time or increase their services as well as mental health work. It is taking a little longer, because authorities cannot come up with the money on their own. I have to come up with the money within the system, and in order to do that, I need to look deeper.

So I want to assure the Member that I agree with the need to enhance services in the communities, and we have to look at it in an innovative way. I am fully committed to looking at what we can do to enhance services in small communities.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, it's fundamental that we do provide programs and services in communities. Simply having a mental health worker, an alcohol/drug worker or even a community nurse.... At least it's something. But when you do not have any of those aspects in your communities, the services and the people's well-being are undermined.

So I would like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it that the Department of Health and Social Services in the Inuvik region has a policy as a budget reduction exercise to not fill vacancies?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the Health and Social Services department, as well as all the other departments, is right now having to operate at a certain growth level that's a lot less than what they are used to. Health and Social Services over the years had been growing at about 10 per cent. We are trying to live within a 3 per cent growth rate.

Having said that, I do agree with the Member about the need to evaluate and enhance the services at the community level. We cannot rely on the authorities to do that, because they have strict budget measures. I have to review the entire program that we have in Health and Social Services, whether it is mental health or nursing or community wellness programs. We have to completely change the way we are delivering our programs. We are undertaking that exercise, and I am committing to the Member to bring back a proposal that could work to enhance the program. But we have to use the money from within.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, again it sounds like a "dream on" answer, where basically nothing is going to happen. So I would like to ask the Minister this: why is it that the community of Fort McPherson, some 900 people, does not have a mental health position in which they receive services two days a month from Inuvik for 900 people?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I was in the community of Fort McPherson with the Member in January. It was one of my first tours that I had as a Minister. I visited all of the Health and Social Services staff there. We have a whole floor of social workers, health protection workers, community wellness workers, the healing society; we have a lot of people there that are assigned to help the people of the community. What we are trying to do is see how we can service the community better by putting all those resources together and enhancing services in Fort McPherson. Mr. Speaker, I'll just leave it at that.

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

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how to put this, but services in the Mackenzie Delta communities have declined to the point where it's actually affecting people's health. People have been medevacked, people have passed on because of not having a secure health system in the Inuvik region. I think it's imperative that we talk to those families and individuals that have been affected by the lack of services and the implication that has had on the Inuvik region. They run a \$5 million deficit, yet no programs and services are being delivered in the communities.

So again I'd like to ask how this government can operate in a deficit mode and not see any improvement in services. If anything, there are no services.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, there are services in our communities. I understand that the Member wants to have that service improved. We are working on a new initiative to support after care addiction worker programming. There are lots of

proposals from the community and aboriginal governments in the Beaufort-Delta that we're considering. I'm not saying wait forever. I have correspondence going to the Member within the next day or two that will state more clearly what it is that we're doing for the Beaufort-Delta.

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

QUESTION 460-16(2)  
EQUITY POSITION  
IN MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, I want to continue on from my statement earlier today when I was talking about how easy it is to come into this Assembly and ask questions of the government. I do think it is easier to ask questions than answer questions. I know I am critical; I know I question the government. But I also try, in questioning the government, to provide some suggestions and recommendations and to try to make things work here. You can't just be critical. You have to try to work together.

One of the issues that's really eating at me lately is this Mackenzie Gas Project. I want to get a better understanding of why the Government of the Northwest Territories does not have an equity position in this proposed project. I could ask the Minister of Finance, perhaps, for an answer to that question.

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

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Speaker, the simple answer that I know of is that we just don't have that kind of money, nor are we in a position to borrow that kind of money when you look at all the other competing interests we have, the reduction exercises we're going through, the revenue option exercises we're going through. That would be the main issue.

I do want to say that I've heard the Member's concerns. Clearly, we're committed to moving on the idea and concept of a heritage fund. We intend to come forward with information that would allow us to have that debate and discussion and hopefully get that structured and set up as a legal instrument that is going to be there for the future.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Minister. I know that he does have a genuine interest, like a number of my colleagues in this House, in finally seeing a heritage trust fund set up in the Northwest Territories. I know that he will work to try to get that done.

Again, I just want to get a better understanding of why an equity position in the pipeline isn't attached to the negotiations that are currently ongoing with

the federal government for resource revenue sharing and devolution. Why isn't that part of it? Why isn't the heritage trust fund a part of those negotiations today?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Initially we're looking at the kind of arrangement that could be made on resource royalty sharing. There's the infrastructure option that was put forward by the Premier on behalf of the Premier and Cabinet. The issue of an equity position was not really strongly considered, mainly because there were other things at play, and our own fiscal situation doesn't give us a lot of free capital to get things done.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, that gets me to my next question. This billion dollar deal that's on the table with the federal government in relation to the negotiations for resource revenue sharing and devolution was formulated by Cabinet. Now, I'm saying today, and I've said it before in this House, that there are other competing priorities, such as an equity position in the pipeline, such as the heritage trust fund. Members in this House just haven't had the ability, like Cabinet, to put those types of things on the table or to discuss what the most important thing is for us going forward to the federal government.

Again, I just want to ask the Minister of Finance when we can sit down with Cabinet and have this discussion and finally figure out what exactly it is we're after with the federal government.

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

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The Member is speaking about the devolution and resource revenue sharing file, and that's being handled through the Department of Executive and myself, working with Cabinet. I've gone forward and presented a proposal that has been put on the table. We know we're working from a framework that was already in the system for quite a number of years. I've also spoken to the Member and informed him that there are a number of initiatives, if we get a proposal put forward, that we can build on as Members of the Legislative Assembly. That's the process we're involved with.

As for a commitment from Cabinet, again, as Premier of the Northwest Territories I'll work with Members of the Legislative Assembly and bring the appropriate Ministers to the table when it's needed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, I guess a final question for the Premier. It's nice that we can have this back and forth in public. Like I said, there are other things that I believe, as a Member of this House, should be on the table with the federal government.

They are not today. How does the Premier address those concerns that individual Members might have, and how do we get those concerns on the table with the federal government?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of ways of doing that. Internally, the Member is quite familiar with the process of business plans and how we get initiatives on the table and move forward. There are many competing interests, and we don't have the resources to deal with all of them.

On the federal side, depending on the initiative, if it's an initiative with ITI or ENR on different funds or policies that the federal government may be working on, we work with committees; for example, the devolution and resource revenue file. Members are aware that we already had a starting point when this government took over that file. We're working with the federal government on that. The recent proposal has been put forward in trying to come up with a different approach. As I said to Members, we would also look at a number of these other initiatives. But I believe those decisions can be made in the North; we can do that here. We don't necessarily need the federal government to make those decisions for us.

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

#### QUESTION 461-16(2) WATER DELIVERY SYSTEM IN DETTAH

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, my question today is indeed for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I want to follow up on my statement today on the opportunity we have for replacing the water delivery system in Dettah, saving on dollars and greenhouse gas emissions. Is the Minister prepared to pursue this opportunity to realize the savings on all fronts?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the Member makes a good case for looking at these options. I would say to the Member that, yes, I am willing to pursue this option and see what's out there that we can do to try to bring this forward.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the Minister for that commitment. I would suggest probably doing some due diligence and making sure that the city of Yellowknife's water tests are true for Dettah. Dettah is situated even further out from Yellowknife Bay, so the opportunity for even cleaner water seems great. It just needs to

be confirmed, and that the Minister would also meet with the parties involved here, certainly the leaders of Dettah and probably the Minister responsible for housing. Would this Minister commit to those meetings?

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** As part of my new role as the Minister for MACA I have been making commitments to meet with as many parties as possible to get myself up to speed and learn more about the communities and their concerns. I will again make another commitment to the Member that I would be more than willing to meet with all the parties involved. To me, it's just part of the whole process of learning a new department.

**Mr. Bromley:** I think I'm just about done for the day here. I appreciate that time very much and, of course, the brief follow-up. When would the Minister be able to arrange for these meetings?

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Well, I will be here as much as possible. I will try and get a meeting lined up at the earliest convenience, because it really is just a short trip out to Dettah — 30 minutes, I think, one way. I'll try. I'll do what I can to make sure these meetings happen immediately. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister McLeod. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 462-16(2)  
COORDINATING SERVICES FOR SENIORS

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Seniors. In terms of the question to the former Minister responsible for Seniors in July 2007, what I was asking for is a one stop shop for seniors where they would have a place to go to be helped by the government in terms of all the services and programs they are eligible for.

I want to ask the Minister again: in terms of her role, in terms of her working with the NWT Seniors Society and seniors at large and the vision for seniors, could she see her way in terms of helping find a coordinated approach? The need is for seniors at the community level to go to one place where they can have someone there dedicated for the day to look at bills, invoices, provide services, applications instead of going to different locations. Could the Minister look at bringing forward a plan? Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Lee.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand the Member's need that I do what he is asking me to do, and I will undertake to see what the feasibility of that is and get back to the Member.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I would really like to work with the Minister responsible for Seniors on this. There's a very valuable opportunity in working with seniors and putting them at a level where we are taking care of them and showing the community that we are taking care of them.

Can I ask the Minister in terms of the involvement of Regular Members or myself, would we have some options to look at some of these areas that we could work on together?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, there are lots of issues that we need to work on with respect to the needs of seniors, one of the most pressing being expanding services for seniors in senior centres. The Member for Tu Nedhe has been asking from day one about enhancing services in the Great Elders Centre. The Member for Mackenzie Delta is looking to replace or to refurbish the elder centre in Aklavik. I know that the Member for Sahtu.... There's an elders' facility in Déliné that could always use more programming.

So I'm saying that if we have extra money, I think the focus should be on enhancing services. I understand it's more convenient to go to one place, but if the programs are not there, going to one place is not going to be helpful. I think we need to balance between enhancing services for seniors and making it more efficient.

I have made a commitment to the Member that I will look into this and will have some kind of paper for us to discuss. I'll be happy to take it to the Standing Committee on Social Programs or any Members on that side to look at it.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to a time and date as to when we can expect some discussion paper so we could have some input before it circulates through the various committees and to Cabinet for some type of recommendation?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I could have a discussion paper prepared in time for the next business plan review, which is scheduled to be at the end of November.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. A final short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that commitment. Could the Minister commit herself to also looking at initiatives such as the Strategic Initiative Committee on Refocusing Government and various options to again work with boards and agencies on how to deliver services like this to our community members, especially seniors?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I will consult with colleagues on the Strategic Initiative Committee on Refocusing

Government, and we'll see if we can incorporate that into the discussion paper. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 463-16(2)  
DENTAL PROFESSION ACT

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for Minister of Health and Social Services. My questions pertain to the Dental Profession Act. There are some phrases in this act which preclude Canadian dentists from recruiting students from universities outside of Canada for doing practicums, which would help in the provision of services, particularly here in the Northwest Territories. I'm going to ask the Minister about section 24(1) of this act that refers to "will provide dental services under the direct supervision of a licensee who is also employed by the Faculty of Dentistry of a Canadian University." There are other accredited universities which are not Canadian, and I'd like to ask the Minister: how will we go about making this small but important change to the Dental Profession Act?

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that information readily available. I'd be happy to look into that for the Member. My understanding is that for the dental profession, as well as other professions like physicians or nurses, we follow the guidelines and standards of other provinces with the credits with which the universities graduate these grads, so I'm not sure if we have it completely within our control to change our own laws to allow foreign trained dentists to come and practise. That's one point that I am not aware of. So my understanding is that it's not within our power, but I just want to look into that to confirm it. Thank you.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, I probably didn't have enough detail to be very clear about my request. In a more general sense, what would be the most expedient way to make a minor adjustment to an act like this that would be of assistance to the dental profession in the Northwest Territories? What would be the process? Would it come from the department, or could it be raised by the Regular Members on this side of the House? Thank you.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** If it is something that's within our legislation, it's obviously something that we could do right here. If that is so, I think we could consider that sort of amendment. My understanding is that there's nothing we can do in our legislation that would change that, because for professionals like

dentists, doctors, nurses, lawyers and engineers, their licensing requirements are controlled by their own profession. It's not within the powers of the government to change those. That is my understanding. I need to confirm that, so we'll get back to the Member on that.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that some American universities actually have exams and accreditation, which they ensure compliance with so that it is interchangeable between American or Canadian standards, and that they actually apply these tests and standards to students who are attending their universities in these professions. It opens up a vast pool of resources for us in terms of dental students or dentists.

Since professions regulate themselves, as the Minister has said, would a proposal from the NWT Dental Association aid in expediting such amendments?

**Ms. Lee:** This government is working on a territorial nomination program, which we hope will enhance and improve the services of overseas residents who could come to work and fill jobs that we cannot.

The second thing is that it may be possible, as the Member stated, that American university graduates could come and practise in the provinces. Now, there is a difference between provinces and territories in that provinces have their own professional organizations that determine who goes into these professions. We don't have that in the Territories. All of our professional bodies rely on other provinces to admit our students.

Let me just make a commitment again to see what is possible. I have had the opportunity to talk to the department about this, because this question was raised. My understanding was that it's not really in our power to change. Let me just get the details on why that's so and what our options are. If it requires any recommendations from anybody to help that process, I'd be happy to do that.

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

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Dental Profession Act is an act of the Government of the Northwest Territories. In summary, what I think the dental profession of the Northwest Territories would like is to replace the words "Canadian university" with "accredited university," and that would make a vast difference in terms of opening that up. That's in summary. I would just ask the Minister, then, if she would take the initiative to consult with the dental association on this.



**Ms. Lee:** I will undertake to see if changing those words would help the process. I'll consult with the necessary bodies and stakeholders and get back to the Member. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 464-16(2)  
GNWT PARTICIPATION IN  
ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of ITI regarding his Minister's statement today. In terms of the 2008 NWT Aboriginal Business Conference and Trade Show next week in Yellowknife by the Denendeh Development Corporation, my question to the Minister is: will the GNWT be making a presentation in terms of the forum to the small businesses that are going to be participating in the conference?

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

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be pleased to send a copy of the agenda and the registration package to the Member, but for his information, both the Business Development and Investment Corporation and the department will be participating in the workshops and making presentations. As well, I believe the Premier and I will be making speeches at various times.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** I'll be happy to receive that package from the Minister in terms of all this. This is a very worthwhile, golden opportunity in that we have strong aboriginal people coming together.

We talk about the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We talk about the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. We talk about the hydro potential. We talk about partnerships with groups with unsettled land claims that have negotiated contract policies and memorandums of understanding with the Government of the Northwest Territories. You have unsettled claims.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister: is this a golden opportunity for this government to sit down with the real owners of the land, talk about these big projects and get them recharging their batteries, as he stated in his statement? Will the Minister talk about these big project items so we can, as the people of the North, see a vision that will happen for our people?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the conference next week also provides aboriginal businesses with an opportunity to interact with aboriginal businesses from all across Canada. That's one of the main benefits. All large development projects and some success stories and best practices will be shared.

Another very important part of the conference, which was a highlight last year, was the youth component whereby youth representatives from every region participated. They were kind of a highlight of the conference because of their enthusiasm and new ideas.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I would focus on page 2 of the Minister's statement. The Minister has talked about the goals of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly as "a strong and independent North built on partnerships." That's what I'm asking the Minister here. Are we looking at really meaningful partnerships with these 200 or so participants from all the aboriginal businesses of the Northwest Territories and saying, "Yes, we can build the Mackenzie Valley Highway if we have to or we could"? That's something that I'd like to look at.

We're the North, strong and free. Would the Minister have some discussion in terms of how we'd have these discussions or partnerships with the aboriginal people?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, last year's conference, for example, resulted in the formation of the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce for the Northwest Territories. This will facilitate a large part of business opportunities. The Mackenzie Aboriginal Corporation participated, made a lot of connections and did a lot of networking to make sure that other aboriginal businesses and regions were aware of their existence. We see the value of that. Certainly, with the networking and the business opportunities I think that will benefit not only the Northwest Territories but the rest of Canada.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take this as a very good opportunity for this government to participate in this conference put on by the Denendeh Development Corporation and have major businesspeople coming to Yellowknife to talk about their businesses and share their success stories.

I'd like to know: will the report from this conference come back from the Minister of this government and say, "This is what we learned, this is what we wanted from it, and this is why we want to introduce it into our policies after some discussion"? I think this is key, and you certainly have my support. Would we get a report afterward in terms of what we as government can do to support our communities?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** The conference does have conference proceedings, and we'll share those with the Member when they come out. It's been an excellent opportunity for all government agencies that are involved in economic development and

working with aboriginal governments and aboriginal businesses to interact in all areas of business.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

### Written Questions

#### QUESTION 37-16(2) HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. The Mackenzie Delta riding that I represent undergoes a wide variety of medevacs. We have patients travelling for medical appointments.

- 1) What is the amount spent on medevac services and patient travel for Mackenzie Delta?
- 2) What is the total cost of nursing, mental health, dental, health representative and home care services in the Mackenzie Delta?
- 3) What is the cost to operate and maintain health services in Mackenzie Delta communities, and what are the overall O & M costs for each of the health care facilities in Mackenzie Delta?

#### QUESTION 38-16(2) MARINE OPERATIONS IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, I also have another written question directed to the Minister of Transportation. The Inuvik region spends a considerable amount of money to upgrade and maintain transportation in the region.

- 1) Please provide a breakdown of the operating costs for the Louis Cardinal ferry at the Mackenzie River and the Abraham Francis ferry at the Peel River.
- 2) What is the total season's cost for gravel required at each ferry crossing?
- 3) What is the cost of operating the camp for employees at the Louis Cardinal ferry?
- 4) Please provide the cost for additional labour hired to construct ice road crossings on the Mackenzie and Peel Rivers.
- 5) What is the cost of operating the Inuvik Regional Marine Operations office?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13,

reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

#### BILL 14 AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

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

#### BILL 17 FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2008–2009

**Mr. Menicoche:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 16, Write-off of Debts Act, 2008–2009; and Bill 17, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009. I wish to report that Bills 14, 16 and 17 are now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

### Tabling of Documents

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories: Part 2, September 2008.

Document 102-16(2), 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories: Part 2, September 2008, tabled.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

### Motions

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

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

Motion carried.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 80-16(2) and Tabled Document 93-16(2), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** I now call the Committee of the Whole to order in consideration of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 80-16(2), Sessional Statement and Tabled Document 93-16(2). 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**

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

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, the 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. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motion carried.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 22, third reading of bills.

Before we go to orders of the day, I would just like to take a moment to thank all the pages that have been working in the Assembly this week. We appreciate your work. You're doing a great job.

Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day.

### **Orders of the Day**

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, Orders of the Day for Wednesday, October 15, 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
  - MS 80-16(2): Sessional Statement
  - TD 93-16(2): Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2009–2010
  - Bill 15: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
- 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 16, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

