



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Day 42**

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

**HANSARD**

**Thursday, October 16, 2008**

Pages 1689 to 1732

**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

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

---

**Mr. Glen Abernethy**  
(Great Slave)

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

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

**Mr. Bob Bromley**  
(Weledeh)

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

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**  
(Yellowknife Centre)

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

**Mr. David Krutko**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

*Minister of Justice*  
*Minister of Education, Culture and*  
*Employment*

**Hon. Sandy Lee**  
(Range Lake)

*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of*  
*Women*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with*  
*Disabilities*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Hon. Bob McLeod**  
(Yellowknife South)

*Minister of Human Resources*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and*  
*Investment*  
*Minister responsible for the Public*  
*Utilities Board*

**Hon. Michael McLeod**  
(Deh Cho)

*Minister of Public Works and Services*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT*  
*Housing Corporation*  
*Minister of Transportation*

**Hon. Robert McLeod**  
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

*Minister of Municipal and Community*  
*Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers'*  
*Safety and Compensation*  
*Commission*

**Mr. Kevin Menicoche**  
(Nahendeh)

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger**  
(Thebacha)

*Deputy Premier*  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister responsible for the Financial*  
*Management Board Secretariat*  
*Minister of Environment and Natural*  
*Resources*

**Mr. David Ramsay**  
(Kam Lake)

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

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

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**  
(Sahtu)

---

## Officers

### Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

#### Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

#### Principal Clerk of Committees

Ms. Patricia Russell

#### Principal Clerk, Operations

Ms. Gail Bennett

#### Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson  
Ms. Sarah Kay

---

Box 1320  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784  
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

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

## Table of Contents

<b>Prayer</b> .....	1689
<b>Ministers' Statements</b> .....	1689
106-16(2): 2008 Northern Economic Development Practitioners Conference (B. McLeod).....	1689
107-16(2): Enhancement of Resources for Youth Programming (R. McLeod) .....	1689
108-16(2): Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Results (Lafferty).....	1690
<b>Members' Statements</b> .....	1690
Tribute to the Late Cal Mains (Groenewegen).....	1690
GNWT Diamond Policies and Practices (Ramsay).....	1691
RCMP Special Constable Program (Beaulieu) .....	1692
Challenges to Home Ownership in Small Communities (Menicoche).....	1692
High Cost of Food in Nunakput Communities (Jacobson) .....	1693
Access to Adequate Housing for Professionals in Small Communities (Krutko).....	1693
Environmental Protection of the Mackenzie River (Yakeleya) .....	1694
Replacement of Elders' Fuel Tanks (Bromley) .....	1694
Palliative Care Benefits Program (Abernethy) .....	1695
Increase to the Minimum Wage (Bisaro).....	1695
Distribution of "Water is Life" Documentary Film by Local Businessman (Hawkins).....	1696
<b>Reports of Standing and Special Committees</b> .....	1696
Committee Report 8-16(2): Interim Report on the Review of the Official Languages Act 2008–2009 .....	1696
<b>Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery</b> .....	1700
<b>Oral Questions</b> .....	1700
474-16(2): GNWT Diamond Policies and Practices (Ramsay) .....	1700
475-16(2): Increase to the Minimum Wage (Bisaro) .....	1701
476-16(2): Access to Adequate Housing for Small Community Teachers (Krutko) .....	1702
477-16(2): Challenges to Home Ownership in Small Communities (Menicoche).....	1703
478-16(2): Notification of Hospital Bed Space in Alberta (Hawkins) .....	1704
479-16(2): Retrofit of Diamond Jenness Secondary School (Groenewegen) .....	1705
480-16(2): Replacement of Elders' Fuel Tanks (Bromley).....	1707
481-16(2): Palliative Care Benefits Program (Abernethy).....	1707
482-16(2): RCMP Special Constable Program (Beaulieu).....	1708
483-16(2): Environmental Protection of the Mackenzie River (Yakeleya).....	1709
484-16(2): Medical Care Provided to Northerners in Southern Institutions (Ramsay) .....	1710
485-16(2): Medical Care Provided to Northerners in Southern Institutions (Hawkins).....	1711
486-16(2): Increase to the Minimum Wage (Bisaro) .....	1712
487-16(2): Status of the Joint Committee on Rural and Remote Communities (Yakeleya) .....	1713
488-16(2): Contract Terms with Alberta Capital Health Authority (Hawkins) .....	1713
489-16(2): National Ranking of the University of Alberta Hospital (Groenewegen) .....	1714
<b>Tabling of Documents</b> .....	1715
<b>Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters</b> .....	1715
Tabled Document 93-16(2): NWT Capital Estimates 2009–2010 .....	1715
<b>Report of Committee of the Whole</b> .....	1730
<b>Orders of the Day</b> .....	1730



**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Thursday, October 16, 2008**

**Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya.

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

Prayer.

**Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Colleagues, it is with great sadness that I inform the House of the passing of former Deputy Commissioner Mr. Cal Mains. Mr. Mains was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories by the Privy Council of Canada on October 25, 2001, and served until June 11, 2004.

Mr. Mains passed away on October 9, 2008. Services will be held for him today at 2 o'clock at the Anglican Church in Hay River. On behalf of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly I wish to offer the sincere condolences of this House to the family and friends of Calvin "Cal" Mains.

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

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 106-16(2)  
2008 NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
PRACTITIONERS CONFERENCE

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform this Assembly that the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation, in partnership with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Aboriginal Business Canada, will be hosting the third biennial Northern Economic Development Practitioners Conference in Yellowknife from December 1 to 4, 2008.

The theme for NEDP 2008 is Building Northern Capacity — an excellent fit with this Assembly's goals and priorities for the development of our economy and our people.

Northern economic development practitioners — including community economic development officers, Community Futures staff, and federal and territorial government employees — all play a vital

role in meeting the needs of residents across the territory through the promotion and delivery of programs and services to our business community.

This conference will bring together approximately 100 economic development service providers from across the Northwest Territories. Participants will receive relevant training, increase their awareness of the programs and services available, and learn about future business prospects in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, NEDP 2008 will be an opportunity for practitioners to communicate directly with industry representatives and to make sure that the programs and services available to northern entrepreneurs are relevant, coordinated and focused on helping them to take advantage of development opportunities as they emerge.

In addition to the four host organizations, the conference planning committee includes the NWT Community Futures Association, the Rural Secretariat and the NWT Regional Program Management Advisory Committee. This project, Mr. Speaker, is an excellent example of how we are working together to ensure that our business community has the skills, knowledge and resources to realize its full potential.

I would like to thank the staff from the BDIC, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and each of our partner organizations for their ongoing efforts to make this year's Northern Economic Development Practitioners Conference a success.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 107-16(2)  
ENHANCEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR  
YOUTH PROGRAMMING

**Hon. Robert McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, a priority of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is to work with families, communities and schools to improve the physical and mental well-being of our youth. An investment in the development of one of our most important resources, our youth, will help us achieve that objective.

The Youth Secretariat, within Municipal and Community Affairs, continues to promote healthy choices and lifestyles by improving youth programming in the Northwest Territories. Two new youth officer positions have been created in regional centres to provide support for all NWT communities and improve our ability to deliver on this commitment.

Mr. Speaker, MACA continues to deliver the Positive Role Models Program. This program involves positive role models from a variety of sectors travelling to our communities to deliver healthy lifestyle and positive choice messages to youth. In addition to the two new regional youth positions, existing staff, such as four-time Olympian Sharon Firth, are an integral part of this program.

The department is supporting additional regional youth conferences to provide a forum for youth to discuss important topics such as leadership and making healthy lifestyle choices. It is anticipated that several hundred youth will have the opportunity to participate in these events.

Mr. Speaker, one of the unique new elements of our youth programming will be the involvement of participants from prior youth initiatives. Over the past three years MACA has supported the participation of hundreds of youth from across the Northwest Territories in initiatives like the Youth Ambassador and the Northern Youth Abroad programs.

Many graduates of these programs have expressed an interest in being involved in future projects and helping other youth seek out positive opportunities for their own development. The department will now be actively recruiting these young leaders to participate in upcoming role model tours, youth conferences and other youth related events. While we assist these young people in achieving their goals, we will help develop the next generation of community leaders.

I ask Members to join me in expressing our appreciation and continued support to all youth of the NWT.

Applause.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 108-16(2)  
APPRENTICESHIP AND OCCUPATIONAL  
CERTIFICATION RESULTS

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The past several months have been very busy for the Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification program. In 2007 a review of the program was

initiated by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. This review was commissioned to ensure the system remained responsive to the demand for tradespeople in the North and across Canada.

The review provided 22 recommendations, some of which were initiated immediately upon completion of the report. An executive summary and an action plan addressing these recommendations were recently released to the public. These actions include changes to administrative and legislative processes, data collection, analysis and communications. These changes are streamlining activities, making the system more efficient for employers and tradespeople.

There is evidence of results, with the number of registered apprentices climbing by almost 25 per cent this fall, from about 320 for the past several years to just over 400 as of September 1, 2008. This increase in numbers may be in part because of changes to the apprenticeship system, but it also speaks to the increase in demand for tradespeople by employers.

Our apprenticeship program can be successful only if northern employers have jobs to fill. The Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification program is a natural and essential partnership between this government and employers. One of the first actions resulting from the review was the establishment of trades advisory committees for five key NWT trades. The employers and tradespeople who give their time to these committees will be key to maintaining current information about the needs and demands in specific trades.

I would like to thank all the stakeholders who participated in the review and whose recommendations have proved invaluable in maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of the Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification program. I believe the review will have a real impact in ensuring that trades opportunities for Northerners continue to improve and flourish.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CAL MAINS

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I will devote my Member's statement to the life and memory of Cal Mains. Mr. Mains is survived by his wife of 55 years, Alice, his daughters, Catherine and Anne, and his son, Sandy. Our condolences are extended to them at this time.

There is much to be celebrated of his life and his contribution to the North. Mr. Mains first moved to the North in 1950, serving as an RCMP officer in the communities of Aklavik, Herschel Islands and Tuktoyaktuk before retiring from the staff sergeant position in 1969 in Fort Smith. He also served for a time in the Yukon.

After retiring from the RCMP, Mr. Mains served as the deputy clerk of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories in Yellowknife. Mr. Mains is a veteran and a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, having served in the Canadian Navy during the Second World War.

Cal Mains is one of those quiet treasures whose presence made a significant impression on the people of the North for almost 60 years. During his 34 years in Hay River he was well known for his beautiful garden; his backyard was an oasis of colour and fragrance, with a screened gazebo where he and his wife, Alice, were able to enjoy the warm subarctic summer evenings.

He was an avid follower of local, territorial and federal politics. He had strong opinions about the issues of the day. He took his involvement in community and country very seriously. In that sense I would characterize him not only as a notable Northerner but an amazing Canadian who captured many of the things that we as Canadians are known for and take our greatest pride in.

This past Canada Day I took a photograph of him with his wife and his daughter Catherine at the high tea sponsored by the Hay River Museum Society. He was a very tall and striking man, very photogenic and often photographed at Legion Remembrance Day services and community events. It didn't enter my mind that day that this could be the last picture I would take of him; he enjoyed relatively good health until his recent illness.

His family, friends and neighbours in Hay River will miss him. He was a gentleman, devoted partner, dedicated father and friend who lived his life with integrity, honour and a serving nature. I will personally miss his support, encouragement and sense of humour.

His funeral will start in Hay River at 2 o'clock, where his family and friends will gather. I wish I could be there, but I know that Cal would understand my commitment to my duties here today. May he rest in peace.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT DIAMOND POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to discuss the issue of diamonds and diamond policy today. The Northwest Territories produces almost 15 per cent of the global production of diamonds. We are the third largest producer of gem diamonds in the world today.

The city of Yellowknife is known as the Diamond Capital of North America, and rightly so, as we've been mining diamonds just north of the city for over ten years. We have four operating diamond mines in our territory. Yet as a government I believe we have been failing to ensure that our territory can benefit as much as possible from our diamond resources.

The last government made a number of bad decisions. One of those was to do away with the diamond division at ITI. We need to get to work on updating and enhancing our diamond policy. And here's a news flash: the Northwest Territories is not the only jurisdiction mining diamonds in Canada. Ontario, Saskatchewan and Quebec are moving forward with projects. The Victor Mine in northern Ontario has made Ontario a player in the diamond industry. Unlike the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Ontario is taking the opportunity in diamonds seriously. They are looking at cut and polish plants in places like Timmins and Sudbury, and there's also a great deal of interest in the establishment of a diamond bourse, or exchange, which is well underway in southern Canada. Town hall meetings were held recently in August in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto to discuss the feasibility of a diamond bourse in Canada.

On June 19 of this year I predicted that other jurisdictions would pass us by. Mr. Speaker, this is happening, and we should be ashamed of ourselves. For a jurisdiction that has four operating mines, this is inexcusable.

After ten years a review of policies, objectives and strategies is long overdue. I'm afraid we just don't get it or we just don't understand what our potential is here in the Northwest Territories. There is no reason why we cannot set up a diamond bourse, or exchange, here in the rightful diamond capital of North America. If you have the diamonds, people will come, and there are examples of this around the world.

The fact remains that we are not progressing in this area. We need more value added industry in our territory. Why is it we are just sitting back and letting Ontario steal our thunder? I get the feeling that the Government of the Northwest Territories just does not care about diamonds and what their potential means to our economy and to our territory.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
RCMP SPECIAL CONSTABLE PROGRAM

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about the RCMP Special Constable program and the important role it can play in community justice. In the past I can remember that this program was an excellent way of recruiting aboriginal police officers. Also having local individuals serve as special constables worked well for both communities and the RCMP.

Unfortunately, because of the mobility nature of RCMP members relocating from one community to another after only a few years, it can present a challenge to the RCMP to maintain continuity. With the Special Constable program this situation can be resolved.

In smaller communities it is not uncommon to find residents who are quite happy to live in these communities. They grew up there; their families and friends are there. These individuals have no plan to leave their community. Some of these individuals may have aspirations to work as RCMP members. Many can already be counted on to volunteer for security when it comes to helping out with community events.

With the Special Constable program these community individuals can now pursue their aspirations with the RCMP and not have to leave their communities. In addition to these individuals, the Special Constable program can be an excellent way to recruit new regular members as special constables. They can get real, on the job training, work with members and learn all about the RCMP. With this experience they are able to make a better decision about taking the next steps to become regular RCMP members or to remain in the community as special constables.

Here in the Northwest Territories I believe there can be a real benefit to the communities and the RCMP by having a Special Constable program. I have been waiting for an announcement on this. I believe that announcement was to be made this fall. However, with the recent federal election I'm not sure when the announcement will be made. Later on today I will follow up my statement with questions for the Minister of Justice.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CHALLENGES TO HOME OWNERSHIP  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest issues for my constituents in Jean Marie River and other small Deh Cho communities is that they cannot afford to become homeowners, even with the program the Government of the Northwest Territories has in place.

There are not a lot of economic opportunities in my region, making it difficult for people to take on the responsibility of home ownership. Even if they qualify for a mortgage, Mr. Speaker, it is often beyond their means when you factor in their other monthly costs like groceries, vehicle payments and other expenses.

As I travel to the communities in my constituency, there are houses that sit empty while many families have serious housing needs. People want to be homeowners, but the cost of living makes that goal out of their reach. One of the challenges is the way the Housing Corporation calculates the core needs income threshold.

As I understand it, the way the income threshold for the home ownership program assistance is calculated is based on the construction costs, land costs, interest rates and shelter costs of a particular community. What isn't factored in to this is an extremely high cost of living in all our smaller communities. If the core need income threshold included an adjustment that took into account the cost of living differentials between communities, it could bring the cost of home ownership down to a more affordable level for many residents in our small communities.

Interest rates are another part of the core needs income threshold calculation that could be examined. If a percentage of the mortgage rate were subsidized by the Housing Corporation, it could be used as another tool that could make home ownership more affordable for NWT residents.

The NWT Housing Corporation is trying to promote home ownership, but for many people the costs are just too high. We all agree that having a good home is the foundation to a healthy, secure and independent lifestyle. We need to make sure that the programs that are in place to support this goal actually work. I urge the Minister responsible to review the way in which home ownership assistance is calculated to make home ownership more affordable in our smaller communities. Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker.

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



MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
HIGH COST OF FOOD  
IN NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Jacobson:** Calculating and comparing the cost of food in communities such as Sachs Harbour — it's a large centre — can often be complex and tedious. Various models can be used along with certain programs. However, results of these are always the same: it is impossible for an average family in Nunakput in the NWT on an average income to practise healthy eating.

Mr. Speaker, my region of Nunakput is by far the most expensive in the region. If it comes to the cost of eating healthy — the situation being equal dollar for dollar — people in Nunakput live in poverty conditions more than any other riding in the Northwest Territories because of this high cost of food. This has to change.

While travelling through my region, I see many people at the airport stuffing their bags full of groceries even after paying \$5.77 per kilogram for excess baggage. This means that a carton of milk costs \$4 in Inuvik, and in the communities it would be \$10. Other purchase options such as food mail possess a unique set of challenges and costs. I think this is a great shame, for many of our elders in Nunakput have to choose between food or various health care related expenses.

While visiting elders across Nunakput, I see a growing trend: empty cupboards and refrigerators in our great territory. This is unacceptable. Many communities in the North have food banks and alternative access to healthy eating. We are not so fortunate in my small communities. As I have mentioned during our previous sittings, the cost of living in Nunakput is around 81 per cent higher than in Yellowknife, but when it comes to specific consumables necessary for healthy living, the difference can be as high as 300 per cent.

This government has a choice. Are we going to treat those who are in small isolated communities the same when it comes to tackling active, healthy living? Mr. Speaker I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted

**Mr. Jacobson:** The large community and small isolated communities are the same. Has it come to active living barriers, or is this government going to seriously implement realistic measures to obtain affordable, accessible and reliable food for all Northerners? We owe this to our elders, our residents and our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR  
PROFESSIONALS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about the core challenges being faced by our communities.

You may have been listening to the radio during the last day, this morning and this afternoon, in regard to the housing crisis we have in our community, providing housing to our professional people who are supplying services from education to policing to health care, mental health, social services, SAOs, band managers — you name it. Without adequate housing in our communities for professionals to provide those services, those services will not be acted on.

Mr. Speaker, a critical component of any society is to ensure that the social and economic well-being of the community is sustained by ensuring that programs and services operate, such as education, health care, policing and municipal services. Yet we find ourselves in a predicament that was dealt with several years ago in regard to a government initiative called market housing in communities to provide housing where there was a non-market community.

As we hear in the news, teachers have to face the challenge of finding housing and the high cost of operating and maintaining units in our communities. The situation is not unique to any particular community or region, but it is essentially clear that those communities that are affected most by this scenario are the non tax based, non market communities. As a government we have a responsibility to find unique initiatives, unique ways of dealing with these challenges.

I don't want to use the bad words by saying staff housing, but we might have to face the reality that that's what it possibly will be. This government decision, made in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, to sell off staff housing has come back to haunt us. As a government we have a responsibility to ensure that everything is done either through Market Housing Initiatives, assistance through loan guarantees — such as corporate loan guarantees, which are provided to the Housing Corporation — and any other initiative that can be there to assist communities.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment questions on this matter later. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE  
MACKENZIE RIVER

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the Thanksgiving weekend I spent some time in Fort Providence with my father-in-law, and there we spent some time on the Mackenzie River. I thought about that the time I was there, when we put the net in and we caught some fish. I thought about the Mackenzie River in terms of the type of protection that the Mackenzie River is receiving now, the type of protection that it should receive if we are not protecting it.

I was looking at the Deh Cho Bridge. I've been on the Mackenzie River and the Sahtu. We have to use that portion of the Mackenzie River as a highway, because we do not yet have the highway to drive into our region. I thought about this with my little boy as we were on the Mackenzie River: what types of protection, at the end of the day, are we giving to the Mackenzie River in terms of the fuel spill that happened on the Mackenzie River?

The transportation route as proposed by ATCL and another company in terms of barging down huge supplies for the Alberta tar sands.... Even the tar sands is coming up in our discussions many times in terms of when it will stop and how it is affecting the people on the Mackenzie River.

The Mackenzie River is homeland to Inuvialuit, the Métis and the Dene people. It is rich in culture, rich in history. It has lots of animals: fish, caribou, lynx. We live off the land. Mr. Speaker, we do have a tool that is in front of us right now called the Protected Areas Strategy. This tool is to help us protect our land and water. At the end of the day that is going to sustain our life for generations to come, and I want to state that this area has been talked about by many elders in the past in terms of how we protect water and land.

We cannot drink oil; we cannot drink gas or money, but the water is the containment. The second tool that we have is called the NWT Water Resource Management Strategy. There is lots of pressure on our water system. It's very sacred and very sensitive and very culturally rooted to our lives in the Mackenzie Valley.

I would have questions to the Minister of ENR in terms of how he proposes to protect the Mackenzie Valley. I would like our people in the Mackenzie Valley to be put first, before development, so we know that we could put this into our books of history — a thought that it is very good for our children. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
REPLACEMENT OF ELDERS' FUEL TANKS

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2006 two fuel spills occurred in the community of N'dilo as a result of old leaking fuel tanks at the private residences of elders. Neither of these elders had house insurance, and the Yellowknife Dene First Nation now faces a bill of \$163,000 to remediate the spill.

These spills could easily have been prevented, which makes the environmental and financial costs that much more regrettable. The Yellowknife Dene First Nation has been in contact with the Housing Corporation on two separate occasions over eight months and has not received a formal response to the request for fuel tank replacement.

As of right now the Housing Corp has still not taken a proactive response to fuel tank replacement through the Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancements program, or CARE. Both of the elders who had spills on their property had low incomes and would have been eligible for the CARE program. The Yellowknife Dene has shown its own initiative to prevention by replacing ten aging fuel tanks in public housing and buildings in their communities.

The Housing Corporation has failed to show a similar commitment of its own by implementing similar measures for private residences eligible for the CARE program. The policy is only useful if it is implemented in a way that actually benefits those who are under its mandate.

The Yellowknife Dene Housing Division has conducted an inventory of the fuel tanks of low income elders from the two communities, which they have submitted to the Housing Corp. The Housing Corporation has a responsibility through the CARE program to fund and implement a program to replace the aging tanks in these communities before there are more costly fuel spills. There are about 18 elders that might fit the bill there.

Unnecessary spills represent a huge waste of financial and human resources at a time when both are in short supply. Also, there is significant destruction to the elders' lives with each event. This government is supposed to be about prevention. Instead of choosing to deal with leaky fuel tanks as and when they occur, let's choose to be progressive, replace these tanks immediately and show the elders the respect and leadership they and our land deserve.

I will be asking the Minister of Housing questions on this. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PALLIATIVE CARE BENEFITS PROGRAM

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February 2008 I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services questions about the palliative care drug approval process for residents of the Northwest Territories who have been diagnosed as palliative. In April the Minister sent me a letter indicating the department was taking steps to simplify the process for approving coverage of palliative care drugs and that the process would be in place by this past summer.

Last week when I asked the Minister to provide me with an update, she indicated, according to the unedited Hansard of October 8, 2008, that "we have a process now where as long as the doctor says in the application for medication to Green Shield or whoever is administering our health insurance that it's palliative care, Green Shield has been processing the documents on a 24-hour turnaround basis."

This is great. Unfortunately, it is not consistent with the way that it is actually working on the front line. Both before and after I asked my questions of the Minister last week, I checked with a number of pharmacists to see how the implementation was proceeding and whether or not palliative patients are experiencing quicker turnaround time. None of the pharmacists I talked to have received notification that there were, or are, new processes in place related to palliative care patients. All of them were able to identify recent situations for palliative care patients who are experiencing delays in obtaining their much needed palliative care medication.

Based on this, I don't understand how the Minister can state as she did in the unedited Hansard of October 8, 2008, that it is "working out really well." During the May-June session I asked the Minister to work with the pharmacists in the NWT on developing and implementing a process that would help palliative care patients. I believe that for the benefit of their clients they would still like to have input and help the government streamline these processes.

Residents of the NWT who have been declared as palliative need to be treated with dignity and respect and should not be forced to wait for much needed pain management medication due to the overly bureaucratic processes and procedures of the Department of Health and Social Services.

Later this afternoon I will be asking the Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services

questions concerning the new palliative care benefit process and procedures. I will be seeking the Minister's commitment to work with NWT pharmacists, the frontline providers of any system put in place by the department, to ensure that they are engaged and that palliative patients are not waiting for the required medications. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INCREASE TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past few months Members have talked a lot about the high cost of living. Gas prices at the pumps have skyrocketed, the cost of home heating fuel has increased dramatically, landlords are increasing rents, power rates are going up and groceries and other commodities are costing us more. But the NWT has not raised its minimum wage since December 23, 2003.

We have been at \$8.25 for five years. For comparison purposes I would like to provide a few examples from other Canadian jurisdictions. In April of this year Alberta raised their minimum wage to \$8.40. The Yukon went to \$8.58, and Manitoba went to \$8.50. Saskatchewan increased their minimum wage twice this year. It is now at \$8.60, and they will increase it once again in 2009 to \$9.25. Nunavut's minimum wage is \$10. Other provinces already have or will be increasing their minimum wage in 2008 or 2009, and some of them have established yearly increases going forward. Ontario will soon see a minimum wage of \$10.25.

Yet in the NWT, where we have one of the highest costs of living in Canada, we have a minimum wage that has been fixed at \$8.25 since 2003. The Premier in his Budget Address on May 22 of this year stated that for NWT residents, especially those in small and remote communities, living costs are among the highest in Canada. Prince Edward Island is the only province with a lower minimum wage than us. We have the second lowest minimum wage in all of Canada, unchanged since 2003, but our consumer price index has gone up by 8.3 per cent since 2003.

It is time for an adjustment, Mr. Speaker. A recent article in the local paper called Looking Back showed that five years ago, when our minimum wage went up to \$8.25, people could not live on the minimum wage even with the increase. Managers suggested in 2003 that the minimum wage should be at least \$9, yet here we are five years later and the minimum wage amount has not changed.

How can we talk about raising taxes when we haven't raised the minimum wage in the last five

years? I say we can't. What we can do, Mr. Speaker, is plan for an increase to our minimum wage as soon as possible. I expect to see it reflected in the '09–10 operations budget. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DISTRIBUTION OF "WATER IS LIFE"  
DOCUMENTARY FILM BY LOCAL  
BUSINESSMAN

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to use my Member's statement today to trumpet the efforts of one individual in our business community, in our Yellowknife private sector, who stepped up to the plate, when government sometimes is uncomfortable, on environmental education for youth.

That person is Yellowknife's Chris Johnston. He heard last week the lukewarm answers from our Premier about purchasing the documentary film "Water is Life." He heard — and I quote from the October 7, 2008, page 22, unedited Hansard — that we will be prepared to "try and see what we can do to get this information out to all the students in the Northwest Territories. We ourselves are undertaking a number of issues to get on top of the water situation."

Mr. Speaker, if someone in the business community hears and uses the phrase "we'll think about it and maybe get back to you" or even words as veiled or not so veiled — no. Chris Johnston believes that the foundation of our youth is built with the knowledge and understanding of the world and most certainly the importance of the environmental issues in our North and in our community.

So when he said that he would buy all of those videos for all of our northern high schools, I was quite shocked and amazed and certainly excited to hear this. When he contacted me, he felt so strongly about this issue, that the government wasn't clearly saying yes to help our youth of today, he said he would help our youth of today, because they are leaders of tomorrow and they need to be armed with knowledge and understanding of the issues of today.

He said this without any hesitation and felt it was unacceptable that it wasn't a clear yes from the Premier; he said he would be willing to do it. Chris Johnston is mindful of the youth. He cares very much about them. He is very strongly committed to his community and his family. He believes strongly in our North and the environment we are living in and where we will be living in the future. That is why he is doing this. He feels that he has to step up

as a business, that he needs to be committed to the North, and he feels he wants to demonstrate this.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fine example of where a business is leading on this initiative and shows the North that business cares too. I want to compliment the efforts of this young businessman in Yellowknife, Mr. Chris Johnston, for his community efforts. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Reports of Standing and Special Committees**

COMMITTEE REPORT 8-16(2)  
INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE  
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2008–2009

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to present its Interim Report on the Review of the Official Languages Act 2008–2009.

Section 35 of the Official Languages Act requires the Legislative Assembly or a special committee of the Assembly to conduct a review of the act "at the next session following December 31, 2007, and subsequently at the next session following each successive fifth anniversary of that date." In accordance with this statutory requirement, the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly adopted a motion on February 11, 2008, referring the review of the provisions and operation of the Official Languages Act to the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague Mr. Jackie Jacobson to continue with the report. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Background

The 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly initiated the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act (SCROLA) in 2001. SCROLA tabled its comprehensive final report in 2003. The report identified 65 recommendations and suggested implementation and investment schedules for these recommendations. The GNWT tabled a response to this report in 2003.

Amendments to the Official Languages Act were made during the last session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. These changes introduced an Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, an Official Languages Board, and new roles for the Languages Commissioner and the Minister. The act requires a review after five years.

The SCROLA review was comprehensive and provided much background research into the socio-linguistic field of language preservation and revitalization. The findings of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act in this regard are still valid and usable, allowing the scope of this five-year review to focus specifically on the requirements as set out in the act itself.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague Mr. Hawkins to continue.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Hawkins.

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

The 2008–2009 Review will examine:

- whether progress has been made since the changes to the Official Languages Act in 2003;
- whether the government implements and administers the act effectively and efficiently;
- whether the objectives and goals of the preamble are being met;
- whether the changed roles and responsibilities of the Minister responsible for Official Languages improved the administration and implementation of the act;
- whether the changed role of the Languages Commissioner as an ombudsperson improved the implementation of the act;
- whether the new Official Languages Board has met its mandate to review the rights, status and use of official languages; and
- whether the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board has fulfilled its mandate to promote, maintain and revitalize aboriginal languages.

Steps for the 2008–2009 Review

The Standing Committee on Government Operations plans the following steps for the review of the Official Languages Act.

Literature and Document Review

The literature and document review covers an extensive selection of documents from the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, other stakeholders and non-government organizations of the NWT. The review also considers literature from other Canadian jurisdictions, international organizations, and examples of language policy and activities.

Input from Aboriginal Languages Specialists and Frontline Workers

Aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers participated in surveys, interviews and regional focus groups during June, July and August 2008.

One hundred sixty-nine aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers were surveyed; 69 participants responded, which translates into a response rate of 41 per cent. All nine aboriginal official languages were represented in the response. The aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers were asked questions relating to:

- the Official Languages Act;
- the SCROLA recommendations;
- their awareness of the implementation of these recommendations;
- government services and communication with the public;
- training for language specialists and frontline workers;
- their awareness of language revitalization activities from the government and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board; and
- community language activities.

Aboriginal language instructors, interpreter/translators and other community based aboriginal language specialists participated in eight regional focus groups. These groups discussed issues around language revitalization and obligations arising from the Official Languages Act.

Some of the highlights are captured in the “Emerging Themes” section of this interim report. The standing committee’s final report will include a detailed chapter on the findings of both the survey results and focus groups discussions.

The standing committee appreciates the Ministers’ support for this undertaking, in particular for sharing information and for contacting the education and health authorities to ensure they are aware of this consultation by the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague Mr. Abernethy to continue the report. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Community Visits and Public Hearings

The committee conducted community visits and public hearings in September 2008. The committee held public hearings in Délíñê, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Inuvik and Yellowknife. The committee also had meetings with community aboriginal language groups in Behchoko, Dettah, Délíñê, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, K'atlodeeche (Hay River Reserve) and Inuvik. To ensure all aboriginal language community groups had a chance to participate, they were invited to attend the meetings for their language group. Representatives from Fort Providence, Ulukhaktok, Fort Liard, Trout Lake, Kakisa, Fort Good Hope and Tulita took part in meetings on the Hay River Reserve and in Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Délíñê.

Most gatherings were well attended, and the standing committee heard many engaged contributions addressing language issues and concerns. The vast majority of contributions during the public hearings were made by members of aboriginal language groups. The committee regretted that there were no contributions from the French speaking public.

Some highlights of what the members of the standing committee heard during its community visits are captured in the "Emerging Themes" section of this interim report. A more detailed summary will be included in the final report on the review of the Official Languages Act.

### Public Committee Meetings

The standing committee expects to hear from witnesses at public committee meetings in late 2008. Witnesses will include the Minister responsible for Official Languages, the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, representatives of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and the Official Languages Board, the NWT Bureau of Statistics, the Fédération Franco Tenoise and the NWT Literacy Council.

### Additional Input from the Public

The standing committee is providing further opportunities for public input. The public is encouraged to complete a questionnaire that is posted on the Assembly's website and available from the Legislative Assembly as a paper copy upon request. This questionnaire is available until November 21, 2008. In addition, members of the public are welcome to provide written submissions to the committee. Submissions are accepted until November 14, 2008.

### Final Report

The Standing Committee on Government Operations will analyze and evaluate the findings of all steps undertaken during the review and will report back to the Legislative Assembly. The final report on the Official Languages Act review will be completed and tabled in the spring of 2009. This report will include the summaries of all review steps and the committee's analysis and evaluation. The committee may make recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness, administration and implementation of the Official Languages Act.

### Emerging Themes of the 2008–2009 Review

People are concerned about the dire situation of aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories. They worry about the survival of their languages and how they can be kept alive as languages of everyday use. There is a great awareness of the connection between language and cultural identity and that language loss has non-reversible impacts on the culture and identity of aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories.

The intergenerational gap of language and traditional knowledge is growing to an extent never seen before. Elders describe this gap as a total communication breakdown, because their grandchildren no longer speak the same language.

People are also disillusioned and frustrated with the lack of accountability for implementing government commitments relating to official languages.

The lack of interpreter/translators in the health and justice systems, the lack of adequate training for these interpreters and the need for on-going terminology development and standardization in an ever-changing modern environment was brought to the standing committee's attention in every community.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask my colleague Mr. Krutko to continue. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Krutko.

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Participants also identified shortcomings within the education and school systems; for example:

- aboriginal languages curriculum development and implementation is slow and under-resourced;
- providing 30 minutes of language instruction per day is insufficient, particularly when all other subjects are taught in English only;
- language instruction often does not extend beyond elementary school grades;

- lack of accountability to ensure language funding for schools is used for language activities; and
- insufficient support, resources and training for aboriginal language and cultural instructors.

This being said, people also acknowledged that some progress has been made; for example, in the development of aboriginal language curricula and with the start of some language nest programs. At the same time, participants repeatedly expressed that if government is serious about its role in aboriginal language revitalization, then the implementation of such programs needs to be accelerated and resourced adequately in order to counteract the language decline, particularly among children and younger adults.

While some people had heard of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, most did not understand their roles and mandates or why two language boards exist. Participants also did not know who the board representatives are and are generally critical about the boards' capacity to develop on-going relationships and communication with the community language groups, frontline workers and advocates. In addition, the appointment process for the boards, their dependent relationship with the Minister's office and the lack of powers and resources were questioned frequently. Participants also found the absence of any reporting mechanism or any publicly available information relating to the activities of the boards inconsistent with their mandate and intended purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the report back to the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Menicoche.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Menicoche.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much, colleagues.

There was general concern about the role and functions of the Languages Commissioner: People did not know who the incumbent is or what the commissioner does. There was no awareness of the changed role and responsibilities of the commissioner. Participants stated repeatedly that they had not seen the commissioner in their communities, nor did they know whether annual reports were published.

The messages the standing committee received with regard to community language funding were unified, loud and clear:

- The major obstacle of the community language funding is that the small amounts do not match the needs for essential resources and

programs that could contribute to the survival of the aboriginal languages.

- There is no funding consistency.
- There are too many interruptions in the programs due to lack of funding.
- Insufficient funding also prevents program expansions for adult language and literacy learners and pre-school programs. Such programs would be crucial for the revitalization of the aboriginal languages.
- The allocation by regions and by language groups does not consider needs.
- Existing community language funding is minimal and insufficient, not allowing for year-round programming. The proposal-based year-to-year funding forces staff and community volunteers to spend their time on proposal writing and in search of funding sources instead of on program delivery.
- Information is difficult to find about funding sources, criteria and the application process. Participants stressed that this is of particular concern when considering the expectations put on the communities, with the Official Languages Act acknowledging their essential role for language revitalization.

In several locations the standing committee was also reminded of its role to hold government accountable for its commitments to language activities and its responsibilities under the act. Those participants who were aware of the 2003 SCROLA recommendations remarked on the lack of implementation and lack of transparency of government commitments and activities. People asked the members of the standing committee to play a more active oversight and accountability role; for example, insisting on detailed implementation and progress reports.

#### Conclusion

The standing committee wishes to thank all the language specialists and frontline workers who participated in the survey and focus groups. Committee members express their grateful thanks to all those who welcomed us into their communities and to all residents who attended the public hearings and made contributions. Members of the standing committee are thankful to all community language groups for sharing their insights and expertise.

Members are committed to achieving the objectives of this review as stated in the Official Languages Act. The Standing Committee on Government Operations anticipates tabling this final report in the spring of 2009.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 8-16(2) be received and adopted. Mahsi.

Motion carried.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to be able to stand and recognize Mr. Jim Schaefer, a respected elder and former chief of the Salt River First Nation and one of the architects of their treaty land entitlement agreement with the federal government. As well, Ms. Denise Yuhas is a successful businesswoman and one of the best CAs in the business.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** I'm pleased today to recognize a constituent from Kakisa, who is the subchief of the community and is also their oil and gas adviser. He's a private contractor and president of the Aboriginal Sport Circle and many other things: Mr. Julian Landry. Also Allan Landry from Kakisa. I'd like to welcome him, and also Mr. Ted Nolan, who's a former NHL hockey player and coach. I'm also told he played with the Coldwell Banker Blades for one tournament here in Yellowknife.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** I'd like to recognize three pages from Yellowknife South — Edward Coad, Emily Thagard and Lucas Othmer — and thank them for the excellent service they provided over the past two weeks.

**Mr. Bromley:** I'd also like to recognize a page, Kathleen Falck of Weledeh, and I'd like to thank all the pages for the great service here. I think one of our Members today learned protocol from one of the pages on his way into the House, so they're doing their job.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I welcome everybody in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 474-16(2) GNWT DIAMOND POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask some questions today of the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and it gets back to my Member's statement where I was talking about the government's support to the diamond industry and the value added industry here in the Northwest Territories.

It seems to me that the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly — some of my colleagues in this room were Members at that time — was very supportive of diamonds in the Northwest Territories and what they meant. But for some reason the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly dropped the ball on diamonds. They did away with the diamond division at ITI, and support for the diamond policy and strategy sank to an all time low.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by asking the Minister of ITI: where exactly is our diamond policy and a strategy on trying to get the most out of our diamond industry here in the Northwest Territories?

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

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Member that we are the diamond capital of North America, but we don't have a monopoly on diamonds. We recognized that other provinces and territories would be finding diamonds and developing their diamonds as well.

It's been ten years since we had the good fortune of having diamonds discovered in the Northwest Territories. We are now undertaking a policy review of diamonds and will be looking forward to getting input from the Members. We are in the process of developing a discussion paper which will help guide us in our review.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Like I have mentioned previously in this House and earlier today, time is of the essence here. I don't think we can afford, as a government, to drag our heels much longer on finding out exactly where it is that we want to take the diamond industry here in the Northwest Territories.

Earlier today I spoke of a feasibility study that's looking at the possibility of opening a diamond exchange, or bourse, here in Canada. There were meetings held in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Where was the Government of the Northwest Territories in this feasibility study? Were they anywhere to be found?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** The diamond bourse provides for the facilitated sale of rough and polished



diamonds. This is something that our government looked at initially, when diamonds were first discovered. We determined at that time that we would get more value added by making sure that rough diamonds were made available for the secondary diamond industry. So we have proceeded on that basis. We are now reviewing our policy to see whether we should be looking at diamond bourses.

Ontario held these workshops in a number of locations across Canada. It was organized by a former resident of the Northwest Territories. The NWT attended and participated in these sessions.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I know we've helped out other jurisdictions in terms of policy development, because they're new into the game, into the diamond business. Will the Minister provide us, whether it's the House or the EDI committee, with the submission that the government gave to this feasibility study group? At any time was it suggested that a diamond bourse, or diamond exchange, should be located in the diamond capital of North America? That's here in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** The Government of Ontario looked at establishing a diamond bourse so that smaller jewellery companies could find a place to buy diamonds. As far as I know, the report has not been submitted as of yet. As soon as that's available, we'll make sure that it's available to all the Members of the Assembly. We will be giving a briefing to the standing committee next week on the diamond policy.

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

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister: was the Government of the Northwest Territories there as observers, or were we actually there presenting our case so that a diamond bourse, an exchange, could be located here in the Northwest Territories, where we have four operating diamond mines in our territory?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** The Government of the Northwest Territories has worked with the Ontario government to share information as they establish their diamond industry. We participated in the workshops that were held in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. We participated primarily as observers. As I said earlier, we are reviewing our diamond policy. Certainly, the establishment of a diamond bourse would be looked at as part of that review.

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

QUESTION 475-16(2)  
INCREASE TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement I noted more than once that the minimum wage in the NWT has remained stagnant since 2003. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment or whichever Minister is appropriate, because I'm not absolutely positive, why there's been no adjustment to the minimum wage in the NWT in the last five years.

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The minimum wage for the Northwest Territories, as the Member indicated, is \$8.25 per hour. It has been for, as she indicated also, the last five years. It hasn't been brought to my attention about increasing the minimum wage in the Northwest Territories by any other Members until today, so I can certainly look further into this with my department on the status. With the previous discussions that we've had, if there was an agreement in place that after five years there was going to be another increase, certainly I can look into that and provide the Member with more information.

**Ms. Bisaro:** I appreciate the answer from the Minister. I guess I'm a little surprised that it's a necessity for Members to bring these items to the attention of Ministers. I would hope in five years that the minimum wage would be a consideration for at least one department. It's unfortunate that we have to force the government to consider the plight of some of our people who are living at the lowest level of income.

I'd like to ask the Minister: now that it's been brought to his attention, when can we expect a change in the minimum wage?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, as I stated, I need to sit down with my department to find out where things are at. I can't really give a specific time as to when there are going to be changes, because I need to present to the committee as well if there are going to be proposed changes.

With any proposed changes there are always cost factors as well. We need to identify how much it will cost us to increase the minimum wage and put that forward, whether it be to the committee or the Cabinet. That is the work we need to undertake. I'm willing to do that with my department, to look into that further and see where we can go with this: the last five years, what's been discussed, and today.

**Ms. Bisaro:** I appreciate the Minister's answer and that it does require a certain amount of time, but I don't know how anybody, let alone myself or the

Minister, can expect anybody to live on \$8.25 an hour when they're working. There's absolutely no way anybody can survive on that. I appreciate that it does take time, but I think time is of the essence here, and it behoves the Minister to try and push this along.

I realize he can't give me a specific date, but we have business plans coming forward in another month. I think that if it was the will of the department to put it forward, we could see it in the plans next month. Will we see a change to the minimum wage — upward, not downward — in the business plans upcoming?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I did commit to the House that I will look into this with my department. Bringing that forward before the next business plan? I can't really commit to that at this time, but I can certainly work with what we have within our department. If we need to bring it forward to part of the standing committee, then we'll certainly do that and move forward. If it needs to be before the business plans, that's another question we need to address.

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

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the willingness on the part of the Minister to try and push things forward. I think that is something that is absolutely necessary. I've totally lost my train of thought. You could just say yes, Mr. Minister. Will you say yes?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly say yes to working with the Member and the Members on the other side. I am willing to work with my department and bring forward what we have to date and share it with the committee. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 476-16(2)  
ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING  
FOR SMALL COMMUNITY TEACHERS

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment with regard to the housing crisis we have in Aklavik and other communities throughout the Territories.

The government, in the past, implemented several initiatives related to the Market Housing Initiative. This was done through the Housing Corporation to build capacity in the communities that were non-market communities in regard to units that were designed for teachers and whatnot. Also, there is a government program, the Corporate Loan Guarantee Program, which is used to assist the

private sector to get into market housing opportunities.

In light of this situation we have in the Mackenzie Delta.... It has come up at the divisional meetings I've been at. It has come forward by way of letters from the Divisional Board of Education and also from the Minister's meeting held this summer with me and Ms. Lee in the community of Aklavik. So it has been out there for some time. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what is this department doing to stem this problem?

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Member's riding in Aklavik, dealing with the housing shortage or the unit that's closed down, we have been working with the local DEA and the band, and also with the Development Corporation, because they are the ones that own the facility. We have our superintendent going to a meeting with certain parties there. We are doing what we can as the Department of Education, because we have to look after our teachers as well.

I understand there have been some meetings in the last couple of days with Mr. Furlong. I believe there has been some alternative housing that may have been identified, and it's being worked on. So I think we're going to come up with some solutions there, but it takes the community, our department and the Member working together to find a solution. I think we've come to that. We're hoping that a solution will be identified before the November 3 deadline.

**Mr. Krutko:** Again, we find ourselves reacting and not being proactive. As government we did have staff housing in just about all the communities in the Northwest Territories by way of professional staff housing for teachers. A lot of these units are still in our communities, and they are over 30 years old. They are in urgent need of repairs and upkeep.

I'd like to ask the Minister: what are we doing to improve the housing stock in our communities throughout the Northwest Territories by way of professional housing for staff such as teachers, nurses and other professionals?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, within our department we've done some overall inventory of the housing units that are available in the 33 communities we serve. We do have that information. Also, for this year with the teachers, the majority have found suitable housing units to stay in.

But the Member is right. We need to plan now for next year and the following years on how we can mitigate these issues or challenges we're faced

with. It's not only us; it's throughout Canada as well, but throughout the North especially.

This is one of the priorities we've identified. We've had several meetings on this particular item, and this is going to be an ongoing discussion. We definitely need to have a plan in place to deal with this specific item.

**Mr. Krutko:** I mentioned the program earlier on in regard to the Market Housing Initiative that was put in place. It was a lot of upkeep, mostly in the southern part of the territory, and we're working our way north, but we haven't heard much from that program in a while.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education: has he been working with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to ensure we maybe consider either expanding the Market Housing Initiative in those communities where we don't have market housing provided by the private sector or else the possibility that we could use existing housing facilities that are not occupied but are basically still functional for emergencies such as this throughout the Territories?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, the Market Housing Initiative, as the Member would know, has been with us for a number of years now. I've been working closely with the former Minister of Housing as well as with the current Minister on identifying the units that are probably vacant and can be utilized in the community. We met yesterday as well, talking about market housing — the rent at the community level, where some rents are \$700 per month and some rent at \$2,200 and so on. That's what we've been talking about: how we can make it attractive for teachers and other professionals working with the development corporation and also the Member and the band. It is coming from the community, especially the small communities that are lacking the housing for staff.

That is one of the areas we are working closely on. I am working closely with the Housing Minister on this particular item. Mahsi.

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

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I definitely look forward to working along with the Minister and other Ministers to resolve this problem. It is unique to small, isolated communities, especially where it's a non-market community.

I'd like to ask the Minister, along with the Minister of Housing, if he can provide us with any information he was able to compile on this situation in regard to where the units are located and where we don't have units so that in the affected communities we know exactly what situation we're in and the same

information is being shared between the affected parties.

I'd like to thank the Minister for taking on this challenge. More importantly, keep us in the loop; share that information with the affected Members so we know the exact status of the professionals' housing in our communities. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can release that information.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** We can certainly provide the information we have within my department of Education, Culture and Employment. I did talk about the inventory we have on hand and the number of vacant units that may be available.

I need to continue to work with Minister McLeod, the Housing Minister, on this particular item as well, because they're the ones that have all the inventories of the units at the community level. We'll provide that to the Member and also keep the Member informed of what's happening in the community of Aklavik and also Members in the isolated communities. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 477-16(2)  
CHALLENGES TO HOME OWNERSHIP  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Housing.

Listening to the interesting debate we had between the Minister of ECE and the honourable Member, I have similar types of issues in terms of affordability of homes. I have to commend the Housing Corporation for increasing the housing stock in the Nahendeh riding, but we're having affordability issues, meaning that people aren't being approved or getting into these homes.

I think part of the issue there has to do with it being a non-market community. Government guidelines and procedures.... I believe they're selling them at economic rents or at the economic rate it costs to construct them, but the issue is that in our small communities they're being constructed at a high cost, and I think they should be sold at market cost. I'm not too sure how we're going to get around this. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could speak to that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, we have a number of programs that have been incorporated in the last while to assist the people across the North to get into home ownership or, in the case of repairs, to apply for repairs. In each case there is a

threshold that is established. We look at calculating the maximum construction cost. We look at factoring in the interest rate, land costs, shelter costs, and we also then amortize that over a 25 year period.

For the most part, Mr. Speaker, it seems to be working well. In the last while we've had a huge investment in home ownership through the Affordable Housing Initiative and the Housing Trust. That money was provided on a cost shared basis from the federal government. We've put a lot of units on the ground. We have heard from a number of people across the North that the opportunity to access this program is too limited. We are reviewing the thresholds to ensure that maybe we could open it up a little bit so that it's a little more flexible.

**Mr. Menicoche:** That's the absolute crux of the issues in many of the small communities. The affordability window is just so small and the income threshold, I believe, has to be reviewed. Is the department or is government going to look at reviewing the threshold this coming winter?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation, including myself, has sat down on a number of occasions now to look at some of the areas that have been causing issues to come forward. The threshold seems to be an area that we need to commit to doing a review on. It's been a while now that this program's been in place. We're hearing a lot of feedback in this area, and we want to do that.

The other area, of course, is to be able to deal with the large number of questions and requests that come in from the general public to the MLAs and also to me as Minister. We are working on a new initiative there, also, to look at the appeal process. Hopefully, we'll be able to do both of those things sometime over the winter.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Does the existing program take into account the remoteness of the smaller communities like Jean Marie? Is the income threshold lower, or is there more room for deduction, as it were, from the payment plan, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is yes. Each community has a different income threshold, whether it's the maximum or the minimum, and each income threshold is designed and calculated from the cost of living in that community.

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

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Is that threshold limit applicable to all the programs that are there? Is that the same program

available for CARE as it is in HELP? Is that the same income threshold?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, this program is designed towards the Homeownership program. The CARE program is a lot more open and fewer conditions are placed on it for homeowner repairs.

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

QUESTION 478-16(2)  
NOTIFICATION OF HOSPITAL  
BED SPACE IN ALBERTA

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be to the Minister of Health today. I'll be following up on both my Member's statement and my questions from yesterday, which addressed my concern about this young mother, two in tow, a three month old nursing baby with her, who had trouble getting a hospital room and waited 34 hours.

I was reading Hansard questions yesterday. To understand some of the complexity, the frustration I'm feeling on this side of the House.... The Minister said we send people....that we use Capital Health services, because services like urology.... Well, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about neurology. That's the frustration I'm having over here, trying to communicate this problem. I mean, it's the study of urine and I'm talking about a stroke.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the Minister at this time is: there must be some type of contract we have with Capital Health, and there must be a proviso within that contract that says we communicate with the Northwest Territories government, and within that contract there must be something that stipulates accessibility for northern patients going south. Is there such a clause, and would the Minister be willing to make that known to myself as the Member, the family, as well as the rest of the House?

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just ask that the Hansard be corrected to read "neurology." That is what I said.

Mr. Speaker, we do have a contract with Capital Health so they can provide services that we cannot in the North. We don't have special status with Alberta, but we do have access to service that Alberta and Capital Health gives to its own residents. My understanding is and we are aware that there is a shortage of beds and facilities all over the country, and sometimes we experience some difficulties. I would be happy to provide the

Member with any details of the agreements he would like to know and that I could get hold of.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Well, if I try really hard and understand that answer, what I'll do is I'll assume that there must be some proviso and detail that talks about potential status if the hospital is full.

Mr. Speaker, when I raised the issue about notice or communications to the Minister's office vis-à-vis through Stanton or whatever from Capital Health and it talked about beds being full, the Minister said there was nothing, but I am getting indications that there was information passed to this government through Capital Health. I would like to be clear: does Capital Health inform this government in any way if no hospital beds are available? How do they do so, and when was the last correspondence on that matter?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, this is a medical decision. A medical doctor at Stanton decides that somebody needs to go elsewhere to receive medical care that we cannot provide here. The medical doctor would be in touch with somebody in Capital Health to receive our patients. So it's a medical decision; it's a medical practice decision, and I believe in this case that decision was made by the medical practitioners.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly wish we were in a court of law so we could treat the Minister like a hostile witness to get her to answer the question. The answer wasn't in there anywhere. My question was about the detail of communication.

All indications are that there is information that flows from Capital Health to the Northwest Territories through Capital Health, maybe through to Stanton, then it gets to the Minister's office. So, Mr. Speaker, I will have to find another way to say the same question: is there any type of communication that gives the detail that beds are full or not?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the Member means by "all indications." I did get a call from the media telling me that the Member is suggesting I got an e-mail two weeks ago. I don't have any such information, and I will make it clear: we do not have any information that says anything like the Member is suggesting. I don't know what the Member is saying with "all indications."

Once again, this is a medical decision made by the medical practitioner at Stanton, who felt that this patient needed to go to Royal Alexandra Hospital. That's the decision that was made.

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

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister drew in Royal Alex, because she is very adamant that this patient went to the Royal Alex. But I actually contacted the hospital; I contacted Capital Health, and she is not at Royal Alex. As a matter of fact, she's at the U of A. So I seem to be a little.... And there's no problem with the Royal Alex, but obviously the detail isn't there.

The Minister said in her remarks yesterday that she spent all day trying to do her best to get this patient into a room. There is a reference to contacting or finding information about Calgary and Grande Prairie. Well, Mr. Speaker, I called these agencies. I called the Queen Elizabeth, too, in Grande Prairie, and they said clearly that there is no way they could see 34 hours as a reasonable amount of time.

I would like the Minister to show me what correspondence and efforts were made to reasonably demonstrate that there was a push from our government to make sure someone did not have to wait in the emergency room 19 hours for an enclosure and 15 more hours for a bed.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to provide the information as to the work the staff did, the calls the nurses made to talk to the patient's husband in Yellowknife as well as Northern Health Services Network staff this government has hired in Edmonton to help our northern residents who are sent there. I don't have that information handy, but I would be happy to provide him information on the steps we took to assist with this situation.

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

QUESTION 479-16(2)  
RETROFIT OF DIAMOND JENNESS  
SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are about capital projects in the Northwest Territories.

I believe that when we are considering the priority placed on capital projects, the highest priority is the protection of people. To that end, I have been trying to get tabled in this House, or given to me or given to the education authority in Hay River, the air quality reports that were done at Diamond Jenness after it was discovered that asbestos was in there.

I have been told that perhaps I am asking for the wrong report. Maybe it's not air quality I should be looking for; it should be the report on the content of asbestos in the air. Now PWS got the reports back. The air was sent out; it came back with reports. Why can I not get a copy of them?

We are talking about spending some \$20 million on an office building in Inuvik to consolidate government employees. I would like to know if

where they are located poses any risk to their health. In Diamond Jenness we have windows that don't open, inadequate heat in the winter and inadequate cooling in the summer. We have an air quality issue there.

I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services again: are there any reports that would indicate the presence of asbestos in the air in the high school in Hay River?

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

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, after the Member's comments yesterday in the House, we did a follow-up. We are and we will be providing the reports to the Member if not tomorrow, then early next week. The reports indicate that there is no asbestos in the air. The air quality reports all report that the air is safe.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that. I really do look forward to getting it and actually visually inspecting those reports myself, because, you know, rumours do abound. I have heard that the reports had come back indicating even in a very small quantity, parts per million in the air — I'm not sure how it is measured — that there was asbestos in there. So I look very much forward to seeing those — not that I don't believe the Minister, but I would like to see it with my own eyes.

Back to the issue, though, of the quality of the environment in which the students are educated in Hay River in the Diamond Jenness Secondary School. The school is old. We are told that some of the rationale for building this building in Inuvik is because the office where the government employees are is old. Well, our school is old. What is the priority here?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, in the case of the Diamond Jenness there has been a review done on the status and condition of the facility that recognized that there's a need for a mid-life retrofit. We have identified a budget for it and have provided the recommendations to go ahead with the retrofit.

However, the school requires more than just a retrofit, which would bring it back to the same standards as when it initially was built. There is a desire from the community, from the education system to provide some upgrades in terms of programs; therefore, the functional review is being done by Department of Education. When that comes back, it will be put back in the capital list.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has referred to the replacement of the schools in Inuvik, and I do not dispute that schools

in Inuvik need to be replaced. You know, the Premier said they have been on the books since he was elected 13 years ago. Well, the problems in Diamond Jenness have been around as long as I have been here as well.

I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services: what is the priority of this government — the comfort of government employees or an environment that is good for the educating of our children?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, comfort is important for our employees, for our students. Safety is the bigger issue. In the case of the school in Inuvik we had a recommendation and assessments that the school should be replaced. In the case of our employees in Inuvik we have them housed in old warehouse buildings that were loaned by the federal government and converted to offices. There is an issue there, and also the Perry Building has been declared unsafe, unsuitable for use.

In the case of Diamond Jenness it needs to be retrofitted and it needs to be upgraded, and it also needs to be enhanced with a program review and new programs. We need to take all those steps, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you. For the benefit of those people in Hay River who are maybe following and are interested, what did the visit of the Minister and designating the Diamond Jenness renovation as a red flag project mean? And from where we thought it was going to show up in the capital plans, where is it now? Why the difference in the timing?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, at the time of the community visit and the visit with the school and talking with the people there, including the principal and the MLAs, we had indicated that the school had been reviewed for a condition rating and that it was earmarked by Public Works as needing a mid-life retrofit. The price tag around that was, I think, \$21 million. What needed to be done was a functional review, a program review by the Department of Education.

Since the time those discussions took place, the Department of Education has embarked upon doing that, and I think those discussions are underway with the education people in the town of Hay River.

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

QUESTION 480-16(2)  
REPLACEMENT OF ELDERS' FUEL TANKS

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement earlier today with the Minister of Housing.

The fuel spills that are occurring in N'dilo and Dettah as a result of the aging fuel tanks are costing us a lot — two incidents, 160,000-some dollars, over \$80,000 per incident — and it's probably a couple of thousand dollars to replace the tanks.

Under the old SDPMI program, the Yellowknives Dene could replace the tanks and be reimbursed by the Housing Corporation, but under the CARE program it has to be approved ahead of time. This has proved onerous. This has been brought up with the Housing Corp for the last eight months. Again, it's a straightforward, relatively low cost initiative. Is the Minister intending to act on this opportunity, or are there barriers to be dealt with here?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have standards in the NWT Housing Corporation that require us to review and assess our public housing units. We expect that we need to change the tanks at least every 20 years. We have our action plan where we have started doing.

In the area of private homes, we like to work with ENR to put the word out to private homeowners that they should assess and inspect their tanks on a regular basis to ensure there are no leaks. We have a program, as the Member has indicated, called CARE, that will provide for people in the lower income brackets to apply to replace their tanks if they need assistance. That program is for all the people in that income bracket.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for those comments from the Minister. That, too, is my understanding, and that's the starting point for this discussion here. The Yellowknives Dene have raised this issue, as I said, over the past eight months on behalf of these elders who are low income private homeowners. Has the department assessed their tanks, and have you developed a schedule to replace those tanks according to the expression of concern and the tens of thousands of dollars this is costing both the Yellowknives Dene Nation and us?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, that issue has not come to my attention. I have not come forward with a plan to deal with the Yellowknives Dene. I have not been notified that there is an issue there.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, it's been raised with the Housing Corporation, and I don't think we can pursue this further if the Minister is not aware of this. I would take the initiative to provide correspondence, and I anticipate that the Minister, perhaps, could commit to dealing with this as soon as possible, since it is now eight months and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation has not heard back from the department on this. Would the Minister commit, once I provide him later today with this correspondence, to doing a quick response?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** I'll gladly take the information provided by the Member and follow up with our officials to see why it's taken such a long time for a response to be provided to the Yellowknives Dene. We'll also share that information with the Member.

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

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the Minister for that commitment. This, again, is very costly all around if we don't act. These are disasters waiting to happen. Rather than fiddling while Rome burns, I'd like to see some action. Does the Minister agree that this is an appropriate role for the Housing Corporation to play and that they have a responsibility under these programs to do this?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** I would agree that the private homeowners have a responsibility to look after their own homes. We have programs that can assist them if their income is not adequate to meet their needs.

We have embarked on a campaign to replace our tanks that are on public housing units, and we will commit to working with ENR to launch a public information campaign to make sure people are aware there is a limited lifespan that these fuel tanks will stand up for. There are other concerns. There's condensation and other issues that factor in there. There could be a shortened life other than 20 years.

There are a number of things I can commit to, but at the end of the day I want to make sure it's clear that we need to be approached by the individual to assist, and we also need the individual to be providing due diligence in looking after their house.

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

QUESTION 481-16(2)  
PALLIATIVE CARE BENEFITS PROGRAM

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services in

follow-up to my Member's statement on the palliative care benefits program.

I'd like to quickly once again thank the Minister for getting her department to develop some policies and procedures to help reduce the wait times for palliative patients obtaining required medications. Unfortunately, I'm not as convinced as she is that it's working well. I've talked to a number of pharmacists who have indicated they actually are unaware of any changes and they haven't seen any improvement.

Given that pharmacists are an important part of the process — in fact, they are a key link between the department and the physicians, and ultimately they dispense the medications — I'm curious if the Minister could tell me whether pharmacists were engaged and asked to participate in the development of these policies and procedures to help streamline the distribution of medications for palliative patients.

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, since the Member raised his question in February and as the letter I've provided him a copy of suggests, all the department has done is the most simplified and streamlined process that we could implement in as efficient a manner as possible.

The department has just asked that instead of asking the palliative care patients and physicians to fill out extra forms, as long as the doctor fills out the palliative care, then Green Shield will administer this and turn it around on a 24 hour basis. I'm advised that the pharmacists and other stakeholders have been communicated with in writing. I did make a commitment to the Member that we will consult more deeply with the pharmacists to see if this is working. We have not had any feedback, and I'd be happy to undertake to have that feedback for the Member.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Speaker, that's good to hear. The process may in fact work. I don't know, and the pharmacists don't know, because they haven't seen it. I've seen the letter that went to the pharmacists. It's a one page letter with two paragraphs. It's incredibly vague and just says: Attention pharmacies, authorities and stakeholders. I think we need to work a little harder to get that information to our pharmacists.

I'd like the Minister to commit today to actually have her department contact the pharmacists with a bit more detail as to why and the process they need to follow. It's not working right now. Patients are still waiting extra periods of time in order to get the drugs they need for palliative care. We're doing them a disservice. Will the Minister commit to

getting this information to the pharmacists so we can actually expedite this process for our residents?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, yes. In answering the Member's question when he raised it for the first time in this session, I did commit to having my officials talk to the pharmacists. That was about seven days ago. We have not had a chance to do that. I don't really have any feedback. I'd happy to undertake to consult widely not only on this but on some of the issues that the Members are bringing with the pharmacists to see if this is working and, if it's not, what suggestions they may have to improve that.

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

#### QUESTION 482-16(2) RCMP SPECIAL CONSTABLE PROGRAM

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the RCMP Special Constable program. I would like to follow up my statements with questions for the Minister of Justice. Can the Minister of Justice tell me: what is the status of his discussions, if any, at the most recent federal/provincial/territorial Justice Ministers meeting with respect to aboriginal policing and special constables work?

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for asking that question on special constables. It has been an ongoing discussion on that issue. Just recently, in early September, I went to Quebec City and met with provincial, federal and territorial Ministers at that time. I did stress, as I indicated in my Minister's statement, the urgency of having special constables in the North — our uniqueness, our isolated post and also the backup plan with nine two-man detachments. It is sometimes difficult.

The Minister of Public Safety was there, Minister Day, and he heard my concerns. He did stress to all of us sitting around the table that he has identified the North as unique — how we deliver, how we charter through the isolated communities. It takes so many hours to get through the communities. Those have been under discussion, and from what I hear, it was a productive meeting with Minister Day. I will certainly follow through with the remark that he has made now that he is back in office, and we will follow through from my department. Mahsi.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell the House how soon we can expect to see special constables in the communities?



**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I have met with the commissioner of the RCMP and also just last week with the deputy commissioner. I did stress to them the urgency of having to deal with the backup policy — having a special constable in the community. At that time the deputy commissioner did indicate that in early spring they will probably share some announcement. Right now they are working on the job descriptions and the length of time of the training that needs to take place. There are many elements of training to become a special constable. They will be constables similar to the RCMP but without any investigations. Those are issues that they are working out, and they are almost at the final stages. An announcement will likely take place around April next year.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if my communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e would be impacted by the addition of special constables?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we have to focus on the small communities that have two man detachments and also three man detachments and four man detachments, because backup policy does take up a lot of overtime hours for RCMP officers. We need to look after their safety. Those are the areas that we need to focus on. And, yes, the Member's riding will be positively impacted, and other ridings as well. That's what we are focusing on, and we're getting ready for the special announcement in the early new year. We are looking forward to that, and I will continue working with the Members on this particular item. If I have any more news, I will certainly present it to the standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Oral questions, the honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 483-16(2)  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE  
MACKENZIE RIVER

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about the Mackenzie River and the protection that is going to be required through some avenues with the territorial government and the federal government and also with the Protected Area Strategy. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for ENR: in terms of living up to the commitments of the Protected Area Strategy, what is the current status on the Mackenzie Valley five year action plan?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, this Assembly is very interested and concerned about water. We passed a motion in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly where we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that may consider water a basic human right, so we have met that. We are very concerned about the issue of water in this Assembly. We have come forward with the water strategy that is underway, and it is going to be unique. We have worked with the aboriginal governments to do that as well. We worked at reviving the Mackenzie River Basin Board and trying to put the issue of watershed management on the list to get the board together with the Ministers to have some serious discussion about water.

As well, we are working on a land use framework as a territorial government that will allow us to better address the very many planning concerns, in addition to the commitment that we have as one of the partners in the Protected Area Strategy.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy and very proud when this Assembly is making first commitments to protect the water in the Mackenzie River, and also the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly passing the motion saying it's our right; it's in our blood down in the Mackenzie Valley.

In terms of protection, I would ask the Minister: would he work very closely with his federal counterparts and the aboriginal groups to have the resources there for the Protected Area Strategy group to implement a critical component of their work in terms of protecting our land and our water in the Mackenzie Valley before development?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Of course we will work with all the stakeholders involved with the Protected Area Strategy. We have a very close working relationship with the aboriginal governments. We have funded.... For example, we assisted Fort Good Hope when we had the Sahtu water conference. We have been involved in various water conferences across the North. As a government we are investing a lot of money in the water strategy, and we are going to continue to invest the resources necessary to work with the aboriginal governments to protect this, one of our most valuable resources.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform this House as to the status of the water resource management strategy? When can we see the final version?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** The intention and plan is to have a document complete by March 2009. We are about halfway through the consultation process. We have been taking the strategy around the North. We have taken it up, for example, to the Sahtu water conference. We have

consulted with the aboriginal governments. We have a working group that the Premier committed to forming to provide oversight. That document has been vetted, as well, by some of the best water people in the world in terms of making sure we have all the key elements and principles in our strategy. So that process and strategy is coming along. The committee has been briefed, and we will share with them, as well, the midpoint review as we pull together all the consultation that we have had and adjustments that we are intending to make.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to differ with the Minister in terms of the best people and water rights down here in the Mackenzie River, here in the communities. They live off the water; they know their water.

I would like to ask the Minister about the Mackenzie River being labelled as a sensitive cultural, spiritual heritage site that needs to be protected right down the Mackenzie Valley, because we are at ground zero of all the mega developments that are even on the table right now. I would ask the Minister if he would see that the Mackenzie River gets full — the highest — protection in terms of water quality and flow for the people of the Mackenzie Valley.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** The water strategy that is under development has a clear blending and recognition of the value of traditional knowledge, natural capital and western science. We recognize very clearly in all our work with the aboriginal governments that, yes, some of the best knowledge we have about water in the Mackenzie River Basin comes from the traditional knowledge of the people that live on the land.

We need to blend that with western science, and we are committed to spending the time and the effort to make sure that we have all the documents and instruments we need to have the best protection possible for the whole Mackenzie River Basin, especially the part from the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel north, which is the area that we live in.

We are also signatories of the Mackenzie River basin transboundary agreement, and we have to work with the other jurisdictions so that we can in fact have whole watershed management as our priority.

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

QUESTION 484-16(2)  
MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED  
TO NORTHERNERS IN  
SOUTHERN INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on some questions a colleague, Mr. Hawkins, had earlier in regard to a patient who was medevacked to Edmonton and who, in fact, is a constituent of mine. I'm going to ask some questions today. I want to try to get a better understanding of what happened and why it is that the government and the Department of Health would send a patient who had a stroke to a facility if they knew there were no rooms there for that patient. The answer that Ms. Lee provided to Mr. Hawkins yesterday wasn't clear enough for me. Could she explain why they would knowingly send a patient who had a stroke to a hospital that had no room for them?

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important to note that it is not the Department of Health that makes the decisions on who gets sent to where for medical care. It's the doctor at Stanton hospital who decided, because of her condition and her medical needs, that she needed to be sent to Edmonton. My understanding is that in most situations the doctor here communicates with a doctor in the receiving location to make sure they agree to take this patient.

Now, I think it's also important to note that she did receive and she is receiving the care she needed; it's just that she couldn't have her own room. She was in a triage facility in emergency. She was being monitored and tested, and she had attending doctors to make sure that they were looking after her. It was not the ideal situation, but she was being taken care of.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Whether it's the department's responsibility or the doctor's responsibility, I think we have to do our utmost to ensure that when patients from the Northwest Territories are sent south, they actually have a room and will be looked after the way they should be. I agree with Mr. Hawkins; I don't think 34 hours in an emergency room with a daughter and a three month old baby is appropriate.

I'd like to ask the Minister.... I know that yesterday she had mentioned that other centres like Grande Prairie or perhaps even Calgary were looked at as a possible location to send this constituent of mine. Was that in fact done? Did the doctor look at other locations to send this patient?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** My understanding is that the receiving doctor at Capital Health decides where

this patient should go. The decision was made that the patient should be sent where she went. Our agreement that we have with Alberta is that we are guaranteed the medical services that Alberta residents get, and that's what we have.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I didn't hear an answer on whether or not other locations in Alberta or even.... I'm not sure; maybe the Minister could let us know. What other agreements do we have with health authorities in southern Canada to look after our patients? Are there other options? There are going to be huge demands on Capital Health in Edmonton. If their rooms are full, we need to be looking after our patients, and we have to ensure that this type of scenario is never allowed to play itself out again. So will the Minister answer that question?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I don't have the detailed information. I believe our agreement is with the Government of Alberta. There might be some subagreements with Capital Health. What happened yesterday is unfortunate. We do want to see that that sort of situation does not happen. But I think it is really important, in the political forum that we are in, that these are medical decisions made by medical practitioners in Stanton and in Edmonton in the best interests of the patients.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you. The time for question period has expired. I will allow the member a final supplementary question. Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to ask the Minister.... As I understand it, the bigger issue here is that Capital Health in Alberta is going to a one board approach, which is going to mean a reduction in services to NWT residents. What strategy has the Minister got to deal with situations like this that are going to arise?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** There is no evidence to suggest that there is going to be a reduction in services because of the amalgamation of boards. There is no evidence to suggest that what happened to this particular patient has anything to do with amalgamation. Obviously, we as a government want to monitor this situation and make sure that we're not affected negatively in that way.

Now, I think we have to keep in mind that Capital Health does provide us with very valuable services in many regards. Sometimes we run into problems. I could also advise the Member that I, in fact, talked to the Minister of Health in Alberta himself, when we were in FPT meetings, shortly after he had announced that the boards would be amalgamated. I talked to him on the phone as well to make sure that he understands that Capital Health is a very important service provider and that we continue to have a good working relationship with them.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for question period has expired. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 8 on our agenda, oral questions. Thank you.

Unanimous consent granted.

QUESTION 485-16(2)  
MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED  
TO NORTHERNERS IN  
SOUTHERN INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue questioning, and I certainly want to thank Mr. Ramsay for helping on this issue, because it is an important issue for this family in Yellowknife.

I continued to ask the Minister four times yesterday: would she provide a written apology to this family in light of the way that this family was treated and certainly in recognition of the duration that this process went on? Is the Minister willing to write apology to this family and also recognize what she will be doing to make sure this does not happen again in the future?

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am always willing to take responsibility and apologize where necessary, but I am not sure if I could apologize on behalf of the services provided by the Government of Alberta. I am not the Minister in Alberta. These are decisions made by the doctor in Stanton and the doctor at the receiving end. I think it is unfortunate and regrettable that this situation happened. I believe that the department officials and the people responsible at this end did everything we could to help with the patient and the family.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, all those hospitals in Alberta, all those hospitals in Calgary and Edmonton and elsewhere, yet there were no beds. I'm wondering who is taking responsibility for sending one of our patients, who was in dire need of serious medical care, to a hospital, or certainly a city, that has no beds. Is the Minister willing to take responsibility specifically for that and write an apology on that issue so this family has some healing and can go forward?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have the information on what decisions were made to see whether it would have been better for the patient to be sent elsewhere or to be moved and on what condition. I don't know any of that information. I'd be happy to undertake, for the Member, to have

officials review this file and see what happened and whether there should be any steps taken.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Minister to explain a paradox. At one moment she'll take responsibility, and at another moment she's not responsible because it's a doctor's situation. At the one moment it's Capital Health's decision where to send the patient, yet she acknowledges that she spent all day on the phone. I'm really confused. If she doesn't have control, why does she bother calling? If she's the Minister, I would think she'd be in charge and respectful and do the honourable thing by providing a written apology to the family. But then she says it's not her responsibility.

So who's responsible for this particular situation? I'll certainly take her up on that potential review. Ultimately I want to know: is she going to take responsibility and provide a written apology for this family? That is what they're asking for; that's what I'm asking for.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I did what I think the Member expects a Minister to do. When the patient's husband called me at my office and told me what was going on, I directed the department to look into it. That is what I did. And I was advised of what was going on in between some of the actions the government was taking.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am responsible as the Minister of Health and Social Services and as a Member of this Assembly to respond to calls I get at my office, and that is what I did on Monday. I am willing to have the department review this file and also look to see what had happened and what we could do to see if we could do anything to prevent this from happening again, with the understanding that the doctors decide. We cannot second guess the doctors' understanding, and they decide where these patients go.

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

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll certainly, once again, accept the offer to review this file. I think that is a good first step for this family. Still, there's quite a bit of vagueness on whether the Minister will provide a written apology to this family. I certainly hope the Minister will clear this up.

We need to be ultimately clear. Do we allow doctors — and this is certainly not a slight against doctors — to send people to hospitals where they can't be treated? I want to be clear on that. Do we allow doctors to send patients south to hospitals that have no beds for them? In such cases I'm concerned about the level of service that will be provided.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I think the Member is quite incorrect in saying that the patient was sent where

the patient was not being treated. That is not correct, and that is questioning the capacity of doctors to do their work, Mr. Speaker. This patient — and I keep saying this — was monitored. She was being tested. It was important that she was monitored. She was being treated.

I think it's quite inappropriate, actually, for us to talk about individual health situations, and I think it's wrong for the Member to say this person was not treated. It is just that she didn't have her own room. I understand, given her circumstances — she had a young baby and another daughter — it would have been much better for her to have been in her own room, but the decision was made that it was better for her to stay in emergency until she could get her own room. If she checked out — and she had the option to check out — she would not be on that waiting list.

So it was a medical decision that was made, and I think that we as the political masters have to be careful about questioning the practices and work of medical professionals.

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

#### QUESTION 486-16(2) INCREASE TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate this opportunity to actually ask a question that my brain remembered shortly after I sat down.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment this question. I'd like to say that I appreciate that there are funding implications to raising the minimum wage. I do want to say, though, that I think there are likely very few people who are currently working at minimum wage in our territory. If it was a large percentage, I'd be very surprised. People simply can't survive on that amount of money.

My guess is that even an increase of \$1.75 per hour to the minimum wage could relatively easily be funded by finding efficiencies and savings within the department. I love to use this example: doing reports electronically instead of printing them and distributing them. It's a good example and one I'm fond of.

So to the Minister: will he attempt to do the necessary analysis to see what it would cost to increase the minimum wage to, say, \$10 an hour before we meet to review business plans in November?

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we need to gather the latest and updated information. It's been five years since we've increased our minimum wage. That information may not be accurate today. That information we need to gather from, whether it's the employer sector, the change that we have in the restaurants and so forth.... Certainly that information is needed to move forward on this. We need as much information to deal with this issue as possible.

**Ms. Bisaro:** I won't belabour this, but I do need to say to the Minister that I don't think there's much to be gathered. We haven't raised the minimum wage, so I'm not too sure what information he feels needs to be gathered. Any expense we will incur by raising the minimum wage, I suspect we're going to save in income subsidy and savings in various programs that we have.

I guess I'll ask the Minister again: is there any possibility that even if we don't do a comprehensive analysis or evaluation, we can get something to consider in the business plans in November?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, as I stated, we need to consult with the small businesses in the North. I do believe that during the last round of increases there was an outcry from the small businesses. We need to consult with them as well. We can't just say we're going to increase wages at this time.

That type of information will be crucial to us to proceed, if we need to proceed forward, to increase the minimum wage. That is the information we need to tackle and consult with the small businesses on. We need that information from the Member as well.

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

QUESTION 487-16(2)  
STATUS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE  
ON RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier in terms of the initiatives he announced earlier in the life of this Assembly. The initiative I'd like to talk about is a small community committee that he initiated. There are certain challenges these small communities that we represent have to deal with.

I'd like to ask the Premier, in terms of the status of this specific committee, when we could see some light of day in getting this committee off the ground.

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

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The small communities committee the Member is

speaking about.... We did have correspondence with the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, and we're awaiting their response to the proposal that was put in front of them.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** The policy of the small communities committee in terms of its membership as initiated by Cabinet.... I'll ask the Premier if he has the authority to say that this committee needs to be implemented. Does the Priorities and Planning committee need to initiate it to get it going?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The process we're involved with is when the joint committee works with Priorities and Planning and awaits their response. If it was an internal committee of Cabinet, we could undertake our own work. Between now and then I'm prepared to sit down with the Members, unofficially, to discuss concerns that are out there for Members. For the actual process of coming up with membership on the committee, we're awaiting, again, the response of Priorities and Planning.

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

QUESTION 488-16(2)  
CONTRACT TERMS WITH ALBERTA  
CAPITAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I still have a few more questions for the Minister of Health regarding our experiences or relationship with Capital Health and our contract.

A lot of people in this House know, I'm sure, that Capital Health is an approximately \$13 billion sort of conglomerate of hospitals and whatnot; that's their budget area. To put that into perspective, the GNWT's budget is only 10 per cent of that. It's a sense of magnitude I'm drawing on that.

In negotiating our contract with Capital Health to provide services to Northerners who need services, I'd like to know if the Minister is aware of how this government defines service levels that need to be provided to Northerners when they are sent south for treatment in southern institutions.

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

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, we have a contract with the Capital Health Authority. They guarantee that NWT residents will receive the same level of medical care that Alberta residents will receive.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Is that the actual statement in the contract, or does the contract actually take the time to identify what is considered reasonable wait times for Northern residents who've contracted

specifically with Capital Health? Is that exactly how it works?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** My understanding is that we get the same service that Alberta residents receive. If the Member would like to have a briefing on what kinds of contracts we have — what kind of service agreements we have with Alberta Health or any other organizations or governments that this government has contracts with — I'll be happy to provide the Members on the other side with a briefing or any background information.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I'm sort of perplexed. It sounds like we're not getting any additional services than anyone else who would walk in off the street, yet we have a very specific contract with Capital Health. I find it an odd situation that this government wouldn't try to negotiate some type of preferred experience, preferred customer. I'm certainly well aware that the GNWT makes every effort to make sure we pay our bills in a timely way — to get recognition for that — so Capital Health doesn't need to sit and wait for payment.

Why do we contract specifically with Capital Health? Why don't we consider going somewhere else where we'd get recognition for our Northerners and make sure our tax dollars are actually recognizing their importance?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Notwithstanding this particular situation, most of the feedback we do receive is that we get very good service from Capital Health. Capital Health Authority and the services that the Government of Alberta provide are, I believe, among the best. I just don't know where else we would go to get the services that our residents receive.

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

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'll help the Minister: there's Grande Prairie; there's Calgary; there's Saskatoon. There are other places if the Minister is looking for suggestions to consider.

What is the Minister doing to make sure we have recognizable service levels defined in our contract with Capital Health? If she chooses to do nothing, why isn't she doing something on this issue?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** As I stated already, I'd be happy to meet with the Member or the Standing Committee on Social Programs to go over the contract we have and to have further discussion on it.

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

QUESTION 489-16(2)  
NATIONAL RANKING OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA HOSPITAL

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if she is aware of a rating system that rates all hospitals in Canada. If she is, could she tell us where the U of A sits on that rating? I think they sit at the top.

**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. I'll be happy to get that information to the Member. My understanding is that U of A and the Government of Alberta are investing a huge amount of money to make the U of A and the University hospital a centre of excellence and research in the country.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I realize we've had an unfortunate circumstance here, but I do want to say, too, that I have constituents who have received medical services through Capital Health Authority and thought that if they moved to Edmonton, they would get better service. They found out it was better to move back to the Northwest Territories, where they were given a priority status when receiving services at the U of A.

For the Minister's information, the London, Ontario, and Edmonton, Alberta, university hospitals are the top two rated in Canada. I guess I'm just a little bit concerned that maybe with the rich economy in Alberta, they might decide to give us the heave-ho hearing a discussion like this. I mean, they're very busy with their own people, and they have a lot of money in Alberta. It's one of the richest provinces in Canada now.

I'd like to know: has there ever been any tone from the negotiations with the Capital Health Authority that maybe they're just too busy to take us on?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** In light of the Member's statement, I have to say I was quite surprised when I went to the FPT Health Ministers meeting to hear the Alberta Health Minister talking about the pressure on their system. They spend more money than anybody else in the country, but they have a growing population and a huge demand on services.

Obviously, the Minister took some drastic measures to address that. I don't know the details of the government's plan, but I took every opportunity I had to let him know of the importance of that Capital Authority and Alberta service in delivering health care services for the North. He's well aware of it, and he assured me that if they were ever to

contemplate any changes, he would talk to and consult with us.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 9, written questions. 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. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

### Tabling of Documents

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation 2006–2007 Annual Report.

Document 104-16(2), NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation 2006–2007 Annual Report, tabled.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** I wish to table the following document entitled GNWT Response to Committee Report 3-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Document 105-16(2), GNWT Response to Committee Report 3-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner, tabled.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. 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), Tabled Document 93-16(2), Bill 14, Bill 15, Bill 16 and Bill 17, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 80-16(2), Tabled Document 93-16(2), Bill 14, Bill 15, Bill 16 and Bill 17. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the wish of the committee is to continue on today with the capital acquisition document. I believe we'll start off with the Legislative Assembly and then resume where we were on the list yesterday. I believe we're going to ECE next.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. Does committee agree?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we'll begin with the Legislative Assembly after a short break.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break we agreed that we would begin with the Legislative Assembly.

TABLED DOCUMENT 93-16(2):  
NWT CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2009–2010

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** At this time I would like to ask the Speaker if he would like to bring in his witnesses.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Is the committee agreed that he brings in his witnesses?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

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

Mr. Speaker, for the record could you introduce your witnesses, please.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me on my left is the director of corporate services, Olin Lovely, and to my right is the Clerk of the Assembly, Tim Mercer.

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

Turn your attention to page 1-4 in regard to Capital Estimates 2009–2010, Office of the Clerk, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$130,000. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I had inquired previously, working in this building it's hard not to notice the deteriorating condition, really, of the circle drive here and the walkways. I know there's been a lot of money invested in those areas over the years, but it seems like they are forever sinking away. I was just wondering if it's not to the point where some kind of almost emergency or immediate action is required to prevent the asphalt from getting worse. I'm curious about any future planned allocations in the Capital Budget for addressing the driveways and parking areas for the Legislative Assembly Building.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The condition of the road out there is certainly one that is in dire need of attention and one that I've been really interested in trying to get something done with. As the Member has indicated, it is almost at the emergency stage. We have been trying to do something with that road. We have a mere \$75,000 to try and do some upkeep or patchwork on the road in the parking lot.

We have put in a submission for a capital project to do the entire road out there. Our project was not accepted. Some other projects with higher priority were accepted. It was turned down at the authorities level. We have, since then, instructions from the Board of Management to really take this project seriously and to say that it has to be done. We are coming forward with a submission to do the complete drive out there in the '09-10 or '10-11 budget year as a capital project.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Is there an overall plan not just to repair what is there now, perhaps, but to look at additional parking out there as well? Now, I know a while back we put contractor parking in over here and so on, but it's still disappointing to me in some ways that if we ever do have an event here.... We try to encourage the public to participate in activities that go on in this building. It is the people's building, and it is always disappointing to me that the parking around this building becomes such an issue when there's any event.

Now, I know there was an intention to try to preserve the integrity of the natural surroundings out here, the muskeg out front, but I'm wondering if as part of this overall plan for repairing the roads, there was any plan to add additional parking so we could have visitors to the Legislative Assembly without fear of them having their vehicles towed, because there's no place for them to park.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** Yes, that is also part of the proposal that we're going forward with. Along with the road reconstruction there are going to be an additional 21 parking stalls put on the north side of the road over here, and that's all part of the same project. We have been working on that, looking at it for a number of years. There was at one point in the capital site talk about putting a courthouse in, and we were going to redesign our parking lot out there with some additional parking stalls. That hasn't materialized, so we will now be going forward with 21 additional parking stalls when we do the road reconstruction.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I just want to say that I know there are a lot of pressures on our capital budget and there are priorities. I don't want to make it sound like we're thinking that the needs of the Legislative Assembly are greater than other people's, but literally, there is such a dip in that driveway out there that I scold my daughter when

she's picking me up, because she bottoms out our little car there in that hole. It scares me. It scrapes right on the bottom.

When the Speaker refers to this proposal being turned down at the authority level, just to be clear, is he talking about a committee of deputy ministers?

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** The officials level. That project went through with all the capital projects and was prioritized and didn't make the list, because other ones took higher priority. So I guess that could be said. Now we have looked at a different approach to it, where we will be coming forward with money. It will be done at the Legislative Assembly. We'll be putting forward a report, and it will not be reviewed by this committee. We'll be going forward with that project in 2010-2011.

An interesting thing that she brings up is that dip out there. It's one that we've had some engineers look at to see the best way we could work with that to try to improve the situation. As long as we want to maintain that natural habitat out there, I guess it's going to be a problem to try to get a road in there that stays. I think that with the permafrost and everything in there, it's bog, so there are different opinions as to what we could do to make that road more stable. As long as we leave that area out there the way it is, I suspect we will continue to have problems. Certainly, we'll have to make it so that it stays driveable until we get the total reconstruction done. We've had a number of engineers look at it to see what the best way to do it is.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I know when I chaired the Cultural Enhancement Commission, there were members of the commission who wanted to see everything around the Legislative Assembly cleared, brushed, but I guess it was the intent of the architect who designed this building at the time to keep as much area surrounding the Legislative Assembly as natural as possible. Might I suggest that with the lake out back and everything else, it has been left very natural.

I personally would not have any problem with looking at some fill for that area out front there. We have a large piece of land here, and a large portion of it is natural. In the interest of us mortals, humans here, that have to come to work and find a place to park and for the interest of the people who want to use the Legislative Assembly, I think we should cover up. If we have to fill the bog out front, I personally don't have an issue with it.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** I guess that is an issue we could look at. I know there is a capital site committee that looks at what happens out here that we would certainly have to consult with. We would also have to consult with all the Members before we



would make that drastic a change out there. But I think that is one area that could possibly be looked at. We just have to take the money to drain that area and fill it in properly and whatever we do out there. We certainly wouldn't do it without full consultation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate my colleague's comments and questions. I generally walk, and I hear it's good for the heart and good for mental exercise and all that sort of stuff.

But I really want to raise the question of greening of the Legislative Assembly Building. I think we're all very conversant now on climate change and what that means to the people of the North. I think we're showing a progressive response and getting innovative in how we deal with these sorts of things. I also think it's very important to us to do that and to show that we're doing that as leaders. Nothing would be more appropriate than to really green up the Legislative Assembly Building as much as we possibly can.

I know that much is being done on that front, but I raised last year the possibility of getting a pellet boiler in to replace our fossil fuel heating of this building, which is a substantial sized building, and I don't see it here. I'm wondering if it's in the plan and where we're at on that. So maybe I could start with that question.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That certainly is an area that we're conscious of all the time. We have been taking some steps to try to deal with the environment and the whole issue of greenhouse gassing and the amount of energy that we use in this building, from lighting to the amount of electrical equipment that's left on for long periods of time when it's not being used. We've tried to make some improvements in there, and we're always open to suggestions.

As far as a pellet boiler is concerned, it's not on the books right now. We are doing some experimenting and are investigating the possibility of using some solar tubing to heat water for the building to create energy savings. The building is not a totally friendly building to convert to a different type of heating system right now because of the way the furnace is set up in here and the crawl space. We anticipate that if we were to put a wood pellet boiler in here, it would have to be in a separate building from the Legislative Assembly and then have some piping work to connect the systems together.

We have some very high priority areas, like the road that we were just talking about. Right now what we're anticipating is that the road is going to be our priority area and then the possibility of looking at wood pellets and how to tie the building into that type of a system, probably after the '09-10 or '10-11 year.

**Mr. Bromley:** That's good news. I can't help but observe that we're dealing with the symptoms first here rather than the cause. I think it's always important to consider that climate change is the cause of many of these things that are draining our capital dollars away, so the more we get on with the mitigation side around the world.... I know we're working to play our part here.

I also appreciate the water heating idea; I think that's very good. Obviously, this building does present challenges, and that's part of what I'm happy to hear we're grappling with, because that's a real situation that many of our communities and residents and industries are dealing with too. A lot of this stuff on existing infrastructure is difficult to do and presents challenges that require a real grappling to come to terms with in figuring out an innovative way of dealing with it.

I'm looking forward to seeing it on the books and appreciate the work that's being done on that area. Again, I think it behoves us as leaders to really play that role for our people.

**Hon. Paul Delorey:** We will continue to look at the possibility of doing that. We have had a private firm come forward with a proposal to do with pellet conversion. We have shown some interest in that, but we haven't heard back from them yet as to what they see as the possibilities of doing work here with the building. We will continue to look at ways that we can possibly make some improvements in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Office of the Clerk, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$130,000.

Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, Activity Summary, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$130,000, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Moving to page 1-2, Department Summary, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$130,000.

Legislative Assembly, Department Summary, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$130,000, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** With that, I'd like to thank the Speaker and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out.

We'll move to Education, Culture and Employment, page 7-2. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in witnesses.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Yes, I will, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Do you agree that the Minister bring in his witnesses?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

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

For the record, Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witnesses.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chairman, I have with me Ms. Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance; Mr. Michael Aumond, deputy minister of Public Works and Services; and Mr. Russell Neudorf, deputy minister of Transportation.

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

As I stated, we are now on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, page 7-2, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$76.889 million.

Interjection.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Oh, sorry. Can we move to page 7-4, Advanced Education and Careers, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$2.095 million.

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$2.095 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 7-7, Education and Culture, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$74.794 million. Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make a brief comment on the K'alemi Dene School project, which is scheduled for completion this year.

I was down at an event at that school on Friday with the Minister of ITI and can certainly testify that the current school is brimming over with young little people. So it will be very good to see this project completed this year. I'm just wondering if there is a

schedule for when K'alemi Dene School will be completed and ready for occupancy.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It will be ready for occupancy in September 2009.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions with regard to the projects that are on page 7-8, but I believe they apply to the numbers we're talking about.

In the capital plan for 2008–2009 there was a project listed for the Sissons School. I don't see that in the capital plan for '09–10. I wonder if I could get an explanation from the Minister as to why it is no longer part of the capital plan as we go forward and if and when it will eventually reappear.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's on the schedule to reappear in 2011–12, and go forward for a project size of \$15.691 million.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Can I get an explanation as to why this project has been delayed? I don't remember what year it was scheduled for previously, but I believe it has been put back several years.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, we had to make some choices in terms of adjusting the capital plan to deal with more projects than we can get built and the need to deal with the fiscal arrangements, so we made the decision, as we did with Stanton. We had to make some choices: projects that were ready to go or projects that could be deferred and still allow us to carry on with the other priorities of capital projects.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Okay. I presume it was another school that was leapfrogged ahead of Sissons' renos. But can the Minister advise why Sissons is in such good shape and can be left for two or three years and what project it was that got moved up?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sissons is on the plan, as the Minister stated. In going through and trying to, I guess, reconcile how many projects and what those costs were on the books versus the money we had available, some decisions had to be made. We went with those projects that were, I guess, primarily life safety projects as opposed to those that are not in that position right now. Sissons School is still in

relatively decent shape. There are no real impending life safety issues with that school. The decision was made, therefore, that it could be moved without putting the program or the people who occupy that building in jeopardy.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thanks for the explanation. It's kind of what I expected. I would just like to commend the YK1 education board for keeping their schools in very good shape even though they may be aging.

I would like to ask a question with regard to another project that doesn't show up and which was in last year's capital plan, and that's phase 2 of the expansion — I think it's expansion — of École Allain St-Cyr. Could I get an explanation as to why this project is not in this year's budget and, again, when it might reappear?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That project was to be a partnership project with the federal government, in my understanding. There's no agreement yet for federal funding for that project. Until such time as there's an agreement to do so, my understanding is the project may or may not appear. I'm not sure. But there's no funding for the project from the federal government at this time.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thanks for the explanation. I guess I'm just wondering whether or not this particular project is associated with a possible lawsuit from the French school board, which I believe has entered into some sort of court case with GNWT — lobbying, fighting, for extra space in their school.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, I would defer to the Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

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

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. That particular school with the proposed addition equals.... There's been a discussion from my department with the federal government, with Canadian Heritage, on the second phase. As you know, there's been a federal election, so we're going to continue on with our discussions with the appropriate department within Canadian Heritage. There's a partnership agreement that needs to take place with this particular school, because there have been agreements in place for the first phase. We're currently waiting on the federal government to come into play, and then we'll certainly make our move to expedite this process with the federal government. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** That's good. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to follow up on the Thomas Simpson and Bompas Elementary schools in Fort Simpson. I know there were discussions about a pellet boiler being considered for replacement there. Has a decision been made yet on that project?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A decision has not been made for a solution yet. We did go out to tender earlier this year, and the price that came in to replace those boilers was nowhere near the amount of money we had available. We are relooking at an option, solutions. Biomass is an option we are considering, but we're not quite in the position yet to make a determination of what might be the best course of action.

**Mr. Bromley:** Did the original call for proposals include the potential for biomass, or was it more conventional? Was there a stipulation there?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll defer that technical question to Mr. Aumond.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The thinking on our part was to replace the steam boilers in the steam plant at Fort Simpson with hydronic heat. It would have been diesel fired and did not include a wood pellet boiler.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** That's good for now.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next on the list I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been asking questions about the Diamond Jenness Secondary School renovation. I've been told that it was pushed back because they're doing a program review to ensure they have the right configuration and enough space and so on, probably to address numerous issues.

One of the programs in the school that there's been a lot of uptake on and a lot of interest in has been the pre-trades shop area. A while back there was a committee formed in Hay River to look at developing some kind of a trade training centre for Hay River.

My question is: can I get a bit more detail on the consultation that's taking place, and would the

program review that's being undertaken include additional program areas? Is it only looking at the activity that's already taking place in the school and renovating the school to accommodate that, or could it be looking at additional programming?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that program question to the Minister of Education.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Certainly, there's been a consultant who's been hired to conduct the program review of the Diamond Jenness school towards the retrofit. He's been there already, and he's supposed to develop the package by the end of this month, October. Then from there we have to work with PWS to move forward on the planning process. It does cover the program and the current activity and also the future plans for the new school. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Just to remind Members, we're on page 7-7. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** My questions weren't on that page. What page are we on?

Interjection.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. There's been a precedent set in some communities that when a facility like a school is being built, where there is community interest, additional things can be added into that. I'd be interested in seeing what the terms of reference were for the consultant that was hired to do the program review and if I could get a copy of that.

Also, I'd like to know if any other — since we're delayed anyway — community groups would have been consulted. I mentioned a trades centre. There may be also some interest in a daycare centre being built in the school; that was something that was considered at one time. We're looking for creative ways to ensure that students stay in school and that if they're not interested in the academic stream, they may be interested in the trades. Or if we are talking about young women who have children and have dropped out of school and want to come back....

I'd like to know if the scope of the consultation, as undertaken by the consultants Mr. Lafferty has referred to, would include talking to any other community groups outside of the existing program and people who are working in the school, I guess. Has there been any provision made for that?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that program question to the Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty, with your agreement.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Certainly, that consultation had covered those people who are working within the school. The Member asked for the terms of reference. I can share what I can share from my department on moving forward with the consultant. My understanding is that those individuals or groups that are within the school have been consulted, but I will double-check with my department if that's an avenue the consultant initiated. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Just a clarification on how soon we expect to provide that information on the program review.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, the program review should be available within the next two weeks, the end of this month.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was actually interested in the terms of reference of the program review. I would like to know — and as I have indicated, there have been add-ons to government infrastructure — if there is funding available through other sources or through community resources to incorporate other activities — maybe not specifically into high school education — into buildings that are being built. Like I said, since we're delayed now, anyway, on this capital project.... Not to muddy the waters, but I think it would be good to put out some kind of a call for anybody who may have input in the community, who may be interested, for example, in the trades area or the child care area.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again I'd ask if we could refer that question to Minister Lafferty.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. That will be taken into consideration. They're consulting with various groups within the school. I'll make the effort to dig up some more information in that area and share it with the Member. Mahsi.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd appreciate that.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next on the list I have Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to preface my comments by saying that I absolutely one hundred per cent support replacing the schools in Inuvik. Now, having said that, I'm not quite sure I understand the cost, to be quite honest.

Based on last year's capital infrastructure plan, we've got a new school that we're putting into Fort Good Hope. It's going to be \$24 million, and we just finished one in Tulita that was \$22 million. Last year in the capitals the budget for the Samuel Hearne and Sir Alexander Mackenzie replacements were \$79 million. Based on what I was listening to last week when we were doing the general comments, it's over \$100 million. I believe someone mentioned \$116 million.

It seems a little excessive to me. I mean, I know with that school we've gone from a design where it was like a half-moon, which is a little crazy and would have driven the cost up.... I understand now we're talking about a combined school, which is, I think, fantastic. I think that should help us reduce costs, so why do more? I'm a little surprised by the cost. I'm not saying let's not build it, but I'm really kind of confused by the costs, and I would like to know how we got there. I would like to know how a school that's so expensive.... What are we building? Is this like the Taj Mahal of the Northwest Territories? What are we building? What's wrong?

You know, some people say: whatever; why don't we build a box? Boxes are cheap. We can build a box. We can put state of the art equipment into it, and it will be functional. It may not be the most beautiful building you'll see, but it will be totally functional, and then there's all that extra money we could put into programming. I mean, ultimately the programming is as important as the school, and by building something this expensive, they will never be able to match the O&M for this thing. I'm a little worried; I'm a little stunned. I'm not sure how we got to this price tag.

I was wondering if the Minister could help me understand how a school is going to cost us \$116 million, \$117 million — I don't even know the price — well over \$109 million to build a school.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will defer that question to Mr. Aumond.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we first started to look at the concept of the combined schools project in Inuvik back in late 2005, we came up with an estimate based upon what the cost of construction was at that time. As we worked our way through the process, not only was the construction market really starting to escalate at that time, but the reliability of any estimates —

whether it would be by the GNWT or if we talked to people in the construction association trying to estimate something three or four years out — for construction was and is very difficult in this market.

If Members also recall, we are changing our new capital planning process now for new projects. They have to go to the class C estimate stage before we will consider them into the capital plan so that we have an understanding about what the scope of work is and what it is going to cost, what the areas are of the different rooms, to get a really good idea about what it is we are building and how much it's going to cost.

That's really where we are now with the Inuvik schools when we came up with the price that we have today. When you saw the plan last year with the budget that you mentioned, it was based more or less on last year, what work we had done at that time. Over the last year we have advanced the project to where it is at. Then when we got the first schematic design, the construction estimate was well in excess of a hundred million dollars. We rejected that design and directed the architect to go back and take a much more simple approach. We were also able to bring in a prospective contractor to get the contractor's advice about how to make it simpler to build, make it cheaper to build. The fact of the matter is that the school project itself is roughly 11,900 metres, and the areas of the schools that you had mentioned are anywhere from 2,700 square metres to 3,200 square metres. So the ratio proportion between those schools that are coming in at \$20 million to \$30 million for 3,200 square metres, versus 11,900.... The pricing is right in the ballpark of what we paid for those schools.

It is just that the size of the school is for 1,050 students, where the other schools are probably in the neighbourhood of around 120 to 130 students, or 200 students maybe. So it is a larger building; there is no question about that. But I think we have done our level best to try and get this down to a simple building. There are no fancy curves or multislope roofs that you may have seen in other facilities. It is a fairly simple, straightforward building compared to what we originally had to deal with. I could go on for longer, I suppose, but I think that is the summary of where we were and where we are now and how we got the cost where we are at today.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you for that information. Looking in the Inuvik Drum today, it still strikes me looking kind of like a half moon. I get what you're saying, and I understand the importance of this building. Like I said before, I am going to support it. It comes back to some things I heard earlier this session about our capital getting out of hand from time to time. Maybe it's time that we walked away from pretty buildings. Maybe it's time that we

started talking about buildings that are based on form and function and reducing our costs.

Like I said, boxes are cheaper to build. You know, I don't want to knock the beauty of the proposal for this school you're building in Inuvik, but a box would have been cheaper, and we would have been able to fit the same number of classes. We probably would have found convenient ways to heat it, and we would have had a good school with the classrooms required to educate the children of the North. It didn't need to be most beautiful thing on Earth.

For future reference — I am going to throw it out there — we're going to keep building schools in the Northwest Territories. We're still going to need hospitals. We're still going to need community health centres. There are a lot of things we are going to be building over the years, and I would like to see us get a little bit away from "let's build something incredibly beautiful" to "let's build something that is practical, makes sense and will last in the northern economy based on the realities that we are facing," which includes things like global warming and the price of oil. If we keep trying to build these grand, beautiful buildings, we are going to cause a lot of damage to ourselves and to our bank account in very short order.

So no real question there, but I am throwing it out there, because we need to seriously think about it, and we need to make sure that what we are building is practical and is the right building to build. It doesn't need to be the most beautiful.

I do have one question. A lot of these estimates, I understand, were based on market information for the last year or so when oil was quite bit a higher. Oil has dropped, so does that mean we will see any sort of savings in the construction of this if the oil price stays down where it is now for a portion of the construction year?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank Mr. Chairman. Just quickly in response to the Member's suggestion, the subcommittee on infrastructure that is looking at the capital planning process is in fact considering those very things that the Member has raised. There has been work underway that is being done, which is why we are, in fact, in this Legislature at this point in time doing capital early. Standardized designs and the bundling of contracts are some other things that are very evident to us as opportunities that the Member has pointed out, not only for schools but for houses and health centres. We appreciate the concern about costs as we sit here as a Legislature year after year.

In terms of the potential savings, if the cost of oil stays down for any significant length of time, combined with other factors — if there is tightening

up or a chilling effect in terms of construction projects and things that aren't going to get built and there are some more interesting projects and steel and things are more available — those could all be potentially things that we can benefit from. At this point things are so fluid it will be too early to say.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We're on page 7-7, Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Infrastructure Investment Summary, Total Infrastructure Investment Summary: \$74 million. Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sitting here, looking at the list that we have of the infrastructure acquisitions for '09-10 and '11-12, I do not see.... Basically, pretty bleak for the communities. We are not getting anything — again. I said it last week and put it in a Member's statement. There are people having to share a bathroom at the Mangilaluk School, teachers. I see them eating lunches in the hallways. But then, you know, we can go and build a \$110 million school, quoting it out of the newspaper today, and communities are being left out.

I mean, we are here. No fairness, again. I said it last week and I'm going to say it again: there's no fairness. I know it has been in the books for years, and I do support the school in Inuvik. It's a beautiful building, but what about the outlying communities? We're having to send our kids to Inuvik for education, because the quality of the school in the communities is not adequate. They are having to do grade 12 again. This government has got to get their minds wrapped around it, letting the fairness show in regard to small communities. You know, I sit down here, same thing again: nothing. I can't mention numbers, but a lot of these communities are hurting. The people of the Northwest Territories as a whole are not being treated fairly.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's concern. The issue of more demands on our resources is one that we constantly struggle with. The Premier is committed to looking at the 20 year capital plan.

I know the issue, the request the Member is raising in the House, about an expansion of the school there. We also will be pulling together a timeline going back five years and going forward five years so that we can all get a tiered look at how capital has been apportioned out over that period of time. Then we can make informed decisions and adjustments and look at what the requirements are in terms of any improvements coming out of this capital planning process, which we have all agreed we are going to be revamping for the next little while.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Just a comment. You know, we have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories, and from what I see here, four of them are getting everything. It's not right.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, once again I will just make the point that we are going to bring forward a ten year chronology. It's very difficult to look at one particular point in time and make a long term review and assessment of how capital has been done. We know that the capital planning process needs improvement, which is why the infrastructure committee is at work. We appreciate the Member's concern and will be working collectively here, as we move into the next business cycle, to look at how we address those issues.

**Mr. Jacobson:** I just want to let the Minister know that's another four years. I won't be here in four years; you never know. So, again, it's not fair. Where's the fairness?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Just a clarification from the Minister. Is there a possibility for a worksheet that will elaborate on the planning process? Is there a worksheet that may be distributed so that Members can see where they fit on that 10 year or 15 year plan that you are talking about?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That document is just getting updated. We expect to have it, hopefully, by Monday, which we will share. It will give you a retrospective. As well, we have the 20 year capital plan.

If I could just reassure the Member, the capital planning process is going to continue. There is opportunity on an ongoing basis to look at and have input into what's on the capital plan and how it gets on there. It's not a closed door for the next three years.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question that I have for the Minister or his staff is that when the communities ask for additional space in these facilities such as Inuvik or even Tulita, the community had to buy into the deposits. The community had to upfront some money in terms of additional spaces that they need, and then the community put the funding to, say in Tulita, the addition of a stage to the gymnasium. Now that the budget has increased significantly for the Tulita school building by just over \$20 million, the community is asking why they had to put an extra \$400,000 out of community capacity building for the addition of the stage. The budget is already up \$6 million more than what was originally budgeted for.

Then they came back, and this is something that they wanted me to ask in terms of this funding here. It seems that the schools.... Because of the prices and the labour and the steel and fuel, these prices are going to be increasing every year. I know Fort Good Hope appreciates this process of checking out the school and getting it constructed and for this school there. They have an option also to allow them to put funding towards the school.

There are other schools in the Territories, Mr. Chairman, in terms of making contributions to infrastructure to these facilities. But it seems these prices are always escalating, and they are saying: why do we have to put in the money here when you're putting an extra \$3 million, \$4 million, \$5 million into these buildings?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The price of the school has gone up for the reason the Member has talked about in terms of escalating costs. But the community indicated they would like an addition. There is an agreement to put in \$400,000, which is being honoured. The arrangement will still be honoured. There is no requirement for any additional money from the community; we are just going to absorb whatever costs are there. But there was a significant contribution in cash to help the community achieve its goals, and the government partnered up with them to do that.

Anything outside the basic programs for education is considered basically an extra. As the Member indicated, if there is an interest by communities for bigger gyms or stages or other types of infrastructure not in the original plan, then resources have to be found and agreements have to be made to put those developments into the plan. In this case there was an agreement, and even though the prices have gone up for everything else, the stage will still get built for the money that the community put in, and the government is going to absorb the extra cost. So it's a real deal.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Chairman, as the Minister agreed, there was a real deal at the time that the community wanted an additional gym. It couldn't get it, because they said they didn't have the money. It wasn't budgeted for. If you want the stage for the community, you will have to put in an extra \$400,000. Thank God the New Deal came in. That was the real deal to give the community: some money.

The community as a whole between the three organizations, the three governments, said: we want to support education for children; the school needs a gymnasium, a proper gymnasium; we will pay for it; we will help with the education. Then the price started to increase in the school in terms of

the construction. Now it is over \$20 million, and they are saying: why did we have to throw in the \$400,000? I know the situation. That's what they're saying, and they are not satisfied, saying: we just likely threw away \$400,000. I don't know if it is true or not, Mr. Minister, but that is what the people are saying. It costs more in terms of the infrastructure.

Somebody got the real deal here, and it wasn't the school in Tulita. They are asking why did they have \$400,000 go to the gym, which cost extra money, millions of costs, to build the school? They appreciate it, but you know what the Minister has said: we got a real deal here. I don't think so. I think somebody else got a real good deal on this school, but I want to say that this is what they are asking. And I want to ask again. I know that we'll probably have some further discussions.

We are going to have this opportunity also for Fort Good Hope, and the people of Fort Good Hope appreciate it. The school is falling apart, literally falling apart, the same as with Tulita and many other schools in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chair, I'll probably make it more of a common statement. I do not really expect an answer from the Minister. That's my sense on this, so I would like just to leave it at that. Fort Good Hope is looking forward to their process and looking forward to constructing their school in the hope that they have a good review this fall in terms of the school. But there is something that doesn't fit really well with people in Tulita. They certainly appreciate the new school. They certainly appreciate coming up with \$400,000, because it has put a lot of strain on the community. That's the way this system works, and that's the way it happened there. I'm just voicing my concerns from the people in Tulita.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. No real question there, but does Minister Miltenberger want to make a general response?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just suggest to the Member that his constituents should feel very proud that they've made such a significant contribution to a school that's going to educate their children for decades to come. The community the size of Fort Good Hope now has a fine facility, which, he indicated, is over almost \$20 million or thereabouts. It's a significant investment, and it's a shared investment now with both the community and the government. I think that's something to be celebrated.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next on the list is Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the Minister referring to a 20 year capital plan or a 20 year needs assessment? I'm not sure if I'm talking about the same document here. I'm looking at the 20 year needs assessment, but I'm not sure if that's the

document that's been updated or if there's actually a 20 year capital plan. Can I get a clarification on that, please?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we're referring to the same document. As well, I was saying, we're going to lay out looking back ten years at how capital was portioned out across the North, and we'll provide that information to Members.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Could the Minister advise me if there are any plans for renovation, retrofit or replacement of the schools in Fort Resolution, Deninu Ku'e School or Lutselk'e?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Deferred maintenance for Deninu Ku'e School is one of the things we have on the list for '09-10.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Could I get a definition of deferred maintenance, please?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** I don't have the specific list of what's being contemplated for the money that's identified in the budget, but we could get back to the Member with that specific information.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I know less than the Minister thinks. I actually want a definition of the term "deferred maintenance," not what they're going to do with the money.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** I hesitated to give a definition for deferred maintenance because I assumed I would be told I was being obtuse, that clearly he wanted the detail of what the money was going to be spent on. I just want to apologize to the Member.

Deferred maintenance is maintenance that should have been completed at a previous time but wasn't for various reasons, usually fiscal. It has now been identified as needing to be done, which is why we're spending the millions of dollars we have identified as a Legislature: to try to catch up on that particular backlog.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I'm glad to see there will be some deferred maintenance done on the school at Fort Resolution. How about the school in Lutselk'e?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** There doesn't appear to be anything on the list we have before us right here.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Earlier in some questioning I was told that there was an assessment done on quite a few buildings for the GNWT in order to prepare a plan for deferred maintenance. I was wondering if



there was an assessment done of the school in Lutselk'e.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** We don't have that complete list. Once again, I can get the information for the Member of what major buildings were assessed.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** We'll move to the next person on our list. The next person on the list is Mr. Krutko.

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, would like to respond to questions asked by Mr. Yakeleya in regard to the school that was built in Tulita.

When the school was destroyed by fire in Fort McPherson, the community had to put \$400,000 into that school in order to get a larger sized gym. They were told that under the building standards for schools, there was only so much square footage based on enrolment and also the size of the classroom and everything else. That included a gymnasium.

Again, the community put \$400,000 into that school, and that was in 1998. The school cost \$8.5 million. Now we're talking \$20 million for schools. But it seems like there are different standards being used in regard to what is paid for by the Department of Education and what is being paid for by the residents of those particular communities.

I'd like to know exactly: are those standards still being used in regard to the amount that will be paid by the Department of EC&E, and will any add-ons or any additions be paid for by those affected residents in those communities?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that EC&E has standards for the schools they have under their jurisdiction and that they are available. But I would ask if I could defer the question to Minister Lafferty to reply in more detail.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. As the Minister did indicate, there are standards for the Northwest Territories that we follow to build schools in the communities. There have been some initiatives from certain communities: Tulita, Gameti and, I believe, Fort McPherson, as the Member alluded to.

Those areas that are extra, beyond the school space or school activities, the Minister already indicated that is beyond the school standards. That is where we are with that. There are regular standards that we follow. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Krutko.

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like, if it is possible, to get copies of that just to see exactly what those standards are so that when we talk about particular types of schools and costs associated with building schools, we know exactly what is being paid for and what is an add-on.

On another point, in regard to the Moose Kerr School in Aklavik, there was an addition added on to it, but there is the older part which was just a replacement of the roof. In regard to Mr. Beaulieu's comments about going into the band office in Lutselk'e and having to walk over buckets of water, that was the same scenario that was played out in the Moose Kerr School. Going to the principal's office, there are buckets of water there; going to the washroom, there are buckets there.

It is that type of aging infrastructure we're dealing with in our communities. Sure, you can fix the roof, but what about the effects that it had in regard to the electrical, the effects of water that got into the walls? Once you have the condition of the building deteriorating to a point where you have a leaky roof, that brings other imperceptible effects with it. There are additional costs associated with it. It's the same thing with pilings in a lot of these facilities.

I know that there is, on your capital items list, no real list of capital community infrastructure. I'm on some projects where we have worked up to a certain amount, \$5,000 or whatnot. Is there a specific list of those types of projects, such as electrical codes, safety codes, implementing national standards, that have to be done, especially with the aging infrastructure we have? No, we can't replace everything overnight, but we have to ensure we deal with the upkeep of those facilities.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'd be happy to provide the '09-10 list of identified maintenance for communities, all the communities, to the committee again.

**Mr. Krutko:** Another school in my riding, since we are dealing with Education, Culture and Employment, is the Paul Niditchie School in Tsiigehtchic. It has a joint community hall/small gymnasium, which is attached to the school and used for both purposes: as a community hall and by the school for recreation. It is having some major piling problems that just came to light the last time we were there for a meeting a couple of weeks back.

That building was going to be condemned before we even had our public meeting there that day. I'm just wondering exactly what we are doing to ensure

inspections to ensure that we have safe facilities for our students to go to school in and the public to use as community halls or community recreation activities.

I think, again, the government's so called number one priority is public safety. We're being told to have pride in our community. Well, we may not have to meet in that facility because it's been classified as unsafe since the pilings under it have deteriorated and they just found out about it.

So how often are these inspections — assessments and evaluations — done to ensure the protection of people and the students in those schools is priority number one?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chair, I'd ask if I could defer that question to Mr. Aumond.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** The Member is correct. There is an issue with that foundation around the Tsiigehtchic community hall/gym for the school. We had inspected that foundation under our wood pile repair program this summer, determined that there was significant rot in the foundation and did have to shut down the building for a short while. But we have blocked the foundation. It is now safe and open, I believe. The plan will be to remediate and fix that foundation in the upcoming summer or two.

**Mr. Krutko:** I'd like to know exactly — looking at the five year, ten year, 15 year capital plans — where there are going to be major improvements on the existing schools. I'll use my riding, for instance, in regard to either replacement upgrades or total replacement. I know the Moose Kerr School is scheduled for 2014–15, but I probably won't be here.

I think it's important that the community is aware that you can cope only so long. I think there is a point when communities want to know they are not going to be delayed, delayed, delayed to a point where they have to condemn schools or shut schools down because of specific electrical code violations — things that should basically not get to that point where we have to deal with this major infrastructure, especially schools in our communities.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** The reason we have instituted the deferred maintenance program is to try to address some of the backlog of the maintenance issues. We have also done assessments of a significant number of major facilities that we own. I think the offer has already been made to share with committee. The Premier as well has indicated that he is prepared to sit down and look at all that new information with the current 20 year needs assessment. Plus we'll — just so we

have a more comprehensive view — provide the ten year retrospective as well. As we move through the capital planning process, as it moves forward from this particular forum on to the next year, we'll have all that information before us.

**Mr. Krutko:** Last question, Mr. Chair. One of the issues that always comes up is the whole environmental condition of our schools. Especially with old schools, such as the Moose Kerr School, we have a lot of products used that are no longer classified by way of lead paint, different types of insulation.

I know this issue has come up with what has happened to SAM school in Inuvik and other schools because of environmental contamination by air circulating systems. Again it comes down to a question of not only the safety of the children but also the safety of the teachers who work in this facility and ensuring the safety and health of the people in those facilities, that they're working in a healthy and safe environment. I'd like to ask: how often do we do assessments of quality of air in the schools throughout the Northwest Territories?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** At this point we do them on an as required basis or where it's anticipated there may be a problem so that we can clarify whether there is or not.

**Mr. Krutko:** I know from personal experience that we have had public safety officers with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission called in by either the teachers or the principals where we had a backup of the sewer system. You had, basically, a puncture of a ceiling; they see something seeping out of the walls.

In order to get attention to this problem, it seems like it has to go public, and I don't think that should be the case. If we as the government are responsible for the quality and the safety of our residents, and more importantly the children in our schools, this should be an assessment process that's always paramount to ensure the health and well-being of our students and our teachers in the work environment they go to five days a week over seven or eight months of the year.

It's something I've for a fact had to deal with in schools in my riding because of the things I mentioned — backup of a sewer system, where basically you have a punctured or frozen line or something, and it starts leaking out of mechanical equipment in the mechanic room. These things are crucial. They could shut down our infrastructure. We must do whatever we can to find ways to make sure the schools are constructed with safe building materials and, if not, those materials are removed or remediated so we do have healthy schools for our students to go to.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** I appreciate the Member's concern. If there are events that trigger a concern, like a sewer backup or those types of things, and there are questions about quality of air, clearly there are ways we can deal with that with Public Health or Environment.

In terms of these building standards we do our repairs as we bring things up to code. New construction must meet the building code. We have our northern building standards, as well, to try to make them as energy efficient as possible, as the deputy indicated here yesterday when talking about some of the quality of the energy ratings in some of our new buildings.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next on my list is Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to add a few comments to the discussion. I've got a few questions as well.

Like many other Members, I'm supportive of the Inuvik school replacement. I have been for a number of years now, since the roof collapsed in 2004, and there's a need there to replace that piece of infrastructure.

The interesting thing for me, though, is that if it was in the private sector and they needed to replace a piece of infrastructure like this — it's a big building — it'd be done in the most timely, cost efficient, effective manner possible. What I'm seeing with this project is that if you follow the timeline back a ways, it's had so many people involved in it, so many design changes, and time equals money, Mr. Chairman. I think it's cost the government a tremendous amount of dollars even to get to the stage where we're looking at a negotiation with a contractor to get the school built.

I guess the first question I would have is: why is it taking so long, an inordinate amount of time? If the agreement letter was out in July — it's almost the middle of October — when are we going to have a deal signed so we can proceed with construction of the Inuvik school's replacement?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I anticipate that the contractor will fulfill their obligations under the contract by way of providing the required security any time now. Once we have that, we will be in a position to proceed.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I can understand, and I appreciate my colleague Mr. Yakeleya when he talks about the \$400,000 that the community of Tulita put into their school. Tulita is not alone. There are other examples across the territory. Here in Yellowknife, for example, is the Weledeh/St. Patrick's gym. I

was a city councillor when the City of Yellowknife put \$1 million into that project to enhance a community asset. Is the Town of Inuvik putting any money into the new school, or have they had that discussion? I think when we're talking fairness here, if there are enhancements at that school and there are things the community wants in there, we've got a precedent that's been set across the territory for capital projects where communities, if need be, have to step up to the plate. I'm wondering: have any of those types of discussions taken place with the Town of Inuvik?

**Mr. Aumond:** The Town of Inuvik did express an interest in moving the town library into the school. As we made our way through the process, they understood that if they wanted to do that, they would have to contribute to the project. But they decided not to follow through with that desire to put the library in the school. That's really the only discussion we had with the Town of Inuvik about contributing to the school. It was to address the issue of the library.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Again, I think those are discussions that should happen. If there are enhancements there that the town wants specific to that new school or schools, they should be coming to the plate with some dollars to get that done.

The other thing I wanted to mention here, in terms of capital acquisition, is the three new pieces of equipment for Fort Smith and for Aurora College. I'm just wondering: why is it that we're buying new pieces of equipment for the college? Wouldn't we at least look at second-hand equipment, Mr. Chairman? Why does it have to be new?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, they already have fairly antiquated equipment. There's a need and benefit to having the students learning on equipment that probably industry is going to use. Industry keeps their equipment much more updated and modern than the college can afford. But if the Member wishes more detail, I'd ask the Minister of Education if he could provide more detail. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Certainly, the Minister is correct about those. Of the equipment that we have currently, some are over 20 years old, and some are breaking down on us. Also, it's not compatible for training those individuals and going out to a mine site, because they have high tech, more modern equipment. We have an older version. That was the purpose of replacing that equipment. We need to continue with delivering the training program at the campus. If we

don't invest in this equipment, it will be impossible to have the course delivered. Mahsi.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I thank both Ministers for that. You know, when we're talking about training folks for jobs in the mining industry here in the Northwest Territories, I wonder if any thought was given to approaching industry to try to get them to help with the capital purchase of this equipment so our people could get trained. Did any discussion take place with industry to help offset some of these costs for these three new pieces of equipment?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll defer that program question to Minister Lafferty.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Lafferty.

**Mr. Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. This is something that I need to look into in my department. I don't have the information in front of me if there has been consultation with the industry. In the past they have initiated various training programs as partnerships. They have simulators as well. I can certainly look into that further and get back to the Member on this specific topic. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I'm not an expert in heavy equipment by any stretch of imagination. It's not like when you look at trucks and vehicles that you drive on the street. Every model year those can change quite a bit as time progresses, but with loaders and graders and dump trucks, I think the mechanical aspects of those vehicles don't change very much. Again, I stand to be corrected, but if we've got a dump truck or grader or loader that's three or four years old and we paid 30 per cent of the cost that shows up here and it serves the exact same purpose as a new one would, why wouldn't we look at doing that?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I restrict my reply to the fact that three to four years is fine in the case of some of the college equipment. Speaking from personal experience, you're talking probably from decade to decade with some of the old equipment that they have to drive. Once again, I'd have to refer that question to the Minister of Education as to whether they looked at appropriating not quite new equipment as an alternative to brand new. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Lafferty.

**Mr. Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Yes, we are dealing with 20 year old equipment or 20 plus, and I do believe there's been some discussion on the purchasing of new and also used — just the recent ones — but that information I need to get from my department. I don't have it right before me at this time. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I think the department should be looking at, you know, whether it's two, three or four year old equipment, if it's almost identical to what the new equipment would be at a fraction of the price, I think they should be doing that just as a matter of business. You know, you should be looking at trying to get the most for the dollars that you do have.

The other question that I have — and I ask this every year; I've been here for five years, and I ask the same question every year — is: where exactly is the dedicated Aurora College campus in Yellowknife? Where does that fit into the plan, Mr. Minister?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, I'll refer that question to the Minister of Education, Minister Lafferty.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Lafferty.

**Mr. Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, Aurora College does get direct funding from ECE, so they go through our department. Mahsi.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I've got one second left to come back and ask the Minister. He didn't answer the question. I'm not sure if he heard the question, but where exactly is a dedicated stand-alone college campus for Yellowknife, the capital city of the Northwest Territories? Where is that in the government's plans today? Thank you.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** It's not on the list for the immediate future, so as we look at all these other documents and we look at requirements and priorities and needs, I would suggest that as we go to the next cycle, that would be the time for that discussion.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The next on my list is Mr. Yakeleya.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to ask a few questions of the Minister. I want to ask the Minister: in terms of renovation or replacements or

small repairs to the schools in the Sahtu, where does that fall? Does that fall under small capital projects such as the Colville Lake foundation or the Norman Wells school or Délîné? Is there funding there? I don't see it in the book.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that question to Mr. Aumond.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you. Mr. Chair. Some of the items that the Member is referring to are in the '09–10 deferred maintenance plan, which will be out for consideration. Just for the Member's information, we were in Colville Lake this summer working on the foundation of the school addition.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Chairman, the community of Colville Lake certainly appreciates the portable school that they have and the work that the department is doing. Because it's fall time now, they want to look at some of the preventative heat loss in terms of having the department supply some skirting around it. Time is of the essence, and they were asking when they can see a certain time frame as to when this project could be implemented in Colville Lake.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, that level of detail for a project that was worked on this summer I don't have before us, but I could get what information I can to the member.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Mr. Chair, the question I have here is with the Chief T'Selehye School in Fort Good Hope. To be very brief, the community was offered to negotiate this school with the government. Under our land claim agreement there's a chapter that somewhat supports contracts with the government. I know the different interpretations, different needs. I just want to know: would the government have made an offer to people in Fort Good Hope to look at it and negotiate a contract rather than a two tier RFP construction of the school?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Aumond.

**Mr. Aumond:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman. We did not offer the community an opportunity to negotiate. We generally don't go out soliciting opportunities for negotiated contracts. Neither did the community or anybody else request a negotiated contract for that school. The contract was awarded through a comparative RFP process.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** I have to reconfirm those facts with my community. I'll see what their interpretation is or how they got the sense of how this work was

progressing in Fort Good Hope, because I certainly have a different opinion hearing from my community in Fort Good Hope. I have to go through that process, and I have to follow through later on in terms of the response I got from the deputy minister.

Mr. Chairman, I want to look at when we have construction like that in our communities. As I said before, sometimes these constructions.... We certainly appreciate it, because it's needed in the communities. The communities really look forward to having projects done, especially my community. It's isolated; there are no highways. The only projects going into a lot of communities up north are a little different from the communities on the highway. So when we have this type of project, I want to see if there is any cost in terms of listing the values of the contracts that go to the communities. It's a shared responsibility of the community and the contractors. I know contractors sometimes complain about our community members. Our members also complain about our contractors. Is there a list that evaluates this amount of money which is put into the community? Is that something that will be done or is being done already by the infrastructure department?

**Mr. Aumond:** As part of the contract proposal the contractors commit to using so much local and northern resources. We would be happy, as we progress through the project, to provide those if required.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** I certainly look forward to an explanation from Mr. Aumond.

The second last question is high school career and technology studies at \$400,000. We talked about communities that want to have some opportunity to be even on par with the other communities in terms of high school career and technology studies. Can I get a list of what this means and where it's going? Some communities like Colville Lake simply don't have that — or Tsiigehtchic or Ulukhaktok or even some of the smaller communities down in the valley that want to get into some high schools, and they're at a disadvantage right now as I speak today. There are haves and have-nots in our communities with education. So I want to see where we can bring this up to par with other communities.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that program question to Minister Lafferty.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi. Mr. Chair. The Member asked for detailed information, so I can

certainly instruct my department to provide that information to the Member.

**Mr. Yakeleya:** Thank you. I look forward to that information. I hope I can get it before we leave the House on October 24.

Mr. Chair, I appreciate the responses. My question now is going to focus on education in terms of the capital infrastructure for the community museums.

The communities at times have seen not much of a contribution, even though they appreciate and are looking at ways they can get involved. So I would also ask the Minister responsible for the museums if I can get some detailed information on what they are allocating to the community in terms of community museums.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that specific question to Minister Lafferty.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Regarding the capital infrastructure for community museums that the Member is referring to, we can certainly provide the breakdown. I don't have any in front of me right now, but I will break it down for the Member.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

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

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** I'll now rise and report progress. Sorry; how about I let you guys go first? Minister Miltenberger, I would like to thank your witnesses and have the Sergeant-At-Arms please escort them out.

Now I'd like to report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The committee has been considering Tabled Document 93-16(2), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2009-2010, and would like to report progress.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. 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. Mr. Clerk, item 23, Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, there'll be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Programs at the rise of the House today.

Orders of the Day for Friday, October 17, 2008, 10 a.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
  - Motion 23-16(2): Appointments to the Board of Management (Bisaro)
- 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 14 - An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

Bill 15 - An Act to Amend the Workers'  
Compensation Act

Bill 16 - Write-off of Debts Act, 2008–2009

Bill 17 - Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009

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 Friday, October  
17, 2008, at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

