



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 27

16th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

Pages 2957 - 3002

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
Minister responsible for Energy Initiatives

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Transportation
Minister of Public Works and Services
Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation

Hon. Robert C. McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission
Minister responsible for Youth

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. Dave Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive
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

Acting Principal Clerk of Committees
Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

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

PRAYER	2957
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	2957
64-16(3) - Business Incentive Policy (B. McLeod)	2957
65-16(3) - Youth Development Strategy (R. McLeod).....	2957
66-16(3) - Northern Content in the Classroom (Lafferty).....	2958
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	2959
Grollier Hall Residential School Agreement with the GNWT (Yakeleya).....	2959
Pay Equity and the Federal Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act (Bisaro)	2960
Contributions of Nunakput Students to Global Charities (Jacobson)	2960
Federal Action Plan and GNWT Equivalent (Hawkins)	2961
Concerns for Tu Nedhe Constituents (Beaulieu)	2961
Mandate and Role of BDIC (Ramsay).....	2962
Suicide Prevention Strategy in the NWT (Menicoche)	2962
Recognition of Ecology North Contributions and Volunteers (Abernethy).....	2963
Transfer of the Public Housing Subsidy to Local Housing Authorities (Bromley).....	2963
Federal Government Funding for Housing (Krutko)	2964
Congratulations to Ms. Irene Lafferty (M. McLeod).....	2964
Acknowledging the Contributions of Shirley and Sharon Firth (B. McLeod).....	2964
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	2965, 2977
ORAL QUESTIONS	2965
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	2977
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	2977
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	2985
MOTIONS	2986
16-16(3) - Low Carbon Fuel Standard (Bromley).....	2986
SECOND READING OF BILLS	3000
Bill 15 - Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009.....	3000
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	3000
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	3000
THIRD READING OF BILLS	3000

BILL 5 - PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS ACT	3000
BILL 9 - NORTHERN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SERVICES PENSION PLAN PROTECTION ACT	3000
ORDERS OF THE DAY	3000

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 11, 2009****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, 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 1:35 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 64-16(3):
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to sustainable economic development in the Northwest Territories and to encouraging the development of a healthy private sector.

This commitment has been supported by the Business Incentive Policy providing local preference to registered northern companies on all procurement contracts entered into directly by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

These procurement dollars have had a residual and positive impact on our territory and our communities. Small businesses have developed in number and capacity and our Northwest Territories business community is now vibrant and competitive. Our economy has matured and with it, the role of the Government of the Northwest Territories procurement in this environment has also changed.

As a government, we must ensure that our programs and services reflect these changing times and balance the need to provide effective support to our community with the reality of higher costs and tightening budgets. We are currently seeking the input of our aboriginal business community stakeholders on amendments we are proposing to the Business Incentive Policy.

These proposed changes have been developed to address concerns by community governments that the Business Incentive Policy is restricting their

authority over funding they receive for operations, to strengthen support to Northwest Territories resident-owned small businesses and improve competition on major infrastructure projects in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, our government maintains that the principle of supporting Northwest Territories business or local preference for the Business Incentive Policy remains firm. Changes that have been identified are designed to maximize benefits for Northwest Territories residents and provide all communities and regions with opportunities and choices while ensuring best value on government procurement.

These proposed revisions have been developed to support ongoing Government of the Northwest Territories efforts to refocus areas of service delivery and infrastructure management to ensure affordable and effective government operations.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to working in partnership with Northwest Territories communities and supporting our business community through our contracting practices. Once we have concluded this consultation, I plan to return to the committee this fall to provide our findings and recommended next steps to get my colleagues' feedback.

I would encourage all of our partners and interested individuals to embrace this opportunity to provide input on this very important economic policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 65-16(3):
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to provide Members with an overview of the Northwest Territories Youth Development Strategy and outline some of our planned initiatives designed to help support the development of our youth.

The 16th Legislative Assembly has identified several key priorities related to the development of youth. These include a focus on prevention by promoting healthy choices and lifestyles, the role of personal and family responsibility and the importance of working with families, communities and schools to

improve the physical and mental well-being of our youth.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs delivers a variety of programs and services that foster positive development of youth in communities. A Territory-wide Youth Development Strategy will improve our efforts by continuing successful programming and developing new tools to ensure that the priorities identified by youth, community residents and Members of the Legislative Assembly are addressed. The strategy will also ensure that existing coordination of youth programs and services will be built on and enhanced.

Mr. Speaker, some of the elements contained in the Youth Development Strategy that I wish to highlight for Members include an expanded Youth Ambassadors Program. The program offers NWT youth opportunity to receive training and volunteer experience at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and Paralympics while serving as ambassadors of the Northwest Territories.

Prior experience with the Youth Ambassadors Program at the 2007 Canada Winter Games, the 2008 Arctic Winter Games and the 2008 North American Indigenous Games has demonstrated the positive outcome experienced by youth through this experience. My colleagues may recall that at the 2008 North American Indigenous Games, our youth ambassadors received a special recognition award for their outstanding contribution to the games.

Other initiatives included in the Youth Strategic Plan include a stable source of funding for the operation and maintenance of community youth centres located across the NWT. I am also pleased to advise that MACA is providing the SideDoor Youth Centre in Yellowknife with funding assistance to support the hosting of a youth centre conference that is scheduled for later this spring. This conference will allow program delivery staff from all across the Territories the opportunity to exchange ideas and receive information from a wide range of youth service and funding organizations.

Other elements included in the Youth Development Strategy include:

- a youth program officer position in each of the northern and southern regions to provide ongoing support to community-based youth initiatives;
- the development of a youth website to serve as a one-stop shop for GNWT youth programming;
- the development of a new after-school physical activity program to engage communities and schools to encourage healthy lifestyles;
- support for a variety of youth forums including an NWT youth conference and youth role

model tours to guide the development of future programming; and

- the introduction of the Next Generation Initiative that will engage enthusiastic youth in a wide variety of initiatives with a view to recruiting them as the next generation of community development leaders.

The success of youth programming is dependent on strong partnerships between communities, local organizations, and government departments working together to identify local needs and implement viable solutions. Through the Youth Development Strategy MACA will continue to make wise investments to ensure all parties involved succeed in developing our youth.

I would like to express my thanks to all the Members for their continued support as we move forward with the Youth Development Strategy in the coming months.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 66-16(3): NORTHERN CONTENT IN THE CLASSROOM

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. If we want northern students to be successful, we know that our schools need to reflect the unique needs, cultures, languages, and learning styles of our northern students. Curricula for all Northwest Territories grades is developed using current research and theory that we gain through participating in the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, while staying relevant within our unique cultures, languages, and environment.

Recently we have completed a variety of new curricula and materials that provide additional northern relevance in the classroom. Experiential science is a new course at the grades 10 to 12 level that gives high school students credit for getting out on the land and encourages students to participate in community monitoring. Our communities form the foundations of experiential science and incorporate elders meetings and traditional knowledge. Experiential science was developed in consultation with elders from around the Northwest Territories to reflect those values. This course will encourage students to get involved with science and environment related careers North of 60 and to apply their knowledge to their everyday experiences in the northern environment.

Our social studies have their roots in Western and Northern Canadian Protocol where citizenship and identity are core concepts. They include Dene, Inuvialuit, and Inuinait perspectives. Our social studies curricula were advised by a sample of Northwest Territories teachers who used their

experiences in teaching to shape courses that would be relevant to northern students.

The Grade 4 Social Studies curriculum was written in the Northwest Territories from northern perspectives. This course has many resources, including northern artefacts and materials such as furs, kimberlites, models of northern topographies, and print and audiovisual materials from First Nations perspectives.

Grade 5 Social Studies is being developed right now and will be informed by the needs of our students in becoming our future leaders. The impact of First Nations on this country will be highlighted from a historical and contemporary point of view.

At the Grade 7 Social Studies level students explore themes related to the circumpolar world. Because the Northwest Territories is the only jurisdiction to study these themes, Education, Culture and Employment redeveloped and published a resource called "The Northern Circumpolar World." The updated version explores each country north of the 60th parallel and includes Internet resources. The history, geography, climate, economies, people, and environment of the circumpolar world are all covered in the text and a large selection of maps. The book is available to teachers on-line at the department's website.

Many Northwest Territories schools rely on the expertise and guidance of their community elders in organizing and facilitating any on-the-land experiences, as well as for storytelling, skills teaching, and more. Many schools include elders as regular contributors, guest speakers, and support staff in aboriginal language and culture programming.

In addition to what is provided through curricula, the aboriginal language and culture-based education directive provides guidance to education councils and authorities on the use of aboriginal language and culture funding and supports. This is based on research and understanding that shows that students will learn better and have higher self-esteem if they can see themselves and their world in what they are being taught.

We are dedicated to culture-based education. Only when our students' northern cultures, languages, and perspectives are reflected in their education can they gain a full understanding of the world around them.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GROLIER HALL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH THE GNWT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is concerning the Grollier Hall Residential School Settlement Agreement with the GNWT. In the opinion of some of the claimants, the GNWT has not honoured the educational component of our agreement. This has offended some of the members of the claimant group and has prevented them from making use of their educational component. Some view this as a re-victimizing of the survivors.

In the final meeting of the parties in the spring of 2002, promises were made to the claimants negotiating group that an educational fund provided to claimants would not require repayment. This condition was not in the final document presented to the claimant groups for signing. Rather, the standard of the GNWT education funding terms were included.

There were significant disagreements between the parties about the extra terms of the educational component of the agreement. The GNWT then undertook, prior to signing, to hold individual meetings to resolve issues with the individual claimants once their particular education requirements were determined. None of this has been resolved. In my opinion the GNWT unilaterally and in breach of the agreement made changes to the legislation and policies that did not reflect the Grollier Hall Residential School Settlement Agreement.

Since that time the GNWT has tried to force certain claimants to accept the GNWT's unilateral interpretation of the changes. I'm very concerned about this matter and I'll have some questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PAY EQUITY AND THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SECTOR EQUITABLE COMPENSATION ACT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like today to talk about wages or, more properly, lack of appropriate wages in some instances. Last October in a Member's statement I spoke about the NWT minimum wage; how we lag far behind the minimum wages established in other Canadian jurisdictions and of the need for the NWT to increase the minimum wage dollar amount. Has anything changed? Well, I don't know. In October the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment advised that he would investigate the issue, so I

look forward to his update and answer to my questions later on.

Women make up over half of our population and these days, especially in the North, most women are employed in the workforce. Eighty-six percent of women between the ages of 25 and 54 are in paid jobs. Yet women still do not have wage parity with men. In fact, it's getting worse, not better.

A woman performing the same full-time work as a man will earn only 70 cents for the same dollar earned by a man. Women do not receive equal pay for work of equal value.

Most people know that a massive economic stimulus bill is being considered by our politicians in Ottawa at the moment. It's being fast tracked and is close to passage. Why am I talking about the federal budget? Well, included in this Omnibus Budget Implementation Act is a bill called the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act with amendments which, if passed, will put the hard-won rights of Canadian women back 40 years. It transforms pay equity into an equitable compensation issue, one that must be discussed at the employer-union bargaining table.

It will remove the right of public sector workers to file pay equity complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and it would actually impose a \$50,000 fine on any union or union member for encouraging or assisting their own members in filing a pay equity complaint. Since it is women who, in most cases, earn less than men, this change will knowingly impact the financial situation of women. All non-monetary amendments to acts, especially the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act, must be removed from Bill C-10 and debated separately.

So what can be done in the NWT to improve the lot of women who work? We can ensure effective pay equity laws and use them to bring women's wages to the same level as men's. We can lobby for a national publicly funded not-for-profit daycare program. Statistics show that women working part time earn considerably less in wages and pension benefits than men and suffer from an economic inequality. We can reinstate or enhance funding to women's organizations, organizations which effectively fight for fairness for women. And last but not least we can increase minimum wage to \$10 per hour and index it to inflation. That brings me back to where I started today, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONTRIBUTIONS OF NUNAKPUT STUDENTS TO GLOBAL CHARITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the year and a half I have been here, I have identified lots of problems and unique challenges in Nunakput communities. But today I am very proud of some students. In November and December, Mary Ruben-Bennett, a Grade 3 and 4 teacher, Justin Kenny, a high school teacher, and students of Angik School in Paulatuk raised over \$1,000 in just a few short weeks to purchase 10 fruit trees, two goats, two rabbits, eight hens and four roasters for needy families around the world.

The students were divided into four teams: Team Nanuk, Team Ookpik, Team Amagok, and Team Kavik. Bernadette Green and Team Nanuk instantly raised \$250 and challenged the other teams. Brian Trotter donated a mini hockey stick and raised \$350 in raffle tickets. The money also goes to the education of two little girls, nine soccer balls and the equipment to provide clean drinking water for several families.

I find both encouragement and irony in the fact that our students help poor families to have safe, reliable drinking water. There was a great response from the community, Mr. Speaker. So many others volunteered or came out to support them.

Furthermore, this has turned out to be an annual event. Our small and remote communities and residences often restricts the limits supporting a wide number of fundraising projects due to the high cost of living, participation of youth activities such as travelling to the communities and during sporting tournaments. When you see a small community like Paulatuk has put so much effort into helping others around the world with the basic necessities of life, it must be truly celebrated. I am very proud of my students in the school in Paulatuk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL ACTION PLAN AND GNWT EQUIVALENT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today the honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, launched a web page called actionplan.gc.ca. Mr. Speaker, it is a way to keep the government accountable for the way that they are spending money. It is a way that everyday Canadians can watch where their investments are going.

Mr. Speaker, just recently we passed the NWT budget for this fiscal coming year. Mr. Speaker, a lot of times, the question comes up as where does the money go from there? It is difficult for the

everyday person to follow where that spending is going and how they can keep track of it. Mr. Speaker, for example, there is almost \$17.5 million in energy investments coming in this year's budget but a lot of people won't see it or be able to follow it. I am suggesting that the Minister of Finance should consider an action plan that demonstrates quarterly reports that shows where our money is going in a plain, simple language that every person can follow.

Mr. Speaker, it is about accountability and following the money. A lot of times, this injection is needed. As we all know, with this global recession going on, the last thing we need is approved public money to sit and not do anything.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest complaint I often hear, as well, is the fact that capital money gets carried over. In my years as an MLA, I have heard every excuse in the book and it always seems to be justified in the end. This would put better pressure on the government to make sure that once they get approved money, they start spending it on the projects they promise. Mr. Speaker, this could be a better way to be more accountable by this Legislature to the everyday citizen making sure that we are spending their money the way we promised they would, both accountable and to the needs that we promised that we would solve and deal with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS FOR TU NEDHE CONSTITUENTS

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I gave an update on items I was working on in Lutselk'e. Today I would like to update the people of Fort Resolution on issues that I as MLA have been working on.

Mr. Speaker, working with the Minister of Transportation, it was agreed that the department would spend \$6 million on a highway between Fort Resolution and Little Buffalo River, a very dangerous and rough part of the highway to Fort Resolution. Mr. Speaker, the local government has been working with the Department of MACA to construct a youth complex which will house, among other things, a summer swimming pool and a soccer pitch. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have been working with the Minister of MACA and the Minister of infrastructure to discuss some additional capital dollars to be allocated to the municipality so that the entire community of Fort Resolution can be chipsealed. Some money has been allocated in 2010-11 by the municipality to start the chipsealing project.

Mr. Speaker, like most communities in the NWT, housing issues consume the majority of my time. I have brought over 100 housing issues to the

Minister of Education since my election. Mr. Speaker, ITI is continuing to provide support to trappers. I have discussed a few small business opportunities in Tu Nedhe with the Minister. With the new SEED money, it gives me some hope that some new businesses could start in Fort Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I have discussed the need to provide proper industrial arts and home economic areas for the students of Deninoo School with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. There will be a meeting with the local DEA soon. The cost of living is not as big an issue in Fort Resolution as it is in Lutselk'e, but with limited incomes in the community and the ones that cannot afford to travel to Hay River to buy their food, gasoline and other items, find it very costly in Fort Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I have had a few meetings with the Minister of Health and Social Services to discuss better use of the great elders' facility and will continue discussing the use of this building by the residents of Fort Resolution. I also feel the Department of Health and Social Services should have a rehabilitation aide that would be stationed in Fort Resolution to assist the therapist that is working in Fort Resolution from time to time to create continuity.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice advises me that the NWT will get its fair share of the Community Policing Program, which used to be called the Special Constable Program previously. My intention is to continue my advocacy to have an officer stationed in Fort Resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANDATE AND ROLE OF BDIC

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to speak again about the BDIC and its future with this government. Mr. Speaker, over the past seven years we have analyzed and reviewed the delivery of business related services in our territory to the point where these reviews have recommended some major changes. We have spent over \$250,000 on reviews by Dargo and Allen and also there was the Banker's Commission that called on government to create a one-stop loan and service delivery mechanism for clients. As these reviews and the many public meetings have indicated, this was the desired course of action. This was done to save the public purse for paying for one organization rather than two and to give

residents the one-window approach that they desired.

Mr. Speaker, I supported the creation of the BDIC because I believed that was where the government intended on taking the corporation. Mr. Speaker, here we are four years after the establishment of the BDIC and it seems to me that we have forgotten what the intent of the creation of the BDIC was all about. How many of the recommendations contained in these various reviews and analyses have ever been implemented? Why did the department of ITI maintain their control of the BDIC? This government has not followed through on recommendations or the BDIC Act itself. We have not consolidated anything. Clients still have to go through different windows to receive service. If the BDIC was allowed to do its work, why is it that the BDIC loan portfolio is shrinking over the past three years?

Mr. Speaker, on February 24th, in answering a question on the same subject matter, the Minister of ITI actually asked me a question: Is the Member suggesting to take all of the economic development outside of the department? Well, Mr. Speaker, in response to that question from the Minister, what I'm suggesting is that we revisit the reviews commissioned by the Department of ITI and the spirit and intent of the BDIC Act and take the required steps to get a one-window service delivery model for businesses in our Territory. This government says it's looking at ways and areas of our operation where we might be able to achieve efficiencies. Well, Mr. Speaker, here's one area that I believe we can get efficiencies and improved and better access to the clients that are out there. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY IN THE NWT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about the tragic facts of suicide in the NWT. I will also speak to the importance of suicide prevention.

The NWT suicide rate is twice as high as the national average. For persons who are between 15 and 64 years of age, suicide is the leading cause of accidental death in the NWT. More men than women commit suicide. In 2007, 80 percent of suicides were committed by teenagers and young men under the age of 34.

Mr. Speaker, each suicide means tragedy for an entire family, for family and friends who grieve the loss of a loved one and often feel guilty for not having been able to help the victim to stop their pain. Years ago the GNWT had a Suicide Prevention Strategy that was part of the 2004

Mental Health and Addictions Services Action Plan. In 2005, a status report on its implementation reported on suicide prevention initiatives. At that time, a Suicide Prevention Training Program for community support workers was in place. The GNWT also supported the Dreamcatcher Conference and developed two educational brochures.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the NWT suicide facts have not changed since 2005. Suicide is preventable. The government needs to continue and renew its Suicide Prevention Strategy. Interventions and actions must include a variety of community members; for example, family, leaders and elders. We need to build capacity within our primary health care system. We must provide counselling at a clinical level and increase counselling and skill building at the community level as well. Mr. Speaker, far before a quit smoking hotline, we need a suicide hotline.

Mr. Speaker, suicide and suicide attempts is not our culture, it's not our tradition. Let's work together to prevent suicide. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF ECOLOGY NORTH CONTRIBUTIONS AND VOLUNTEERS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to draw attention to Ecology North and the work it does for the well-being of people in the Northwest Territories. Ecology North is a non-profit, charitable organization that supports sound environmental decision-making on individual and community levels. Ecology North's central focus is public education. Its programs address three priorities: public awareness of environmental issues, sustainable living and climate change. It enjoys productive partnerships with community organizations such as the Centre for Northern Families, the Native Women's Association, the Yellowknife Community Garden Collective, NWT Recreation and Parks, as well as local schools.

Ecology North organizes a full schedule of events to recognize Earth Week in April and a sustainable living fair at Yellowknife's annual Trade Show. It's Youth Ecology Club promotes awareness of environmental challenges and possible solutions among the upcoming generation of northern citizens.

Throughout the year, Ecology North offers workshops on energy efficiency, sustainable living tours that showcase ways to increase energy efficiency in homes and business. Its rent-a-plate services featured at Folk on the Rocks provides a

means of reducing the amount of waste created by disposable dishes at large social gatherings. Natural history events help Northerners gain a better appreciation of our physical surroundings.

The Northwest Territories is not a cold and inhospitable wasteland but a network of delicately balanced and perfectly adapted ecosystems. Ecology North frequently organizes workshops, film screenings and school presentations on climate change and helps local and regional governments find practical means to respond to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the ultimate goal of Ecology North's programs is to promote environmental and social well-being. In our technologically advanced society it's easy to neglect our relationship with the natural world. It would be impossible to meet in this House or debate or even conduct the activities of our daily lives if it were not for clean air and drinking water, an adequate food supply and a means of transport and heating our shelters. These are extremely basic elements of life, but the ways that human activity encroaches on wild spaces and fresh water supply are becoming increasingly apparent as is the need for sustainable energy sources.

Mr. Speaker, volunteers are at the heart of Ecology North. I would like to thank the many Northerners who have offered their insight and expertise to the organization since its beginnings in 1971. It is a prime example of a group of people who think globally and act locally. Let's show our continued support for their initiatives and make the North a leader in sustainable living. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRANSFER OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING SUBSIDY TO LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 4th the House passed a motion requesting that the government once again place the Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program under the control of the local housing organizations. I supported that motion and I am hoping that the departments hear our calls and act quickly to rectify this avoidable burden on our communities

Subsequent to our action, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation passed a band council resolution on March 9th adding weight that will hopefully help expedite the government's response to this issue. The Yellowknives Dene Band Council resolution tabled in the House yesterday reads: Whereas, the current delivery of the GNWT Education, Culture and Employment Public Housing Rent Subsidy Program creates administrative problems for the Yellowknives Dene First Nation housing division; And whereas, the requirement of travelling to

Yellowknife every month to assess rents under this PHRS Program places a burden on the Yellowknives Dene First Nation members; And whereas, the involvement of ECE has weakened the relationship between the Yellowknives Dene First Nation housing division and tenants; And whereas, rent assessments were more timely and accurate when they were performed by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation housing division; Therefore, be it resolved that ECE revert to the old system where the Yellowknives Dene First Nation local housing authority assesses the band member's monthly income to determine rent.

Mr. Speaker, forcing people to travel from Dettah and Ndilo to downtown Yellowknife to deal with their monthly housing bills is wasting people's time and energy. Furthermore, it is forcing people who are not on income support to visit the income support office, which can be uncomfortable and cause further undue stress. It is hardly the one-stop shopping approach that the government refers to and that these communities used to enjoy for the housing needs.

Mr. Speaker, let's show our people that we have heard them and implement the obvious solution to this problem as soon as possible. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR HOUSING

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to speak about the \$50 million that we received from the federal government in regard to housing in the Northwest Territories which has to be expended over the next two years.

Mr. Speaker, this is a perfect opportunity for this government to take concerns raised in this House from groups such as Persons with Disabilities, the Seniors' Society of the Northwest Territories and also from our communities in regard to finding ways to have barrier-free housing built in our communities to assist people with disabilities, people that are in wheelchairs, the aging population in our communities, but, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we basically have the infrastructure in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, it has been some time since this government has put in seniors housing in our communities and I've heard my colleague in regard to the situation in Holman Island, I've heard the same thing in regard to the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik and finding ways to replace these facilities, and also find facilities for the communities.

Mr. Speaker, the government has already implemented seniors' housing in communities in

regard to Dettah, Ndilo, Fort McPherson, other communities which already have a blueprint on the drawing board where they own the blueprint, they have built these facilities already, so there's no need to go back to the drawing board. We have two years to expend this money and I'd like to recommend to the government that they consider putting seniors care facilities in our communities and also have barrier-free houses built for people with disabilities in our communities.

I think it's a totally perfect opportunity for this government to do what I've stated, because we have seniors in our social housing system who have gotten themselves into a situation where there's no one there taking care of them. There's no family members allowed to live with them because there is a burden on that senior when it comes to assessing rent. I think we have to get away from that. We have to develop seniors facilities where there is safe, secure housing for seniors, and have a system where we have caretakers in those units. We need to have a system where it's located on one side of town rather than seniors spread out all over the community. That's the type of care the seniors are asking for and the type of housing I'd like this government to seriously consider with the \$50 million we have to spend over the next two years.

With that, I will be asking the Minister of Housing if that can be part of the priorities put forward in spending this \$50 million.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Michael McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO MS. IRENE LAFFERTY

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and acknowledge one of my constituents, Ms. Irene Lafferty of Fort Providence. Irene is one of the client service officers for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and she began her career with the Government of the Northwest Territories in 1974 as a field service clerk. After 35 years of public service she has decided to retire.

Irene has held many different job titles with our government over the years. Too many for us to count, she tells me. I've had the opportunity to work with her for several years and certainly attest to her dedication to her job and her positive work ethics, she has demonstrated to others throughout her career.

This Friday we will take the time to celebrate with her friends and family in Fort Providence. She then plans to take some time to do some travelling and she also tells me she's planning to do a whole lot of relaxing.

I'd like to take this opportunity to invite my colleagues in this House in expressing our sincere appreciation of Irene's dedication and commitment to public service. I would like to wish her all the best in her well deserved retirement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SHIRLEY AND SHARON FIRTH

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to speak about Sharon and Shirley Firth, both long-time Olympic athletes, and what they have strived to do since their days as Olympic athletes.

Both are role models. Both are visionary. Both strive to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and community wellness, particularly among youth. They have both visited every school in the Northwest Territories promoting excellence in both body and mind, with persistence and dedication to the empowerment of youth. I know they will carry this passion on for generations to come. Both strive to build self-confidence, teach teamwork, build character, teach focus, and encourage the youth to set goals, dream big, and to be the best they can be.

Through role model tours they have also brought cross-country skiing to every school in the Northwest Territories and taught the youth cross-country skiing. Both are great ambassadors for the Northwest Territories. Both have always promoted the Northwest Territories and continue to put the Northwest Territories on the map, so to speak.

Some of their major accomplishments include the role model tour, as I mentioned, to all 33 communities; they were inducted into the Banff Sports Hall of Fame in 2008; I think Sharon was a presenter at the APTN Aboriginal Country Music Awards in 2008; they participated with Governor General Michaëlle Jean at the Inuvik Youth Forum in 2008; and on the national stage both are recipients of Aboriginal Achievement Awards -- I believe Sharon received it in 2005 and Shirley in 2006.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Shirley and Sharon Firth.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'd like to recognize Todd Parsons, president of the UNW and a constituent of the Great Slave riding.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I, as well, would like to recognize a constituent from Thebacha, Mr. Brad Brake.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I would like to welcome everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just so that Barb doesn't feel left out, I just want to recognize Barb Wyness from UNW.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 307-16(3): SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement with regard to Suicide Prevention Strategy in the NWT. I know that in its efforts to quit smoking they undertook this whole quit smoking hotline, but far before that I believe we should have had a suicide hotline. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if the Department of Health and Social Services has a current NWT Suicide Prevention Strategy.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to advise the Member that the department does invest a substantial amount of money in this area other than the regular core funding that we provide on mental health and wellness. We spend about a million dollars a year on suicide prevention and part of that funding goes to NWT Mental Health Association, who administers a NWT Help Line where anyone who is in distress or needs someone to talk to can call any day from anywhere in the Territories between 7:00 to 9:00, I believe, every evening.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm given to take that is the current status of the NWT Suicide Prevention Strategy? That Health and Social Services is not involved, but it's more of a devolved program into the different mental health centres that are out there? What is the current status of the NWT Suicide Prevention Strategy?

HON. SANDY LEE: I should correct that; the NWT Help Line is open between 7:00 to 11:00.

We do have a Suicide Prevention Strategy much like the Member described in his Member's statement. We fund a lot of community groups to work on suicide prevention. We do capacity building. We have provided training to about 20 individuals across the NWT so that they can strengthen their skills to work with the groups and youth to talk about the issue of suicide prevention.

When there were some teenage suicides last year, that was highly publicized. There were youth that were provided support to have discussion among youth. We do continue to fund the Dreamcatchers Conference. We get funding through the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

So there is multifaceted programming that's working with the groups in the communities, especially in the youth suicide prevention.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm glad that the resources are there within the Department of Health and Social Services to work towards the prevention of suicide. I'm raising this issue because I don't see it advertised or promoted out there. And if I don't see it, do the members of the public see it? So once again, could the Minister of Health and Social Services tell me what initiatives and actions the Department of Health and Social Services currently undertakes to support suicide prevention?

HON. SANDY LEE: I think the Member is correct in thinking that it would be helpful for the department to be able to promote more of the activities that are going on. Sometimes you're busy doing your job and not necessarily promoting. I'll just assure the Member that we have what's called a steering committee made up of various departments -- Education, Health and Social Services, NGOs, community groups -- who work on the strategy implementation, helping the communities, as well as publicizing and making the public more aware. I will follow up on that to make sure that people are more aware of what is available.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that commitment, because in our small communities and regions people just don't know where to reach out if it's not handy there. That kind of exposure and promotion has to be foremost of the Department of Health and Social Services when it comes to the Suicide Prevention Program. Does the Department of Health and Social Services still provide the Northwest Territories Suicide Prevention Training Program at the community level? Mahsi.

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, we do. It's under assist training program where last year 20 individuals

were trained to be trainers so that they could work with the community groups. We are planning on having another training program in the spring of 2009, which will be the next level of skills training program. I will make sure that when that sort of work is going on -- and we do a lot of work with youth in schools and communities -- that those will get more advertised. That's something that we need to talk about, because the department is very much aware that we continue to have a very high rate of suicide. Per population we have about anywhere from nine to 11 a year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 308-16(3):
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS
FOR NWT BUDGET

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the Honourable Jim Flaherty, our Minister of Finance for the Government of Canada, and his position and his launch of a website called actionplan.gc.ca today. What he did was he came up with a process that demonstrates where the public money is going to help demonstrate that they are attempting to stimulate the economy. By promoting it publicly we can draw accountability to the monies actually being spent and where and how and at what rate. My questions for the Minister of Finance will be along that line.

Just recently we passed the budget and I'd like to know if the Minister has any plans to create a strategy and a webpage that demonstrates how this territorial government is infusing cash into our economy at a much needed time such as we're going through now.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As government practice, of course we'll be doing the regular variance reports. Every department and every Minister will be looking at the work plans that they brought forward to the House and to the committees as they go into the communities to deliver the programs. We will be doing regular statements and updates in the House when we do our community travels, which are going to be extensive. We will be speaking to the needs, programs, and expenditures that have been approved by this House. We have a whole wide variety of ways that we will disseminate this information.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister is correct about the variance reports, but it's been my experience you have to be quite a knowledgeable person to be able

to follow those. The challenge really is, is it in everyday plain language for the average person to be able to say, hey, I see where this money is going, the Minister said there would be \$17.5 million invested in environment issues. I can follow it. Here's the investment.

What would stop the Minister of Finance from creating a website under the fundamentals of just plain language explaining where the highway money is going, where the environment money is going, where the infrastructure money is going, in plain language that the everyday person can follow?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Government of the Northwest Territories has a number of websites. Most departments do as well, I believe. What I'll commit to do is talk to the officials and the deputy about the possibility to see what could be improved on those websites.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate that commitment in looking at that. Would the Minister be able to commit to an action plan somewhat similar that the federal government Finance Minister is doing to make sure that all Northerners can follow where their infrastructure money is being spent? Would he be able to commit to some type of review into that process and report back to this House by May to let our people know where their money is going and they can follow it?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The broad document reports that we use as our action plan is the main estimates that are built on all the different departmental business plans. I've made the commitment to the Member that we will look at the information that's on the various websites and is there a way to improve that so that it's as user friendly and in as plain English as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 309-16(3):
ACHIEVEMENT AND GOALS OF BDIC ACT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got some questions today for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Again getting back to my Member's statement where I was speaking of the BDIC, it was four years ago that the Government of the Northwest Territories took the Business Credit Corporation and the Business Development Corporation and rolled them into one under an act called the BDIC Act. This happened for a couple of reasons. It was in an effort to become more efficient and to save some money and it was also to get to the one-window approach for business-related services provided in our Territory. Here we are four years later and I just don't see the proof that we've

acted on recommendations and actually achieved what it is we want to achieve.

I'd like to ask the Minister, the first question I'd have is, how much money has the BDIC and the government saved by bringing the two former organizations -- the BCC and the BDC -- together under one roof?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The consolidation of the BDIC was not a money-saving matter and it was not intended to save money by combining the two.

MR. RAMSAY: I was a Member of the last government and to me that was always a part of the equation. It was to get the one window, it was to find efficiencies, and it was to deliver programs and services to people in the Northwest Territories in a more efficient manner. Again, we're not there. People have to go to multiple windows to receive the same level of service. This was premised on reports that the department itself conducted. I talked about them earlier. Dargo, Allen, there was a number of recommendations in those reviews.

I'd like to ask the Minister how many of those recommendations in the reviews commission by his department has the government actually acted upon?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We act on all reports that we commissioned and in my view we have a one-window approach that is working very well with regard to promoting economic development in the Northwest Territories.

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like to ask the Minister why it is that the BDIC loan portfolio over the last three years is shrinking. Why is that trend there and what does the Minister perceive for the future of the BDIC loan portfolio?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The loan portfolio has shrunk for a number of reasons, predominantly because of the Auditor General's requirements to reduce the loan loss provisions and to tighten up on the accounting. I think with the expansion of the lending authorities to lending officers into the regions and communities, you'll see the loan activities increase as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 310-16(3):
FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HOUSING

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of the Housing Corporation in regard to my statement and the consideration of the \$50 million we're going to be

spending over the next two years. Seriously consider spending those dollars on housing in communities that are barrier-free or user friendly to people with disabilities. We do have people right now in our communities who are in wheelchairs or whatnot, but the housing that they're living in is not designed for people with disabilities. They are not barrier-free. The same thing applies to our aging seniors in our communities who are having mobility problems but our housing is not designed for that.

I'd like to ask the Minister, is there going to be any housing built in our communities with the \$50 million for barrier-free houses so that we have these houses available in our communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes. It's already built into our programs that we utilize, whether it's a renovation program or private homeownership program. It's designed for a disabled person or family with somebody who's disabled or a senior we allow for a barrier-free access.

MR. KRUTKO: Also in my Member's statement I made reference to seniors care facilities in our communities in which, especially nowadays with the whole area of having safe and secure housing for seniors, but more importantly having seniors located in one facility in the community where you have a caretaker in the facility who can ensure that the well-being of the seniors are being taken care of. I'd like to ask the Minister, knowing that previously the situation with seniors at housing by way of care facilities were mostly in line with Health and Social Services, but with these dollars can we build seniors facilities in communities for such a thing as seniors care facilities so that seniors can live in one location and have the caretaker in those facilities so that they can be taken care of?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We already build seniors facilities. We build houses that seniors utilize. We build barrier-free facilities for seniors. And we also invest in a lot of communities with a program focused on independent seniors. We have not seen the criteria for the new dollars. We currently don't invest in seniors facilities that require ongoing O and M. We do not have new dollars to do that. But we certainly can have the discussion with the Department of Health to see what our avenues are once the discussion negotiations with the federal government for the new money are finished.

MR. KRUTKO: In regard to the...I wasn't clear on the Minister's response on the first question. My understanding is that right now most public housing that are built in the communities are not barrier-free. In regard to having someone with a disability or in a wheelchair, you usually have to build a

ramp. Basically that's all you do to a public housing unit. I'd like to ask again if you are considering building social housing units for social housing clients and people with disabilities, barrier-free housing in our communities.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes. The answer to his question, as I indicated before, is we currently design and build houses to accommodate people with disabilities. We also work with seniors to make sure the facilities are suited to their needs and will continue to do so.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the \$50 million that the Minister mentioned and how it's going to get laid out, we don't have an idea of where it's going to be spent and where those dollars are going to go. Can the Minister give Members on this side of the House an opportunity to look through how that \$50 million is going to be spent, but, more importantly, consider the issues that I raised here of having barrier-free housing and seniors care facilities in our communities using the \$50 million that's going to be spent on this item?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, again, that's a commitment I've already made in this House. I indicated to the Member as soon as our negotiations are concluded and we have formally made an agreement that we are going to receive the money, we will bring a plan and lay out some of the allocations that we see that are based on needs, community projects that we feel are going to be required in the community, and then we'll go to the Members for discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 311-16(3):

SOCIAL SERVICES AND CHILD CARE ISSUES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start by acknowledging the hard work and dedication of many of our social services and child care services personnel. However, I have a constituent where it seems clear that our social services have not served them and specifically their children well. In custody cases, for example, children may be placed in the care of one parent, but it's not always the healthiest parent that they're in care of and thus there are consequences.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if there is a routine review of these sensitive social services and child care cases.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to need, I think, more information on that. I

don't know if the Member can give it. As far as I'm aware, the custody decision as to where the child remains and who that child remains with would be a decision made by the court. Unless it has to do with other information, that is my understanding. The social workers or children and family services would not have much role in that.

MR. BROMLEY: Indeed, the courts play a large role here. However, the situation can be exasperated if social services do not recognize what's happened. If the court, for example, places the children under the care of an unhealthy parent and a healthy, frustrated parent is left with that situation, often looking after the children who are not then being looked after by the unhealthy parent, social services is not stepping in to help with this situation. Obviously the children then put up with the consequences.

There's an obvious role for social services to step in. Is there a review of that sort of case and that sort of situation? What's our safeguard there?

HON. SANDY LEE: The children and family services and the legislation that governs that gives much emphasis to the best interests of the children. They do investigate wherever there are complaints or concerns being raised by anyone. I'm not clear, without knowing all the details, what level or to what extent the social services should be involved in this specific case. If the Member wants to give me some more details in private, understanding the confidentiality, I would be happy to look into that.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that offer of the Minister. I'll definitely be speaking to the Minister about cases that I'm aware of. Let me ask plainly, are there internal reviews routinely and when is the last time that we had a comprehensive review of our child care services?

HON. SANDY LEE: There is ongoing review on much of the work that this section does in terms of legislation review. We went through a major review of the legislation in 2007 and the enactments of some of the changes that allowed for even more review of any apprehension of children and such. But I think what the Member is talking about is a situation where there are two disputes or differences of opinion about where the children are and how they are being taken care of. We'll have to know the details as to whether it's a case that social services should get involved in. I'll just leave it at that and I'll ask the Member to get together in private.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the offer from the Minister. Once again, I guess there is some review on legislation. I didn't hear that there is a review of performance or the actual services that are provided to our people.

I'm wondering, given that there is a strong opinion and probably information that men are often behind some of the causes in family strife, at least at the NWT level, and apparently that's being debated at the national level leading to more interest in equal parenting and so on, but there is a possibility that there is a gender bias against men because of that sort of background information. Is the Minister aware of that sort of thing or does she have programs in place to guard against the gender bias that might present?

HON. SANDY LEE: The work of the social services and child and family services generally are principally based on what is in the best interest of the child. I know there are some thoughts out there about some biases, but I think, in general, social services and everybody else wants to make sure that children get access, support and love from everybody around them. We have to look at individual situations on a case-by-case basis. These are such highly emotional and sensitive issues that there are checks and balances within the system.

Social workers work as a team. There are a number of people working in any division of Social Services across the Territories and cases are reviewed by supervisors or their supervisors. They are continually reviewed. Those checks and balances are within the system in terms of legislation as well as policies and directives. I would be happy to discuss further on that, Mr. Speaker, with the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 312-16(3):
INCREASE OF FISHING LICENCE FEES
IN THE NWT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Several sessions ago I asked questions of the Minister of the cost of fishing licences. Retail outlets have expressed some frustration with the high amount of paperwork required and the fact that they pretty much get zero profit for selling them. Further, the cost of licences for out-of-territory visitors is incredibly low in the Northwest Territories compared to other jurisdictions and it is even low for residents of the Northwest Territories compared to other jurisdictions. Has any thought been given to increasing the cost of fishing licences in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the budget address, there was reference made to the need to look at the rates and fees charged across government in our initial review as we were looking at putting the budget together. Fees and rates charged have not been touched in many cases for decades, as is the case with fishing licences. The intent and plan is across departments, including ENR with fishing licences, to look at the costs and look at a way in a carefully planned way with thorough consultation to make the rates more realistic and in tune with the 21st century. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. I was wondering if the Minister can give me a bit of a timeline as to when he thinks this might start to roll out and the analysis might be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We are working on the issue as we speak. We will be building that type of work going forward into the upcoming business planning process. There is not sufficient time to do all the work that is necessary and the consultation necessary, we believe, for this coming fishing season, but we are definitely planning for the fishing season of 2010-11.

MR. ABERNETHY: As I said in my first question there, one of the areas that I am getting a lot of concern raised is from the people who are actually selling the fishing licences. I was wondering if I can get the Minister to commit that, in this review, they meet with some of the people who are currently selling the fishing licences, because they get no profit and it is actually a significant amount of paperwork, kind of a hassle. They would like to continue to sell fishing licences but the way we are set up now, it is not very appealing. So a commitment to meeting with some of the suppliers and getting some feedback and information from them to help make a decision would be great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member raises a good point. We have already had those discussions and will continue to have further discussions. I will point out that I am going to be pushing the department to see if there is something possible before the onset of fishing season this year, but at the very latest -- additional time is required -- we will be looking at the following year. We intend to consult. We recognize it is a burden with very little remuneration. It is an issue that we want to address. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 313-16(3):
INCREASE ON NWT MINIMUM WAGE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I spoke in my Member's statement about the minimum wage and that the Minister had advised me some time ago that he was going to look into whether or not the minimum wage for the NWT could be increased. I had some communication from his department which says that the department was looking into that. I understand from the department and from the Minister's office that the research has been concluded. I would like to know from the Minister, what were the results of their research? Were there any recommendations that came out of that research as a result of the research? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly minimum wages have gone up in the last session and I did commit that we will be looking into potentially increasing that minimum wage at that time. I did approach the Cabinet on Education, Culture and Employment's approach on how we should be dealing with this with our research from across the country. Each province is different with their minimum wages. Certainly we are doing an analysis on the impacts on the proposed change on minimum wage with various employers. At that time, providing minimum wage, what kind of impact will there be? We are currently doing that right now. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: I thank the Minister for his information, but I guess that sort of contradicts the information that I got from his department a couple of months ago, which indicated that they had made a decision and were taking a decision to Cabinet. Could I get clarification from the Minister? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the paper that we submitted to Cabinet was our department's recommendation of increasing. At that point in time, we need to do more work and do more analysis with more businesses out in the communities which have potential impact on their business operations. We are currently doing that. We are hoping before next session we are going to have some paper to come forward. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thank you to the Minister for the clarification. I guess I am a little disappointed if Cabinet requires more research and that they didn't just take the recommendation of the department, but there we are. I guess I would like to say first of all, in terms of the impact on businesses, there are not many businesses in the NWT that actually pay the current minimum wage. It is pretty minimal. I think it is \$8.25. I am a little surprised that we have

to do that much research. The Minister says that he is going to come back in the next session hopefully. If we don't get a recommendation to committee in May/June, when does the Minister think that we could perhaps have an increase in minimum wage actually implemented? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, certainly it is the target for May/June sitting. If all goes well, we are hoping to implement in the fall. That is part of our target that we are working with. We are just doing some more work with small businesses. Certainly we want to cover all areas as much as possible before we make any changes that will benefit the North. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister. I appreciate the department and the government is trying to be thorough. That is probably better than them not being thorough. As part of the analysis and part of the ongoing work that is being done, are they considering how an increase to minimum wage will be adjusted in the future? Will it be tied to inflation, for instance, or to the cost of living? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, those are the factors that we will be taking into consideration. One of the primary causes, of course, is the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories, so those will be taken into consideration. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 314-16(3):
GROLLIER HALL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
AGREEMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if he would commit to looking at the Grollier Hall Residential School Settlement Agreement with the claimants and having a review of the overall agreement, and look at the different components that seem to be in dispute between the department and the claimants in terms of having investigated, and sit down with, potentially, his department to see where the agreement has fallen off track in accordance to some of the claimants.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I can get my department to look into that. We need to find out if there is an agreement in place. I have been asking my department if there is such an agreement that was signed by all parties. To date, we haven't produced the documentation as of yet, but we are waiting for

that and certainly we will follow through with that again. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Minister that the agreement was negotiated. I was one of the negotiators on behalf of the claimant. The agreement was signed. I would ask the Minister if he would commit to reviewing this with some of the former negotiators. I think we sort of missed the boat on this one here in terms of implementation of the agreement. Would the Minister look at this overall agreement with some of the claimants with his department and see? This was an historical agreement between the Government of Canada, the Mackenzie Diocese of the Northwest Territories and, of course, this government here in terms of settling this agreement with the claimants. Would the Minister look at an overall review of the whole agreement with the parties that could be affected by this agreement?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, certainly this has been an area of ongoing discussion that my department has been going through with some parties of the claimant groups. I did commit to the Member that we will follow through with that on an ongoing basis. We need to see the actual agreement that was initially signed because we have to work with the documentation. If there is no documentation, it is very difficult for us to act on it. There might have been some negotiations between the parties. We need to get more clarification on the legality of it. Those are the ongoing discussions that we are having within our department. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the Minister's willingness to look at the agreement in terms of discussions. He also needs to have some discussions with the claimant members. Would the Minister commit to extending the agreement beyond 2012 due to a lack of progress of the implementation of this agreement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the agreement the Member is referring to, we need to look at the agreement he is referring to. The 2012, we can certainly discuss that but, as a department, we need to look at those agreements. As long as it is before us, then we can proceed further. I can certainly commit to the Member that we will continue to work as a department and work with the Member and also the claimant group. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the hard work of the various department members, the Roman Catholic Church, the residential school, members from the Grollier Hall Healing Circle, through blood, sweat and tears, the negotiating that happened in the time of the

agreement, there was a negotiation happening. Agreements were all agreed. I was there to witness the handshakes. The agreement was signed. I would help the Minister look for the agreement. The agreement is there. It is being administered. I appreciate the Minister's response in terms of looking at a review. I hope that this review happens within the year to settle these outstanding issues with the specific clause to his department.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would ask the Minister to instruct his department officials to contact the various parties. Could he contact the various parties to bring them together and sit down and talk about the original agreement that was negotiated and agreed upon?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I did commit to that already. We continue to have a dialogue. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we are waiting for a document that was signed as the Member has alluded to. If there is such a document that was signed, I would like to see it and would like to move on it. If there is, then certainly that will be our obligation to move forward on. But I haven't seen a document to date yet. Certainly I am looking forward to seeing the document. Yes, we will continue working with the Member on this particular subject. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 315-16(3):
SUPPORT FOR NWT
MANUFACTURING SECTOR

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few more questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Back in 1996, the Government of the Northwest Territories came forward with an interim manufacturing directive. Somewhere along the way I think we have lost the purpose of this manufacturing directive. I think it is time that the Government of the Northwest Territories started supporting what little manufacturing we have here in the Northwest Territories. The money has to stay here in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. I have manufacturing companies in the Kam Lake Industrial Park who are losing business to southern companies. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it should matter if we have to pay a little bit more to get goods that are manufactured in the Northwest Territories. The money is going to stay here, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, what work is the government doing on getting the Government of the Northwest Territories in its procurement practices to buy more and buy manufactured goods from the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have an existing NWT manufacturing directive that was spawned out of the Business Incentive Policy. That directive still is in existence and basically NWT manufacturers can apply for recognition as an approved NWT manufacturer and, at that time, the government would make it a priority for purchasing. As well, under the new SEED program, we have written to the standing committee and asked them for direction as to what should be established as priorities. One of the possibilities that we have identified was manufacturing in the Northwest Territories should be designated as a priority sector to be developed. We are still waiting for a response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RAMSAY: If the government is going off of the spirit and the intent of this interim manufacturing directive, what recourse do companies have that lose contracts on goods that are actually manufactured in the Northwest Territories when the work and the money go south, Mr. Speaker? What recourse is there for businesses here? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We do have a Senior Management Preference Committee which the companies could apply to or appeal to for raising their issues of concern. I am not aware of any businesses that have lost business to southern competitors because of government not purchasing their manufactured products. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of a couple of businesses that have lost contracts to southern companies. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to get into a dialogue on the floor of the House about those two businesses, but perhaps what I could do is get the Minister to commit to sitting down and reviewing these two cases so that it doesn't happen again and so that the value added stays in the Northwest Territories. These companies employ people, Mr. Speaker. They pay taxes here. We shouldn't be getting things manufactured in Winnipeg and shipped north into our communities, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Value added is a priority of this government. Certainly we require it of all developers that come north. Certainly I would be very pleased to discuss with the Member the two situations that have been brought to his attention so that we can bring redress to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, with the process underway to review the Business Incentive Policy in the Northwest Territories, could the Minister let us know what focus there will be on manufactured

goods in that review of the Business Incentive Policy? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: It was not our intention to put a focus on manufacturing with the review unless it was brought up as part of the consultation process. Right now it is being addressed through a directive of the government, but certainly, if it is brought forward as an item of importance through the consultation on the Business Incentive Policy, we will look at it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 316-16(3):

REVENUE FROM NON-RESIDENT WORKFORCE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Finance and it's in regard to the tax collection. Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that's often raised here in this House is about trying to get Northerners to live in the North to make sure they pay their taxes in the North. A constituent brought forward an issue, a potential idea on how to collect taxes. They asked why can someone work in a specific area of Canada and not have to pay taxes in that area. In other words, if someone works here in the North at a mine and they make the lion's share of their income here, why aren't there rules that oblige them to file their taxes in the Northwest Territories?

I guess my point really is, it doesn't restrict them where they can work, it doesn't restrict them where they can live, by no means, but it builds a framework as if the money was made and earned here in the North, then shouldn't they perhaps be filing their taxes here in the North.

Mr. Speaker, my question directed to the Minister Finance is: Has any work ever been done under that type of philosophy to consider that if you earn your money in the North, you should be filing your taxes in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This issue has been looked at over the years. There are mobility issues. There are tax harmonization issues. The national understanding is you pay your income tax based on where you live at this point, which is why we have such a great concern about the fly-in/fly-out workers. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, although I haven't researched this extensively, as I understand it, when people follow their jobs and do their work outside of Canada, there are circumstances where people get paid outside of Canada and then when they come home, therefore, they don't have to pay the taxation dollars here. I guess the same philosophy kind of makes me wonder why can we

allow certain circumstances to exist on a national level, then why can't we proceed by pursuing this ability. Because it doesn't affect the mobility issue if we ask them or require them to pay in the North. Specifically to the question, has any research been done to focus in on getting people to pay taxes here not to infringe on their mobility issue of where they work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, if there was an ability to make sure that all the personal income tax was paid that was earned in the North and was paid in the North, we would be doing that. That capacity is there right now that if you live and work in the North, you pay your tax in the North. If you work in the North but live in another jurisdiction then that's where you file your income tax. We haven't found a way around that particular circumstance yet. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, Mr. Speaker, for the cost of a piece of paper perhaps, and a little bit of ink, would the Minister of Finance be willing to write the Government of Canada would they consider that type of philosophy or is there an avenue for us to approach that type of philosophy that would have people file more taxes here in the Northwest Territories? Because the money earned should in some way, in some manner, stay here in the North where it certainly belongs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we continue to look for ways to ensure that we keep the maximum amount of revenue and income in the North, which is why we've done things like the payroll tax, because it was a way to get some of that money to stay in the North. We're going to continue to monitor. I'll give the Member the commitment that we're going to continue to monitor that and all the regulations that are currently there and if there is any change that allows us to be able to, in fact, ensure that all taxes are paid in the North, we will definitely take advantage of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the willingness and I certainly know we have some very smart people in the Department of Finance. My concern isn't necessarily about their abilities in the context of that. The fact is, I'm wondering, can the question be posed to Canada by asking would there be a way or certainly would they stop us if we put that type of legislation in place that would require people to do that. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is concerned about the cost of the stamp or the cost of the envelope and those things, I'll certainly front the cost out of my own pocket. All I'm asking the Minister is would he be willing to put that type of question in writing to Canada to get some details? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'm glad to see that the Member is prepared to put his money where his concern is. What I will do is pull together a brief package that I will share with the Member in committee so that we can all look at what the current circumstance is before we possibly fire off letters that we know the answer to or that will put us in an awkward position. What I'll do is commit to do that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 317-16(3):
GNWT DISCUSSIONS WITH
ARSLANIAN DIAMOND WORKS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment. I understand that earlier today talks broke down between the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Arslanian Cutting Works, which is a pretty bad thing. It looks like they're getting pretty close to laying off 37 employees at that facility, which is unfortunate because although they're losing a significant amount of money, they're committed to the North, they're committed to a northern diamond polishing secondary industry and they're committed to their employees who they want to continue to employ. They're looking for some level of commitment from the government to find some solutions here and I'm wondering if the Minister could tell me what was the nature of the collapse of these talks and where is the government's commitment to work with these organizations to ensure that we don't lay off more people and we continue to have a secondary diamond industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a long-established Diamond Policy in the Northwest Territories and we're not going to take a knee-jerk reaction to some threats that were made on a moment's notice. I think that we are quite prepared to work with the company in question to see the secondary diamond industry continue. We will need to take a longer-term approach to it and we will need to ensure that the Members of the standing committee are well aware of the discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ABERNETHY: To the Minister, have negotiations or discussions with Arslanian, in fact, ceased or are they still ongoing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Well, this morning we had a meeting and we were advised that unless we made

some immediate changes to our Diamond Policy, that there would be other action taken. We found out this morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ABERNETHY: They've outlined a couple of commitments that they are looking for the GNWT to work with them on and one of them was that they want to pay the same price for rough from Ekati Mine that BHP actually charges to customers in Antwerp. I'm wondering if there's any room for negotiation on this between this government and Ekati. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The diamond mines operate with the diamond cutters and they have contracts that they have signed and it's not within our purview to interfere in those contracts. We had possibly looked at other arrangements but we haven't been able to reach a conclusion on those matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I understand the relationship between the polishers and the company but I'm curious whether there's an opportunity for us to step in and work with both the polishers and the company to find a way to decrease the cost or make the cost equivalent between what our companies are paying for northern diamonds and what BHP Billington is actually charging in Antwerp. Is there any room for some negotiation here? It's important that we don't lose more employees in the Northwest Territories. We need and should have a secondary diamond polishing industry and I think this government needs to work with our businesses. Is there any opportunity to have those discussions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We're always willing to negotiate, but what was presented to us this morning was not negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 318-16(3):

GNWT SUPPORT FOR THE DEHCHO PROCESS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week I spoke about the Dehcho Process and the Dehcho First Nation making some significant change in the way they wish to negotiate with the federal government, and our government, of course, is participatory to that. In light of those significant moves, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask Mr. Premier how receptive is the government to it and how will they continue to support the Dehcho with their process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process we're involved with, one, is on a number of fronts. We continue to be engaged in the Dehcho Process as long as that table moves along, and there's been a fair bit of work done on that file. As well, we're engaged in a number of other discussions happening within the Dehcho and, for example, the Acho Dene Koe First Nation work that's ongoing there. We're also working with the K'atlodeechee First Nation as they look at what options they're looking at. We're involved in a number of areas within the Dehcho. As those tables are established, then we're setting up to be a part of them. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: The Dehcho Process is very important to the Dehcho and the future of the NWT. My vision, I see us, this government, working with them, taking the significant change that they have and working with them to work towards moving the Dehcho Process forward. The land use is still an aspiration of the Dehcho. Will this government commit to work on the land use plan as hard as the Dehcho is? Mahsi cho.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, we are committed to working with the land use plan. We have a number of departments involved in that and will continue to be involved in moving that process forward. I understand we're very close on quite a number of fronts and that work should be done in the near future.

The other areas that we're working on, again, we're still engaged and will be. As the Dehcho review their mandate and how they plan to proceed forward, we will stay engaged and see what we can work on cooperatively. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm glad to hear the Premier say that. We've got to do a little bit more than working cooperatively with them. We've actually got to have some real cooperative efforts and that's in terms of consulting with them and seeking their advice as we deal with the federal government when they call upon us for advice.

Another huge component of the Dehcho and the land use process is the Edezhie Protected Areas Strategy. The federal government has recommended reduction down to 47 percent; the Dehcho is looking at 57 percent. A key issue like that, where would the government stand, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, there is a working group established around the Edezhie and that process continues to do its work and we're involved in there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm glad that Mr. Premier knows what they're doing, but I'm asking what is this government going to do? The Edezhie

Protected Areas Strategy has been reduced to 45 percent by the federal government. The working group has recommended it 57 percent. I'd like to ask Mr. Premier, will he support the Dehcho in achieving this 50 percent Protected Areas Strategy for the Edezhie? Mahsi.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, we're a part of the working group so we're involved in the process. We're working with them coming up there to what may be. The simple fact is we need to have a look at that final work that comes out and, as Cabinet would, from time to time when these issues come across our tables, our negotiators and different departments who are involved in this would make recommendations to us. When that comes forward we will have a look at that and see where we stand and make our decision based on having all the information on the table. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 319-16(3):
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY REVIEW

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are in follow-up to the statement made by the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment earlier on the Business Incentive Policy. I note that the Minister has stated that the proposed changes are being developed to address concerns and then he lists a couple of concerns that are being addressed. That's all well and good, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to know from the Minister whether or not the department is actually looking at the whole of the Business Incentive Policy, looking at the rationale for that policy and going right back to square one. What exactly are we trying to achieve by having this policy in place? What are you trying to accomplish? What is the purpose of this policy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Business Incentive Policy has been in place for 20-some years and the whole intention is to provide for building capacity in the North and to protect northern business and provide a preference for northern and local business. We concur with that intention and what we're trying to do here is we're only dealing with certain portions of the policy, because we still fundamentally agree with all of the tenets of it and we're working to improve it and to have it work better in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for oral questions has expired; however, I will allow the Member a short supplementary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for the rationale. I appreciate that but there have been changes made to this policy over the years and these are sort of piecemeal changes that, again, are being, kind of, slapped in. I would like to know from the Minister whether or not, as these changes are being considered, are we also looking at the whole of the policy and do these new changes and the ones that have happened previously still fit in with the original intent of the policy? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There have been a number of attempts over the years to change the Business Incentive Policy, without success. I think the Business Incentive Policy has remained intact for virtually the 20-some years. We're dealing with just portions of it that have been identified as areas that can be improved upon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: The Minister mentioned earlier, in answer to another question, that unless something is brought forward, it's not going to be considered under these changes to the Business Incentive Policy, and I think he was talking about consultation. If it's not brought to consultation, they won't consider it. That's what I'm getting at in terms of doing things piecemeal. If we are changing two or three things within this policy, are we considering the impact that that's going to have on the policy overall, and the impact that it's going to have on some of our northern businesses? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: That remains to be seen, because we've gone out to consultation on just three specific areas and if any other areas are raised, then we will definitely look at them and review them in light of the whole policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: I guess I would like to reiterate to the Minister that it is vitally important that if we make any changes that we make them in the context of the whole policy. I think we need to go beyond the information that we've asked for in this consultation. There are only three or four areas that are being considered. We need to make sure that if we make changes in these areas, that we actually check for the impact on the whole of the policy and on other areas that may not be mentioned in these instances. I'd like to ask the Minister again, when the points that have been brought forward through consultation are considered, will he also, and will the department also, be considering how they're going to impact the policy as a whole and the impact that it may have on other parts of the policy? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: It is our intention to bring back the findings that we hear from the consultations to the committees and that, definitely, any recommendations that emanate from

consultation will be done in conjunction with the review of the policy as a whole and its impact on the policy as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back on the orders of the day to item 5.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the Deline Land Claim Corporation president, Mr. Peter Menacho, from Deline visiting us.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Welcome everyone in the gallery today. I will now recognize Elaine Keenan-Bengts. We will be introducing her a little bit later on when we table her report. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 6-16(3): NWT RESOURCE ROYALTIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier.

1. Can the Premier identify the federal resource revenue from non-renewable resource development in the NWT in the previous 10 years by the following categories: Norman Wells project profits, oil and gas leases and royalties, quarrying royalties, and resource revenues?
2. Can the Premier identify the NWT corporate, property and fuel tax revenues received directly from resources companies in the previous 10 years?
3. Can the Premier provide an update about the status of resource revenue sharing discussions, both in terms of activities with northern aboriginal stakeholders and the Government of Canada?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

WRITTEN QUESTION 7-16(3): ACTIVITIES OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT CORPORATION

MR. RAMSAY: My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

1. Are Industry, Tourism and Investment agents working closely with Business Development Investment Corporation to help promote BDIC programs in the regions, according to the service agreement established with Industry, Tourism and Investment?
2. From April 1, 2008, to present, what is the number and total dollar amount of BDIC loans processed by ITI and approved in accordance with the agreement for services in the current fiscal year?
3. What are the BDIC loan balances for March 31st as of 2006, 2007, and 2008?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 4-16(3): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2007 ELECTION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its report on the review of the report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election and commends it to the House.

1. Introduction

The Chief Electoral Officer of the NWT is required to table a report on the administration of the general election in 2007. That report was tabled on May 29th, 2008.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is tasked with the responsibility to review the report and make recommendations to the Members of the Legislative Assembly. The standing committee met with the NWT Chief Electoral Officer at a public meeting on December 15, 2008. The standing committee also asked all candidates, electoral officers and MLAs to provide their views. This public discussion and consideration of views supports the Legislative Assembly in its desire to continually improve the processes used to administer territorial elections.

2. Submissions From The Candidates And Official Agents

The standing committee invited all returning officers, official agents, and all candidates to review the report of the Chief Electoral Officer and to identify any concerns or comments about the administration of the election. Six persons,

excluding MLAs, responded and identified the following concerns.

- Some communities -- those in electoral districts with more than one community -- did not have a returning officer in their community. This meant that the community residents were not able to vote in the office of the returning officer, known as early voting, and some people were concerned that this seemed unfair.
- The office hours for the returning officer were not effectively communicated.
- There were not enough special mobile polls.
- The special ballot process is too complicated and too slow.
- Candidates are not required to be residents of the electoral district.
- The legislation permits candidates to assist voters at the voting booth with voting and this does not seem to be fair. Friends may assist and some see this as unfair.
- The rules about signage are unclear and inconsistently enforced.
- There were not enough communications activities and information materials from the Chief Electoral Officer.
- There were issues related to the location of signs and campaign activities.
- MLAs should not have preferred access to the voters' list.
- Old campaign material, such as signs, which are re-used in another election should be assigned a monetary value.
- There were concerns that each voter's residency in the electoral district was not confirmed because it is not clearly required in the legislation.
- There were concerns that the voter identification processes were not consistently applied.

The submissions from the candidates and official agents are attached in Appendix A.

3. Members' Concerns

All MLAs were invited to a meeting to discuss the report of the Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Krutko, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Lafferty, and Mr. Bromley attended in addition to the regular committee members. This section provides a brief overview of the concerns discussed by Members.

Electoral Officials

- Requiring the electoral officials to be resident in the electoral district has limited hiring options unnecessarily.

Early Voting Opportunities/Unequal Access to Early Voting

- There was disappointment that some candidates did not have a returning officer located in the community and, therefore, did not have early voting opportunities other than an advance poll.
- In some communities the office hours of the returning officer were not clear to community residents.
- In some communities access to the office of the returning officer was not barrier-free.
- Candidates' agents were not permitted to witness the votes or the counting of early votes.

Student Voting/Special Ballots

- There were some people who did not understand the process and could not easily find the instructions.
- There were some mail-in, special ballots which were not counted for a variety of reasons.
- Special ballots required the use of mail services, which are too slow for a short election period.

Signage - Labelling And Locations

- There were irritations about the requirements to relocate signage which was placed near polling stations and/or office of the returning officer, especially when the signage was located before the polling location and/or office of the returning officer had been determined.
- There was concern that Elections NWT did not communicate clearly and consistently about signage rules to all candidates well in advance.
- There was concern that Elections NWT only responded to complaints and did not assume a more active role in enforcement activities.

Mobile Polls

- Mobile polls are appreciated and their use should be increased. Members suggested that mobile polls should be used at the mine sites.

Voters' List

- The list had too many inaccuracies, even after revisions.

- The list was not provided to candidates in a useable format.

Criminal Records Checks

- There was concern that some candidates had a criminal record. This did not affect their eligibility to be a candidate because the law does not disqualify them.

Residency Of Voters

- Most Members were satisfied with the existing one-year residency requirement and did not want change.

Voter Identification

- There were concerns about the amount of time it takes to administer the oath for electors who were not on the list, especially when there are a large number of these voters.
- Some Members suggested that, at some point, voter identification should be required for every voter, such as at enumeration or at the polling station.
- There were concerns that each voter's residency in the electoral district was not confirmed because it is not required in the legislation.
- There were concerns that the voter identification processes were not consistently applied.

Reporting Of Expenses

- Some Members wanted signs from previous elections to be given a monetary value.
- Some Members wanted to be able to incur official expenses before the start of the election period.

Enforcement Issues

- Members expressed concerns about the difficulties related to enforcement.
- Some candidates have not yet filed their expense reports and there are no consequences.
- Elections NWT seemed unable to thoroughly investigate complaints.

Access To Apartments And Condo Buildings

- Members wanted to see improvements to the candidates' access to these buildings, which often remained limited even after the Chief Electoral Officer notified the building owners about their obligations.

Candidates Assisting At The Polls

- Some Members consider that candidates should be prohibited from assisting voters at the booth because many people perceive this as unfair.

Communications/Information From The Elections Office

- Members were concerned that communications and information from Elections NWT was not proactive and consistent. An example of this included the lack of clear direction provided to apartment building owners. Another example is the lack of clear direction provided about the requirements for identifying sponsorship information on signage.
- Members were concerned that returning officers need better training and information resources.
- Some Members indicated that there was poor organization at some polling stations which minimized the privacy of the booths.
- Some Members wanted improved communications with voters about their electoral district designation, especially if there are changes.

Elections Night Reporting

- Members want accurate results on election night to be reported more quickly than was done on the 2007 election night.

At this time I'd now like to pass the reading of the report on to the deputy chair, which is Mr. Kevin Menicoche, the Member for Nahendeh.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

4. Review Of The Recommendations From The Chief Electoral Officer

On December 15, 2008, the Members of the standing committee met with Ms. Sandra Arberry, Chief Electoral Officer, and Patrick Orr, legal counsel for Elections NWT. The Members of the standing committee reviewed the report of the Chief Electoral Officer. The Chief Electoral Officer's report identified recommendations for amending the Elections and Plebiscites Act. That report describes the recommendations thoroughly. The standing committee considered that advice and has determined its recommendations as follows. The Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations are described very briefly.

1. Campaigning

- a) The prohibition of campaigning within 100 metres of a polling station causes confusion.
- The distance is large and can include nearby homes and floors above and below.
 - It does not apply to the office of the returning officer.
 - Sometimes offices and polling stations are located after candidates' offices are established and signs are placed.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that a 25 metre prohibition apply to campaigning near polling stations and the office of the returning officer, and that the Chief Electoral Officer be authorized to make exceptions.

The standing committee agrees.

- b) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the requirements in the law for identifying sponsorship on signs be clarified.

The standing committee agrees that the act should be amended to clarify that the wording has to be visible and legible, and also recommends that the actual wording should be identified in legislation.

- c) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the Chief Electoral Officer should have the authority to remove illegal campaign materials and be able to charge those costs to the candidates who failed to remove the material.

The standing committee agrees that the Chief Electoral Officer should have the authority to remove illegal materials. The standing committee has recommended that additional research on enforcement be undertaken before it can consider a recommendation to charge costs to candidates.

- d) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the obligations of owners and managers of multiple dwelling buildings be strengthened to clarify the obligations in order to increase candidates' access.

The standing committee agrees with this recommendation.

2. Illegal Practices And Corrupt Practices

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that references to "illegal and corrupt practices" should be referred to as "election offences."

The standing committee agrees.

- b) The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the act should be amended to provide a standard disqualification period of five years from the date of conviction for a candidate with a conviction under this act. This recommendation is based on a review of case law.

The standing committee agrees.

- c) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the existing voter disqualification for convictions related to elections offences in Canada be removed. The Chief Electoral Officer also recommended that candidate disqualification be based on convictions for elections offences related to the NWT elections legislation, not other elections offences in Canada.

The standing committee agrees that the voter disqualification clauses should be removed.

The standing committee has asked for additional research to be undertaken into whether criminal convictions can disqualify a candidate.

3. Residency Requirements

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the residency requirement be reduced to three months.

The standing committee does not support a change to the residency requirements.

4. Polling Stations

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that a designate of the Chief Electoral Officer should be able to be present at a polling station and/or recount.

The standing committee agrees.

- b) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that only one person representing the candidate or the candidate may remain at a polling station or be present during the count.

The standing committee recommends that the candidate should not be permitted to attend at a polling station,

except briefly. The standing committee agrees with the CEO's recommendation that during the count only one person representing the candidate or the candidate may be present.

- c) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that candidates take the same oath as polling agents when attending a poll.

The standing committee has recommended that candidates be permitted to attend a poll only briefly, as in Alberta's Elections Act.

5. Chief Electoral Officer

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the term of appointment for the Chief Electoral Officer should increase from four to seven years.

The standing committee recommends that the four-year term remain unchanged. This includes the authority to extend the term up to six months after the term has finished and the authority to reappoint.

- b) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the Chief Electoral Officer should have the right to vote.

The standing committee agrees.

6. Privacy Of Voter Information

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the clause in the law which requires a written record in the polling book for electors who decline a ballot should be removed.

The standing committee agrees.

7. Nomination Papers

- A. The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the nominating process be replaced with a simple declaration and oath.

The standing committee does not agree with this change and recommends no changes be made to this process.

8. Voting Opportunities

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the Chief Electoral Officer be permitted to establish mobile polls in a wider variety of situations.

The standing committee agrees.

- b) The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the clause in the act be amended so that only the Chief Electoral Officer has the authority to establish an advance poll.

The standing committee agrees.

9. Financial

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the financial reporting status of the elected Members, not all candidates, be reported to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

The standing committee agrees.

- b) The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the financial reporting requirements need a civil remedy in addition to prosecution powers already provided.

The standing committee has recommended that additional research on enforcement be undertaken before it can consider a recommendation to establish a civil remedy.

10. Housekeeping Amendments

- A. The Chief Electoral Officer recommended a number of minor housekeeping amendments.

The standing committee agrees with a consideration of these housekeeping amendments by the legislative drafter.

I'd like to turn the report over to my colleague Ms. Wendy Bisaro for continued reading.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO:

Recommendations

1. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to refer to both "illegal practices" and "corrupt practices" as "election offences."
2. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to provide a disqualification period of five years from the date of conviction for a candidate with a conviction under this act.
3. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to remove the voter disqualification for convictions related to election offences in other jurisdictions.
4. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to permit a designate of the Chief Electoral Officer to be present at a polling station and/or recount.

5. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to permit only one person representing the candidate or the candidate to be present during the count.
6. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to restrict the attendance of a candidate at a polling station except to vote and for brief visits during polling hours.
7. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to permit the Chief Electoral Officer to vote.
8. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to remove the requirement for a written record in the polling book for electors who decline a ballot.
9. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to permit mobile polls in a wider variety of situations.
10. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to allow that only the Chief Electoral Officer has the authority to establish an advance poll.
11. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to direct that the financial reporting status of only the elected Members, not all candidates, be reported to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.
12. That the housekeeping amendments, which are identified by the Chief Electoral Officer on pages 22 and 23 of the report of the Chief Electoral Officer, be considered by the legislative drafter during the preparation of the other amendments.

5. Committee Recommendations

This section identifies the recommendations of the standing committee. The recommendations are organized in three sections: direction to the Chief Electoral Officer, direction for amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act, and topics that require additional work before direction can be established.

1. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer should:
 - Improve the reporting of results on elections night, so that the elections results are accurate and released in a timely fashion. Further, the standing committee recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer should report back to the committee before the end of 2009 about the changes in policies and procedures that will be made to ensure the needed improvements.
 - Improve the communications from Elections NWT, for topics such as:

- employers' obligations;
- multiple residency buildings;
- office hours;
- special ballots;
- mobile polls; and
- signage requirements.

The standing committee recommends that communications need to be clear and consistent. More information needs to be available, including information about:

- how to make a complaint;
- what happens to a complaint;
- the consequences of violating the Elections and Plebiscites Act; and
- decisions and direction of the chief electoral officer that all affected candidates need to have.
- Improve the performance of returning officers and other officials through training.
- Increase the number of locations which have opportunities for early voting.
- Increase the use of mobile polls such as at mine sites.

Recommendations

13. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer improve the reporting of results on election night to ensure that the elections results are accurate and released in a timely fashion.

Further, the standing committee recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer should report back to the committee before the end of 2009 about the changes in Elections NWT policies and procedures that will be made to ensure the needed improvements.

14. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer improve and clarify the communications from Elections NWT for topics such as: employer's obligations, access to multiple residency buildings, office hours of Elections NWT offices, special ballots, mobile polls, and signage requirements.

Further, the standing committee recommends that clear and consistent information be available to all candidates and the public concerning the initiation of a complaint, what happens to a complaint, and the consequences of violating the Elections and Plebiscites Act and the decisions and direction from the Chief Electoral Officer.

15. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer work to improve the performance of returning officers and other officials through training.
16. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer increase the number of locations which have opportunities for early voting and increase the use of mobile polls such as at the mine sites.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn the reading of the report over to my standing committee colleague Minister Robert R. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD:

2. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act are needed:

- To establish very clear requirements about signage and location of campaign activities.
 - The distance of signs from the polling station and office of the returning officer would be the same, would be measured from the front door of the building and would be 25 m. The Chief Electoral Officer would have the authority to make exemptions.
 - Campaign activities would similarly not be permitted.
 - The exact words that would be required on campaign material could be identified in the law.
- To give the Chief Electoral Officer the authority to provide the voters' list in a digital format, that can be manipulated, to all candidates.
 - The authority for the Chief Electoral Officer to do this would be established in law to make it certain that it is permitted.
 - The authority to provide the voters' list to MLAs after the election period would be modified or deleted to minimize the appearance of preferential treatment.
- To permit the Chief Electoral Officer to collect information from certain key sources, such as the NWT Health Care Plan registrations list.
 - The accuracy of the voters' list could be improved without significantly increasing costs.
 - The ability to acquire the NWT Health Care Plan list could be identified in law. This is the way the juror's list is now established.
 - The ability to acquire the student financial assistance student list could also be identified in law.
 - These changes would also require supporting amendments to the Medical Care Act and the Student Financial Assistance Act.
- To remove the requirement that returning officers and other officials must be residents in the electoral district.
 - By practice, appointing a resident would be beneficial, but it is not always possible.
- To establish and accelerate the voter identification processes at the polls.
 - The use of "vouching" for voters could apply only in certain communities -- smaller NWT communities, where there are fewer transients. Returning officers in other communities would have to confirm all voters' identification proving citizenship and residency in the electoral district. The types of acceptable identification documents could be identified in the law or its regulations.
- To prohibit the candidate from attending a polling station, except to vote.
- To prohibit candidates and any of their agents at that station from assisting voters in the voting booth.
 - This would still leave friends or family who are not candidates' agents at that station able to assist.
- To permit candidates' agents to be present at the count of the early votes.
- To make the process for special ballots less complicated and faster.

- It could also permit students who are outside their district attending school to have the option of voting in that school electoral district or in their home electoral district.
- Additional research will be undertaken to identify specific solutions that could be considered.

Recommendations

17. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to establish detailed requirements about signage and location of campaign activities as follows:
 - (a) Signs and campaigning activities are to be prohibited within 25 metres of the front door of the polling station or the office of the returning officer.
 - (b) The Chief Electoral Officer is to have the authority to make exemptions from this requirement.
18. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to identify the exact wording regarding sponsorship which will be recorded on campaign material and the requirements for eligibility relating to size and location of the information on the materials.
19. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to give the Chief Electoral Officer the authority to provide the voters' list in a digital format, which can be manipulated, to all candidates and to the elected candidates and MLAS immediately after the election period.
20. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to permit the Chief Electoral Officer to collect information from the NWT Health Care Plan registrations list and the student financial assistance student list. Further, that the Medical Care Act and the Student Financial Assistance Act be amended to support these changes.
21. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to remove the requirement that returning officers and other officials must be residents in the electoral district.
22. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to establish a detailed voter identification process to be used at polling stations in NWT communities with the exception of certain designated small communities.
23. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to prohibit candidates and any other agents from assisting voters in the voting booth.

24. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to permit the attendance of candidates' agents at the count of the early and advanced votes.
25. That the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to make the process for a special ballots list complicated, including permitting students who are outside their district attending school in the NWT to have the option of voting in that school electoral district or in their home electoral district.

Mr. Speaker, I will return this to Mr. Robert Hawkins, MLA, Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, finally...

3. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures will return with additional recommendations after its review and research for the following three topics. This work will be reviewed with Members before September, 2009.
 - Options for criminal records check for the candidates will be examined. This topic raises significant Charter of Rights and Freedoms issues and needs to be carefully considered to understand what the limitations and options are.
 - Additional research to identify specific solutions to improving a special ballot process will be undertaken.
 - Options for improving enforcement will be considered. It may be possible to make amendments so that some simpler enforcement methods can be included such as civil and administrative penalties such as fines, warnings, et cetera. This will take additional research.

Mr. Speaker, any changes also need to include a consideration of requirements for public reporting about enforcing and compliance activities.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 4-16(3) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE CARRIED

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Report of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election. Therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Committee Report 4-16(3) be received by the Assembly and moved into the Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will ask you to change the seconder to your motion. Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-16(3) moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 29-16(3):
NWT POWER CORPORATION 2007-2008
ANNUAL REPORT

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Power Corporation 2007-2008 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

TABLED DOCUMENT 30-16(3):
INTERACTIVITY TRANSFERS OVER \$250,000
FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 2008, TO
DECEMBER 1, 2008

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled List of Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2008, to December 31, 2008. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

TABLED DOCUMENT 31-16(3):
BARREN-GROUND CARIBOU MANAGEMENT
IN THE NWT:
AN INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEW

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Barren-Ground Caribou in the Northwest Territories: An Independent Peer Review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 32-16(3):
2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Pursuant to section 68 of the Access to Information Protection and Privacy Act, I wish to table the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Information and Privacy Commissioner.

I would also like to draw your attention, Members, to the presence of Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts, the Information Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Keenan-Bengts.

---Applause

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Motions

MOTION 16-16(3):
LOW CARBON FUEL STANDARD
CARRIED

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move the low carbon fuel standard motion.

WHEREAS the production and burning of fossil fuels used to power our vehicles, generate electricity and heat our buildings contributes to increased carbon dioxide emissions that are responsible for global climate change;

AND WHEREAS the health of the Northwest Territories ecosystems, including its lakes, rivers, forests, tundra, birds and animals, face increasing threats from climate change and our continued dependence on fossil fuels;

AND WHEREAS the production of fossil fuels derived from the Alberta tar sands emits approximately three times the carbon dioxide pollution per barrel as does conventional oil production and poses significant environmental and health threats to all downstream communities in the Mackenzie Basin;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories purchases over eighteen million litres of fuel on behalf of NWT communities, as well as millions of litres of fuel for its own use on an annual basis, making the government one of the largest purchasers of fuel products in the Territory;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories has established green procurement guidelines that encourage the purchase of goods and services that are environmentally responsible or less environmentally harmful than those currently used;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Greenhouse Gas Strategy and Northwest Territories Energy Strategy, has committed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and the NWT's dependence on imported fossil fuels by investing in more clean, renewable energy sources;

AND WHEREAS the continued reliance on higher-carbon or "dirty" oil slows the Northwest Territories' progress toward clean, renewable energy sources and in meeting our reductions to greenhouse gas emissions;

AND WHEREAS the Dene Nation has recognized the grave environmental and public health threat the Alberta tar sands poses to the Athabasca River and Mackenzie River Basin and has passed a motion calling on all governments in the Northwest Territories and governments across North America to implement a low carbon fuel standard;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake the necessary research and cost-benefit analysis and consider implementing a low carbon fuel standard that decreases the Government of the Northwest Territories' reliance on, or eliminates, the use of unconventional higher-carbon oil by the end of the term of this Assembly;

AND FURTHER that this Legislative Assembly supports the establishment of guidelines for the use of lifecycle analyses that evaluate the greenhouse gas emissions from the production, including the extraction, refining and transportation, of any fuels that are imported into the Northwest Territories by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion asks the government to review our fuel purchasing practices, to look at the carbon intensity of the fuel that we buy and become a discerning customer who selects sources of fuel that have the lowest carbon emissions associated with their extraction, production and transportation. It asks that we change from simply buying fuel blindly, to intelligently seeking out the low carbon fuel. Conventional fuel made from oil extracted from traditional oil wells uses relatively little energy in its production. This causes relatively few carbon emissions. Unconventional fuel or synthetic fuel is manufactured from unconventional sources like tar sands and uses three times the energy, causing three times the emissions of conventional oil. It is also the fastest rising source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

As clearly stated in the Dene leadership meeting two weeks ago, extraction and production of tar sands oil is causing major environmental damage and the huge and toxic tailing ponds perched on the shore and in the area of the Athabasca River are threatening our water and the health of our ecosystem from Fort Smith to the Beaufort Sea.

This motion does not ask the government to change to different products, to buyout fuels or to fuels that do not meet Canadian standards for use under conditions of extreme cold. This motion does ask this government to take a leadership position, one that will help us in our work to negotiate meaningful transboundary water agreements and that contributes to our leadership on climate change through further reductions on emissions. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of this motion. In discussing this motion with colleagues and members of the public, it has become quite clear that there is some confusion about what we are proposing by way of this motion. To be clear, this is not a motion to implement the carbon tax on fuel purchase in the Northwest Territories. It is also not a motion that will result in different grade or quality of fuel being utilized in the Northwest Territories. What this motion is, is an encouragement for the government and residents of the Northwest Territories to purchase fuel, gasoline, automotive diesel, home heating fuel, et cetera, from sources where production of the fuel is less threatening to our continued existence.

For the past five years there has been much talk in the NWT about water quality and water quantity. There are few issues that people are more concerned about.

In September 2006, there was a Keepers of the Waters Conference in Liidlii Kue which declared that water is a sacred gift and an essential element that sustains and connects life. In 2007, the 15th Assembly passed a resolution declaring that water is essential to life and constitutes a fundamental human right. In 2007, the Akaitcho Territory had held their Water is Life Conference. Last October I had the privilege of watching the premiere of a compelling and powerful video Tu Beta Ts'ena: Water is Life, based on this conference. Last November the Dene Nation also had a water conference. This conference passed a resolution calling for an indigenous peoples commission on water.

In 2008, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources released a discussion paper on developing an NWT Water Strategy. This Water Strategy was a joint effort of the GNWT and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The Minister and

Cabinet should be commended for this good piece of work.

Despite all this interest, all this concern and hard work, our water, both in terms of quality and quantity, is still under threat. We as legislators, we as leaders, must do more, while critically important strategies, meetings and commissions alone will not get us the changes we need to protect our waters.

The biggest single threat to water quality in the Northwest Territories, in my opinion, is the Alberta tar sands. The close second is the impact of climate change.

In January I attended a slide show with Andrew Nikiforuk on the tar sands. The size and scope of the tar sands is truly breathtaking. The tar sands is one of the largest, if not the largest, energy developments in the world. At its full potential, the tar sands would cover an area the size of Florida. I have no doubt that, if Alberta and the federal government get their way, they will mine the tar sands to every last drop. If they do that the way they have been doing it so far, the NWT and the people of northern Alberta are in big trouble, to say nothing of the environment. I encourage all Members of this Assembly to check out the latest edition of the National Geographic which begins to show the true size and scale of this project.

What people often don't realize, and what oil companies and the Alberta government don't want you to think about, is that the tar sands are utterly dependent on the Athabasca River. No Athabasca River, no tar sands. The tar sands use enormous amounts of water to produce oil. The tar sands use the same amount of water as a city of two million people. The production of each barrel of tar sands oil requires three barrels of water from the Athabasca River. In theory, most of the water is never supposed to return to the river because once it has been used to help them process the raw bitumen, it's far too toxic to return to the environment. This water is instead stored in giant tailings ponds that now cover 130 square kilometres. The oldest tailings pond, the Tar Island Dyke, is right beside the river itself. We know that these tailings ponds leak. There is no question. This was well-documented recently by environmental groups. Despite this, the Alberta government claims that pollutants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and heavy metals found in the water are natural, I almost got that out. This position defies good science and good common sense.

The fact of the matter is that the Alberta government has historically never wanted to do the science, the comprehensive baseline studies, that would have established the cold, hard truth. They didn't want to risk it proving that they were wrong. The nightmare scenario is of one that these dykes

will breach and thousands of cubic metres of polluted water will spill into the Athabasca and eventually flow to the Slave River and the rest of the Mackenzie Basin, our home.

A second major concern, Mr. Speaker, is the impact of climate change on water quantity. The Athabasca River is fed by Athabaskan Glacier. The melting of this glacier and the doubling, tripling and quadrupling of tar sands production would put a downward pressure on water quantity. Climate change may cause the B.C. government to retain more water for its dams along the Peace River. Note, the Peace River provides roughly 75 percent of the water in the Slave River while the Athabasca provides roughly 25 percent. Alberta always points this out, along with the fact that their total withdrawals from the Athabasca are around 2 to 3 percent of the total flow.

Last but not least, the tar sands are Canada's fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions. Compared to a barrel of conventional oil, three times as many greenhouse gases are emitted in the production of one barrel of tar sands oil. If we, as a country, want others to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to help slow down climate change, we better be prepared to reduce our own emissions.

Neither the Alberta government nor the federal government have been prepared to tackle the greenhouse gas emissions stemming from the tar sands. Do not be fooled by Alberta government's efforts toward carbon sequestration. While the billions that they promise for carbon sequestration sounds impressive, there's little evidence that it will be cost-effective or even work for the huge volume of greenhouse gases coming out of the tar sands.

The Premier of Alberta has stated that he does not want to touch the brakes or slow down when it comes to the tar sands. Despite recent announcements from the Alberta government on such matters as land reclamation, limiting water use...(inaudible)...of greenhouse gases, environmental groups such as the Pembina Institute have determined no dramatic change in policies. The Alberta government mistakenly believes it's a communication problem and not an environmental problem.

I think that as this Assembly, we know that Alberta has an environmental problem and that their environmental problem is our environmental problem. If you believe for a minute that somehow our water is not being affected or that the people of Fort Chipewyan are not really dying from cancer induced by the tar sands, then what about the future? If the tar sands remain unchecked it will be a growing risk to our water, the land, people and animals of both northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The sooner that we and our friends and

allies can bring some sanity to the tar sands, the better off we'll be.

As I've done more research and learned more about the tar sands, the more concerned I get. Yes, the oil companies and the Alberta government and the federal government have started to take some steps to improve or mitigate the impacts of the tar sands; unfortunately, they are minimal and it's not clear that any of them will make any difference. In my opinion, it's insane for the GNWT or our residents of the NWT to buy fuel from the tar sands supplier who clearly disrespects the land, the water, the lifeblood of this Territory. Buying from them is like giving bullets to a crazed gunman who has a rifle pointed at your head and telling him to do as he pleases -- go ahead and shoot.

What can we, as a small jurisdiction, do? I believe that we can actually do an awful lot. Every year the Government of the Northwest Territories buys approximately 18 million litres of fuel for communities. Let's make sure that as little of this fuel comes from the tar sands as possible. Larger jurisdictions such as California, Florida and here in Canada, B.C. and Ontario, have adopted low carbon fuel standards already. A low carbon fuel standard focuses not just on greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fuel itself, but on how many greenhouse gases are produced to refine the fuel and transport it. A good low carbon standard takes what is called lifecycle approach. That is, it will look at fuel's emissions from the wells to the wheels. It should also look at how changes in the land, such as cutting down trees, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. In California they have committed to a 10 percent reduction in greenhouse gas intensity of fuel used for transportation by 2020. Enforcing this standard would involve setting yearly targets and penalizing companies that don't meet that target.

The United States government has taken a different approach. A law is now on the books that states the U.S. government will not buy any non-conventional oil that has higher than average greenhouse gas emissions. Canada and Alberta are lobbying furiously to make sure that that law is interpreted so that it excludes the tar sands. If a low carbon fuel standard is good enough for California, Florida, Ontario, British Columbia and the United States government, then why is it not good enough for the Northwest Territories? Commitment to a low carbon standard will send a real message to the Government of Alberta in a language that they will understand. By adopting this standard we will also be sending a message to the world that we do not accept or condone what Alberta is doing to our water or the environment in general. While our standard will have to be consistent with other larger jurisdictions, I think that in some ways it should be more ambitious. I think that this standard, at a minimum, should apply to all fuels bought by the

GNWT. We may not be able to avoid any tar sands oil, but I think we should minimize it as much as possible.

Currently when we, as residents of the NWT, buy fuel that comes from the tar sands, we are actually supporting our potential demise. We are contributing to companies whose current practices undermine our potential existence here in the Mackenzie Basin. As a Territory, we must send a message to the Alberta government and the oil companies extracting bitumen that their current practices are unacceptable and that unless they change how they produce oil, we are unwilling to buy from them. They must protect our water. A low carbon fuel standard goes a long way to sending a clear message to these companies, the Government of Alberta and the federal government. It also ensures that we, as residents of the Northwest Territories, are not contributing to this potential disaster and are doing our part to protect this incredibly important watershed and the lifeblood of this Territory.

I've had some people suggest that a low carbon fuel standard will affect some of our more expensive communities; communities where fuel has to be shipped during specific seasons such as Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, and Paulatuk. Currently the fuel for these communities comes from Korea, British Columbia and California and is shipped by barge over the top. As a result, they would not be affected in any way by the GNWT implementing a low carbon fuel standard and the products that they are buying from that already meet low carbon fuel standards of other jurisdictions. It is safe to assume that they'll meet ours as well.

Some Members, Mr. Speaker, may be wondering will this cost more. I believe that we can set a standard that will be meaningful and not cost us more money. As a note, if a cap and trade system were introduced in North America, then everyone will be paying more for tar sands oil anyway. There is a chance that we may have to pay a premium for low carbon fuel standards, but if we truly believe that the water is sacred, if we truly believe that water is a human right, surely, then, we should be prepared to pay a small premium that will protect our water and the environment.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, the Pembina Institute released a paper on the impact of the tar sands on the water of the Northwest Territories. It called for a moratorium on the new tar sands leases until the tar sands cleaned up their act. The week before, the Dene Nation passed a motion calling for basically the same thing. They also called for a low carbon fuel standard for NWT communities.

Here in the NWT and across North America there is a growing desire to get the Alberta government and the tar sands companies to clean up their act. The

message from the people of the Northwest Territories is clear: that people want this government to act and act effectively. We need to ratchet up our pressure on the Alberta government and I say adopting a low carbon fuel standard for the Northwest Territories is the first step in this direction.

Does supporting this motion mean that we'll never buy fuel originally from the tar sands? No. It means once companies producing oil from the tar sands and the Alberta government implement production practices that don't jeopardize our water and reduce the amount of carbon consumed to produce the end product, they, too, can meet our low carbon fuel standards. Once they do that, we'll be able to purchase from them again.

In 1947, a research engineer, Mr. Karl A. Clark, said, after studying the tar sands, "I don't think there is any use trying to make out that the tar sands are other than a second line of defence against dwindling oil supplies." Oil supplies are clearly dwindling around the world. Do the tar sands offer a reprieve as the world moves in a more responsible direction with clean energy? The tar sands are good for the Canadian economy. The tar sands will continue to be developed. However, just because they can and should be produced doesn't mean that it should be done irresponsibly and threaten other potentially more valuable resources such as water. Mankind has put man on the moon. Certainly mankind can find a responsible way to turn bitumen into oil that does not jeopardize the existence and health of the Mackenzie Basin, our home.

Let's pass this motion and encourage the oil companies and the Alberta government to take our continued existence in our Territory seriously. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support the motion. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had many discussions with Mr. Bromley, the mover of the motion, and I'll speak in favour, but softly. I'm not convinced it's the best move for our smaller communities. I've got small communities that are dependent on the fuel that is transported by our government and whatever product they buy, our communities are locked into it. The low carbon fuel standard, I'm given to understand, is tested in the harsh conditions of California, but they really don't test...Preliminary tests have shown that the low carbon fuel doesn't work in our colder temperatures, at 30 below, and to have an insolvent product like that where our communities really have no alternative...The larger communities do, Mr. Speaker. Inuvik, Hay River, Yellowknife, they've got a free market. They've got somewhere else to get their fuel. But in the smaller communities that are

isolated, like Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake and some of the other ridings have very isolated communities.

For me, I'm curious to know what's out there. I'm supporting the motion because the motion speaks about doing the research. It's speaking about doing a cost-benefit analysis of what impact it would have on government. I'm curious to know that. I believe we do it to ourselves to examine the new fuel de jure that are out there to see what's beneficial, to see what can be helpful to greenhouse emissions, greenhouse gases. I believe it's incumbent that we should look at the different products that are out there.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of the motion. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am in support of this motion and that should be no surprise as I have supported other initiatives associated with greening the government previously. I believe that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and that we all have to do our part. By we, I mean the Government of the Northwest Territories, other Canadian governments, each of us in this room, each of our residents. The Government of Canada, to me, in my estimation, are not doing their part and it seems that we have to show them the way. This is one of the ways that we can do that.

I think that the GNWT is actively working to lessen the impacts of climate change on the North. I think that going to a low carbon fuel standard is another opportunity for us as a government to put our money where our mouth is. It's been said that the per person greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT are the highest in the country or pretty close to it. There are lots of valid reasons for that, but that does not excuse us from taking steps to lessen the impact that the greenhouse gas emissions will have on all of us. We're the first to see and feel the effects of climate change and anything that we can do to reverse that trend, even a little bit, is a step in the right direction.

It's widely acknowledged that oil produced from the northern Alberta tar sands creates three times the carbon dioxide pollution as does conventional oil production. They need machines for mining which are not needed in conventional oil production. They need natural gas to heat the bitumen underground that is not needed in conventional oil production. They have a need for hydrogen which they have to add to the bitumen, and the hydrogen has to come from natural gas. All those three things are extra additions to the production of carbon dioxide which are not necessary in conventional production.

The GNWT purchases millions of litres of fuel each year and we have the opportunity to influence the

production of the carbon dioxide in our world through our fuel purchase. By buying low carbon fuel we're forcing the oil producers to reduce their CO2 emissions or chance not selling their product.

The end products of both conventional and unconventional oil are the same, it's just how it got there that is different. This is not a different product that we're talking about. We're talking about whether it is fuel that creates a high amount of carbon dioxide in its production or conventional oil production which creates fewer greenhouse gas emissions and carbon dioxide emissions. To me, it's unlikely that our processes and our procedures will have to change very much. We already get most of our fuel from Asia and from the west coast, so I believe that we're already using a minimal amount of dirty oil. I don't think we're going to have to change things much at all in our purchasing practices.

I fully support the actions that are called for in the motion: to do the necessary research, to consider the implementation of a low carbon fuel standard, to establish guidelines to evaluate greenhouse gas emissions associated with the fuels that we import. These are all rational, sensible actions and I fully support the motion and encourage all Members to support it as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, will be supporting the motion because it does call for a study from this government. I think that from our communities where we do have a high dependency on fossil fuels from running our power generation to heating our homes, that's just the reality of a small, isolated community.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we do have to show our part to the rest of the world that we are being impacted by global warming, but more important questions to us is what are we doing to reduce our footprint and the impact on climate change. Mr. Speaker, I think we do have to show the rest of the world that we are facing this challenge head on. We are the ones that are realizing the most impact from climate change in regard to the effect it's having on the Arctic and the Northwest Territories. I believe, Mr. Speaker, we do have to, as a government and as Canadians, realize that, next to the United States, we have a very high dependency on fossil fuels and the affect it's having on global warming.

On that, Mr. Speaker, I do have to point out, like Mr. Menicoche, that we, from small communities, realize that this motion could have a very detrimental effect on the style of power we generate, the way we heat our homes by using these different types of fuels. Again, as the motion states, this government will be directing the

government to do our research and analyze the problem and look at alternative fuels that we can come forward. I believe that the technology and basically looking at our energy strategies, looking at the greenhouse gas emissions and stuff that we're trying in the Northwest Territories like hydro or looking at more dependency on natural gas is stuff that we have to come forward with.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to point out that, yes, the Government of the Northwest Territories purchases some 18 million litres of fuel, but the diamond mines use more fuel than that. I think, if anything, in the Northwest Territories we have to also approach the industry and let them know that we'd like them to consider these changes along with the Government of the Northwest Territories so that it is a real made-in-the-North solution in regard to finding ways to reduce our effects in regard to global warming and the use of fossil fuels which are affecting greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I, for one, feel that through this study and this research that we're directing the government to do, and hopefully come forward before the end of the term of this government, that we can use that information that's presently being compiled. But again, I believe because this is a global challenge, especially with what's happening worldwide, that we do have to do our part.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion and realizing that we are doing our part to set the example for the rest of the world and the rest of the people in Canada. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by thanking Mr. Bromley for moving the motion. I've been working with Mr. Bromley now for over a year and a half and I've become much more cognizant of the environment and the issues surrounding the environment -- alternative energy sources and how we can become greener. I'd like to thank Mr. Bromley and other Members, too, who have brought a green focus. I know the Minister of ENR, Mr. Miltenberger, also brings that green focus. I think if anything is going to turn around the slumping economy on a global scale, it's going to be this shift to alternative energy sources and government around the world looking at different ways of doing things. I think that's going to help turn things around globally.

Here in the Northwest Territories I think we need to, as other Members have said, do our part when it comes to addressing issues of climate change. We don't have to look very far in our own territory for examples of climate change. Last summer I was up in Sachs Harbour and Banks Island and we were out with some community leaders in a boat. You could actually see the island falling into the Arctic

Ocean or the Beaufort Sea. It was really something that stuck in my mind. This is happening not only on Banks Island, but in other parts.

In Tuktoyaktuk there's a lot of shoreline erosion there as well. We have much more prevalence of species that aren't native to the Northwest Territories: the white-tailed deer and there's coyotes in Yellowknife. When I was a little boy growing up in Yellowknife, there were never coyotes here. They're here now in big numbers.

Also, I think I've mentioned this before, but last summer at the golf course there were frogs. As a little boy, too, we'd always look for frogs. There were the little wood frogs that you'd find on occasion, but now we have these aquatic green frogs that are taking up residence here in Yellowknife. That's because of climate change and the effect that climate change is having on the environment.

I certainly do support the motion. I don't think the motion is about changing the fuel that we use. It's about looking at where we purchase that fuel from and making sure it's from an operation that is environmentally friendly. I think there's nothing wrong with looking at this and doing our part.

Again, I want to thank the mover for the motion. I think it's very important that we all understand our role in trying to make the world a better place and doing our part for the environment. I thank the Member and I thank the other Members who have spoken in favour of the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion speaks to a number of issues and the biggest one I guess we have, as people of the Northwest Territories, is our dependency on fossil fuels. We have created a dependency over a number of years, ever since the Norman Wells oilfield started up in the 1920s. We have created the dependency. Before, many of my people lived off the land on the natural ability of what the land has given to them. Since the oil has come into the Northwest Territories and since we started to introduce the furnaces and all the other things that we need to heat our homes and power our communities, we have created a real dependency on fossil fuels.

Just recently we started to create a new way of thinking, a new attitude in the Northwest Territories more so because of the southern news that we get and the amount of pollution and the way that things are looking in the southern parts of the United States and even in Canada in terms of global economics, global change, and the attitudes of people now are starting to differ in terms of the fuel that's being produced from the ground here. It's noted that even in the Alberta tar sands, for one

barrel, 45 gallons of fuel, it takes about three to six barrels of water to produce that one barrel.

The breaking of the fossil fuel will take some time here, so I think this motion speaks to having our government seriously look at this type of dependency. The burning of fossil fuels in our communities certainly is used for our own power, for our own vehicles, even our power plants to generate electricity and heat our homes.

Again, I point to the issue of climate change. We're seeing more and more of how prevalent this issue is and how different regions, countries, nations are forming conferences and forums to talk about climate change. You see it every so often on the news in terms of the global warming.

I believe this government here has initiated frontier money in terms of hydro, clean energy, wind energy, other energy that is going to be cleaner, cheaper for our communities. I see that as an initiative that I fully support.

The Alberta tar sands is a real threat for the people of the Northwest Territories. This year, the Alberta tar sands is a live-and-die issue for us in the Northwest Territories. I think now that National Geographic, the Minister of ENR has met with the Alberta counterparts, the people in the Northwest Territories are starting to see if even the federal government is jumping on board. The Alberta tar sands, as much as it's producing the economics and the dollars, in the future I think it's going to be live and die for us in the Northwest Territories. That water somehow gets contaminated to a point where we have to start maybe even importing bottled water for ourselves. I'm thinking about 20, 30, 50 years in the future. I'm thinking about this threat here and how it's going to affect us all along the Mackenzie River.

In 50 years, God willing I'll still be standing, maybe sitting, but I know this issue here is a real threat, because my elders have talked about this threat. I didn't know what they meant about the Mackenzie River being poisoned or drying up. In 1979, '78, I didn't know what Chief Paul Wright and Chief George Kodakin were speaking about in our communities, until I started reading about the tar sands, the leakage and what they're putting in the rivers and how it's coming down. Maybe we won't see it today, maybe not in 10 years, but we're going to see it. This threat is real and it's alive and if I don't speak up for it and other Members speak up for it, mark my words, in 30 to 40 years you might see something. I hope they can read the Hansard and say that's what they're talking about.

I think we, as a government, have to really look at this here and really protect our people. Every spring we go in the bush and fall time we go in the bush and we live on water. Animals live on water. People down the Great Slave Lake live on water. That's our life. That's our land. I think this government here

has to stand up and say this is more important than economics.

The government purchased over 18 million litres of fuel for our communities. That's not counting the government. We depend on the fuel from the government because we have that dependency. This is what they brought into our communities. We have gone green. There is a new initiative on green. I believe that we are going through a transition phase right now.

My question will be to the government. How are we going to implement these new low carbon fuel standards? How is it going to be implemented? There's a cost for implementing these new low carbon fuel standards to our people. There's going to be a cost to us. I believe that. I believe in our communities we pay high enough on our fuel for our vehicles and our energy. My question is, until I see real clean, reliable energy in my communities in the Sahtu for hydro, wind, solar panels, geothermal or whatever, we are depending on fossil fuel. We are depending on it because we haven't seen any initiatives yet to really see results. We have talked about some programs. We talked about some initiatives. It's going to cost us additional dollars to raise the cost of fossil fuel in my communities with the prices all too high right now.

I think there are bigger issues that need to be looked at. Until I see that there's energy initiatives like wood boiler furnaces in the communities in my region, like hydro initiatives that can start up construction next year or this year, until I see that in my region, I have to say that because the price of fuel is costing lots...Elders have talked to me about the global changes. They know. They say even today it's hard for them to read the weather. It's so difficult in terms of that.

This year I'm going to not support this motion until I really see some initiatives on what the real cost of the carbon fuel is. I know what Mr. Bromley's talking about; the greenhouse. I know that's an issue for me. Right now this motion, I think it's going to be somewhat detrimental to my communities so I'm not going to support the motion. But I'm going to have other issues that I'd like to embark on further in terms of some of the points here. There are some real good points in this motion, but I think we need to really look seriously at this before we go ahead with it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a couple of comments on this motion. First of all, the 16th Legislative Assembly has made a commitment to action that will help ensure our environment sustains present and future generations. That will be done through the implementation of alternate energy substitutes

for diesel fuel, such as wood pellet boilers, natural gas turbines, wood turbines, hydroelectric power. We're working to ensure that the Northwest Territories continues to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.

The State of California recently introduced low carbon fuel standards, a policy similar to what the Member has proposed here today. The policy is meant to reduce the reliance on petroleum-based fuels for transportation use and also to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the use of ethanol-based blended gasoline and biodiesel fuels. While this product can work well in the larger, warmer climates such as California, it has been demonstrated that these biofuels are not suitable for use in the extremely cold weather. Their use in the Northwest Territories is not recommended by our suppliers at this time.

Our fuel supplied to the PPD must adhere to the Canadian General Standards Board's cold climate specifications. And in addition to that, there is only a limited amount of ultra low sulphur diesel fuel and winter grade gasoline produced to these specifications for our own use here in the Northwest Territories. If we were to choose to limit or totally cut ourselves off entirely from the supply, we would run the risk of being unable to obtain fuel that meets our needs. We're talking about 18 communities that are serviced by PPD. We're also talking about 20 of our NTPC sites and also for our own use in different areas of our departments.

A large portion of our fuel is purchased by PPD and that is sourced from the west coast of North America and Asia and then shipped to the Western Arctic for distribution to NWT communities. In 2008 nearly half of PPD's fuel supply was purchased outside of Canada and it is planned that this will continue in 2009 and also into the future years.

The feedstock for this fuel is not extracted from the oil sands but rather from conventional means. For the 2008 summer marine resupply, most of the diesel fuel was supplied by a refinery located in the State of California and Jet A-1 aviation fuel was supplied by a South Korean refinery. The rest of the diesel, gasoline, and Jet A-1 aviation fuel that was delivered by tug and barge was obtained from Imperial Oil's refinery in Alberta.

Imperial Oil refines crude oil for western Canada at its Strathcona refinery near Edmonton and obtains crude oil from unconventional sources -- oil sands and deep heavy oil sources -- as well as conventional crude oil from Norman Wells and other locations. Shell Canada refines crude oil for western Canada at its Godford, Alberta, refinery. This fuel is refined entirely from oil sands products. Bluewave Energy, a Shell Canada branded reseller, was the only compliant bidder for the PPD supply contract to provide fuel to communities served by the winter road.

Fuel purchased by PPD for communities served by winter road is shipped through the Hay River Imperial Oil terminal. During the winter months, the petroleum products that are originally from Shell and from Imperial Oil are combined in the tanks at Hay River; diesel fuel with diesel fuel and gasoline with gasoline according to specification, not segregated according to the manufacturer.

About half the oil produced in Canada now originates from the oil sands. There's a limited conventional crude available. So virtually all petroleum refined in western Canada contains some oil sands product. A policy that would prohibit or limit the ability of PPD or any other NWT supplier or distributor from obtaining fuel that is originating in the oil sands or was only produced by conventional means would likely mean and likely result in higher costs of such non oil sands fuel and, more importantly, result in an increased cost of living for Northwest Territories residents and businesses.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is investing in alternative energy substitutes such as wood pellet boilers, natural gas turbines, wind turbines, hydroelectric power, the proposed \$60 million investment in energy initiatives announced in the 2009 budget speech. The GNWT will do more to reduce the NWT's reliance on fossil fuels than will developing procurement policies or prohibit and limit the purchase of petroleum fuel that comes from the oil sands.

A number of biomass heating projects funded under the Capital Asset Retrofit Program are planned for implementation in 2009-2010. Energy saving initiatives include the use of cold weather air-to-air heat pumps and conversion of three GNWT buildings in Fort Smith to electric heat using surplus from the Taltson Dam. Projects funded under the Canada Eco Trust in 2008-2009 include the wood pellet boiler in Behchoko, the electric heat conversion of the DOT garage in Fort Smith, wood pellet boilers in Kalemí Dene School in Ndilo. These projects are estimated to result in a total cost savings of approximately \$1.1 million a year, reduce greenhouse gas emission reductions by more than 4,100 tonnes per year, and displace nearly 1.4 million litres of diesel fuel annually.

Potential future projects will result in further permanent reductions in petroleum consumption. In addition to initiatives, Public Works is also performing asset renovations and upgrades to reduce energy use in buildings, including: improved insulation; the retrofit of lighting; the replacement of windows, doors, heating systems and installation of solar domestic hot water systems. The Good Building Practices for Northern Facilities guidebook is now being updated with the focus on the design and construction of energy-efficient buildings for the Northwest Territories. These efforts will all serve to effectively reduce our consumption of fossil fuels

and provide measurable results and cost savings and a significant reduction of greenhouse gas.

It is more constructive and better for the environment to continue to invest in new technology to actually reduce the consumption of diesel fuel than to develop a policy that would limit the ability of PPD or any other NWT supplier or distributor from obtaining fuel that originated in the oil sands or was only produced by conventional means. Such a policy will not result in less diesel fuel being consumed, but will mostly likely result in higher costs of such non oil sands fuel and, more importantly, result in increasing the cost of living for NWT residents and businesses.

Such a policy if applied to the non-government sector would also adversely impact resource development, such as a policy means only increasing the cost of exploration and exploration development.

As with our practice, this motion is a recommendation to the government and Cabinet will not be voting on this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Greenhouse gas emissions are additive and any effort to reduce them is indeed necessary. We must first look at what we can do in the communities and, more broadly, in the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has been working toward reducing the reliance on diesel and other forms of gasoline to keep our communities warm, whether it is in heating homes or generating electricity. We are researching ways to replace the use of diesel with environmentally friendly fuels. The Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, or MECC, has developed a multi-year Energy Priorities and Investment Plan designed to make a number of investments aimed at displacing the use of imported diesel and reducing the cost of living in Northwest Territories communities.

Many of the initiatives included within the EPI Plan have the goal of reducing the use of imported diesel for energy generation, including development of hydro resources, expand the use of biomass, a commitment to develop wind energy in Beaufort communities, a commitment to support the investigation of geothermal potential, a commitment to pursue the use of Northwest Territories natural gas.

One of the five pillars of the Northwest Territories Energy Plan which was released in March 2007, is to reduce our own dependence on fossil fuels. As stated in the Energy Plan, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a tremendous investment in physical assets amounting to over \$1.6 billion

utilizing more than 18 million litres of fuel. The Government of the Northwest Territories is leading by example and making additional efforts to reduce the economic and environmental costs associated with Government of the Northwest Territories assets.

Through the normal course of operations, the Government of the Northwest Territories department undertakes a variety of energy efficiencies and conservation measures. One of the specific initiatives in the EPI Plan is to reduce the Government of the Northwest Territories reliance on fossil fuels and includes \$2.5 million in 2009 to fund the purchase and installation of biomass wood pellet heating systems in facilities in Hay River, Harry Camsell, Princess Alexandra, Ecole Boreale and Diamond Jenness schools and the highways maintenance garage in Fort Smith and they help to reduce operating costs and GHG emissions. The results of this initiative could include the following: reduction in fuel consumption of more than a million litres per year, annual cost savings of more than \$700,000 for the payback of three and a half years, greenhouse gas emission reductions of approximately of 3,000 tonnes per year.

We will continue to work with our colleague in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to look for ways that business can reduce energy waste in the workplace. We must also look at what we can do on a larger scale or continental level. The demand for energy is rising, but so too is the ever increasing output of greenhouse gas emissions. We must find solutions. The Mackenzie Gas Project, one source of natural gas from the Arctic, will provide a solution. Arctic natural gas can play a key role in addressing the rising demand for electricity. Arctic natural gas includes gas from the Mackenzie Gas Project, liquefied natural gas from both Russia and Norway and Alaskan natural gas.

Two years ago, the Government of the Northwest Territories asked Virginia-based Energy and Environmental Analysis to consider the implications of continental carbon emissions of northern gas could not be developed as currently anticipated. The findings were dramatic. Their analysis showed that in the absence of northern natural gas, carbon emissions associated with the use of coal for electricity generation in United States and Canada would increase by 258 million tonnes from 2014 to 2025. In the absence of Arctic natural gas, the analysis undertaken by the department has shown that carbon emissions associated with the use of coal for electricity generation in the United States and Canada would increase by 258 million tonnes from 2014 to 2025. Simply put, the combustion of coal releases far more greenhouse gas emissions than natural gas. Replace coal with clean burning natural gas and emissions will go down. So what is the outrage against coal? Carbon emissions from

the oil sands are dwarfed by the thermal coal plants in the United States and Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the National Geographic story recognizes that oil sands count for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of global carbon emissions. What the oil sands need is a plan to protect the environment. Without the oil sands, foreign oil would make up the much greater percentage of Canada supply; nearly one-quarter more. Prices for everything from electricity to home heating fuel to gasoline would be undoubtedly much higher and there would be concerns about where the energy would come from.

Every development has some environmental issues. The same is true with alternative energy. Alternative energy needs backup which will be fuelled by fossil fuels.

In conclusion, we are looking at every possible opportunity, both short term and long term to replace burning fossil fuels with energy solutions that will work in our climate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am reminded of a saying that goes: careful about what you ask for. In this particular case, I am going to provide the most cautious support possible for this motion. The reason I say this is because I am a big fan of doing business better. I certainly see that in the expectation and certainly the hopes of Mr. Bromley as he brings this forward, but my pragmatic side wants to go forward but cautiously. I am interested but I want to be sure what we are getting into. Mr. Speaker, the costs are unknown. I know my good colleague will say the costs are real and well understood. He may say the costs are too high if we don't do it. That may be his perspective as well. But, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned and I think the honourable Minister Michael McLeod said it well. Concerns about costs and quality of fuel weigh heavily on my mind. Yet again I say, careful what we ask for. Mr. Speaker, the reason I will, again, I stress very cautiously support this motion because Mr. Bromley was willing to make accommodation for me that reflect my major concern, which is about consider implementing this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think that was a willing compromise to me that is a big deal. What it does is emphasizes that it is okay to go look at this issue. It is okay to study this issue a little bit and perhaps maybe even experiment through a pilot project, in my view. When we say consider, in my view that is how I see this, as this is a chance to take a look at this issue. Even ideas I don't necessarily like or fully support, I will support the fact that let's give something a try

and take a good look at it. Every idea deserves its chance to be able to stand on its own.

Mr. Speaker, I have to emphasize, as well, that I think this government is setting a hallmark for one thing and its certain attention to the way it views environment issues as a whole going forward. I have not seen in my time and watching government -- and believe me, I have been watching since I was a young teen because I have been interested as a kid -- I have never seen a government so concerned about its impact on the world. I would define that as one of our defining hallmarks of any Assembly that has ever come forward. I certainly hope that type of consideration will go forward on future Assemblies, if not forever on a permanent basis.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am just going to stress that, as I started off by saying, be careful what we ask for, Mr. Speaker, without knowing the fullness of the results. I am very cautious and concerned about where this will take us, but I do support the analysis of this. I do support a full consideration on this. That is how I see this motion being drawn up, is to look into this venture and, if at the time, it is worthy of standing on its own merits, perhaps I will be supporting it. I may be the loudest trumpeter here for this initiative if those results prove to be as they are. Mr. Speaker, I will support it, but I exercise my caution as we go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, I just feel that this motion is good for the economy. However, I will not support the motion. I think that this time with current state of economy and not knowing the full cost analysis of this and not knowing the impacts upon the cost that would be passed on to the communities...I do have a PPD community in Lutselk'e and also not knowing the impacts it would have on a private entrepreneur in a place like Fort Resolution to be able to purchase fuel if we were to have this type of restriction imposed upon the government and the government being a big purchaser of fuel. I don't know what the impacts are is the bottom line. I know that it probably will be good for the economy, but at the same time I don't want to see this as something that is a very immediate concern for our communities, the cost of living and so on. I don't want to see the cost of living increase as a result of a motion that we make here in the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to briefly speak about this motion as well. We don't often get a chance to talk

in this House and have a discussion where we can exchange thoughts. Generally we talk in a very specific, often high-minded way about the environment. I think we all share a common concern. It is one of our key principles. There has been a wide ranging discussion here today that has touched on water, cumulative impacts, being residents of the Mackenzie Basin, the need for integrated watershed management, but this motion, as well, speaks very specifically to how we currently do business.

As we have heard from some of my colleagues, we are spending tens of millions of dollars to limit our reliance on fossil fuels. We are going to make significant and I hope long-term commitments to getting all the diesel communities onto some other type of energy within the next, hopefully, five years or so. It is a very ambitious agenda. We are not stopping with that. We are looking at recycling. We are looking at all the other things we can do that are energy efficient.

When we look to our southern borders, while we have strong concerns about what is being done, Alberta is not our enemy. Alberta is our neighbour. We have to work together to come up with the best way possible to protect the Mackenzie River basin watershed. We have to work together to make sure that we have the best plan possible for the tar sands.

Like it or not, we are going to be reliant on oil for some time, probably the rest of our normal living lives here as we look to the future unless something dramatic is discovered. In the meantime, as legislators, as the heads of government, as ones making decisions for our people, we have to be aware of all the things that are happening around us. We have to be aware that sometimes political action may have implementation consequences that we have to be cognizant of. While this is only a recommendation to government and there is work to be done, we do have to be aware of the implications should we choose or should the direction be to proceed down a path.

California is a trend setter, but California and the Northwest Territories is probably 70 degrees difference from their hottest day to our coldest. We have to be sensitive to that. As my colleague Minister Michael McLeod indicated, this is a very complex issue. It will benefit us to know as much as possible. I would suggest a lot of the information on the second part of the motion about the lifecycle analysis, greenhouse gas emissions, when we look at where we are buying our product from, that information would be available. I don't think we are going to have to reinvent the wheel or spend a lot of our scarce resources doing that kind of research.

Our job I think in the long term is to get us off fuel. I think the plan that we laid out with the alternative energy and all the work we do with hydro, biomass,

geothermal, wind in those areas are going to pay us the big dividends. In the meantime, for those buildings that we are going to continue to heat, we are looking at building standards and all the things necessary to minimize that use.

I think we all want the same thing. We have committed just through this budget passed in this House a couple of days ago for us massive investment I would suggest that no other jurisdiction is doing. We are going to soon have a Water Strategy that no other jurisdiction will have that will give us the foundation, the policy base to sit down and negotiate the bilaterals with Alberta, with B.C., with Saskatchewan and it will give us the foundation to go to the federal/provincial/territorial table to make the case for a national water strategy. Once again, that is a very fundamental, probably the most fundamental issue that is before us. We don't want to lose sight of that fact.

This latest effort to focus our attention, our political energy, is there. We just have to be careful on how it could be applied or the application that could result from this. I do believe, as Mr. Hawkins said, that this Assembly has embarked upon probably, if I may use the word, the greenest path of any Assembly that I have been involved in the last four Assemblies. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. I will allow the mover of the motion for some wrap-up comments. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has indeed been an interesting debate. I am very appreciative of all the thoughts and consideration that has been given to the comments today and sharing those.

Mr. Speaker, clearly doing something new can be scary. Being a leader can be challenging. I appreciate the consideration of this and what this is actually calling on this government to do. In my introductory remarks, apparently some people in the Cabinet missed that comment. I would like to repeat that. This motion does not ask the government to change to different products, to ethanol or biofuels or fuels that do not meet Canadian standards for use under conditions of extreme cold. I want to make that clear. I am not proposing a California low carbon fuel standards. I have said that repeatedly. I think some Members, at least on this side of the House, are clearly understanding that.

Somebody mentioned limited supply. Mr. Speaker, 25 percent of the fuel now in western Canada comes from unconventional sources. That could very well be increasing rapidly as we run out of conventional sources. This would require seeking out those conventional sources and becoming a customer of those things.

Again, Mr. Michael McLeod mentioned that it calls for no unconventional fuel. It does not call for that. It calls for lowering of the average carbon content.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of comments here that pose this as a you will do this sort of approach. I would like to just briefly reiterate that it calls for undertaking the necessary research and cost-benefit analysis and consider implementing a low carbon fuel standard. It calls for support for the establishment of guidelines through the use of lifecycle analyses that evaluate the greenhouse gas emissions from the production of fuels imported into the Territories. So let's be clear about what this is calling for, Mr. Speaker.

I have heard Mr. Miltenberger refer to California as a trend setter but I wonder about Ontario, if Ontario could be considered as a trend setter on climate change or indeed the U.S. government or the U.S. military. Would they be considered? Of course, they have adopted a much more stringent Low Carbon Fuel Policy.

Mr. Beaulieu, I appreciated his comments. He understandably doesn't know what the impacts of this policy would be. Based on what this motion actually calls for, I hope he will change his mind and support the motion because, indeed, what this motion calls for is the answer to that question. What would be the impact of a low carbon fuel standard?

Mr. Speaker, what is the intent of the proposed motion? The proposed motion attempts to ensure that the fuel the GNWT purchases for community resupply and its own operations are not sourced from high carbon fuels such as the Alberta tar sands. Enforcing a low carbon fuel standard is an important addition to comprehensive efforts granted to reduce our overall greenhouse gas emissions. Tar sands production in Alberta represents a growing environmental threat to the NWT, as laid out by speakers today. Compared to conventional oil, it takes much more greenhouse gas emissions to produce tar sands oil and so on. Of course, we are speaking out in support of the Dene leadership resolution.

We have also learned what low carbon fuel is. There is no difference in the products that we are talking about bringing in. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is supporting further those products that we have been using for the last five or eight decades in the Northwest Territories, in our communities. The new fuel is the unconventional stuff. That is the high fuel that is costly in terms of carbon. What we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is let's go back to that tried and true stuff that actually has low carbon emissions. Again, I want to be clear about that. Let's not be baffled by the comments from the Minister of Transportation on this.

The production of tar sands oil that we have heard has many aspects to it that are costly both to our environment and to our pocketbook. The end

products are both the same. To be clear, Mr. Speaker, the production of tar sands oil causes 86 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions for each barrel of oil produced compared to 26 kilograms for conventional oil.

We have also heard that there are a number of other jurisdictions -- Ontario, British Columbia, a number of U.S. states -- that are moving to low carbon fuel standards and I suspect that more will be as time goes by.

In 2008 the GNWT sourced much of its community resupply from California and Korea, as we've heard, through the over-the-top resupply and these would be considered low carbon fuels. However, for resupply from Alberta, approximately one-third of our 2008 resupply, as we've heard, was purchased with high carbon fuel or tar sands fuel. This motion strongly recommends that with the necessary research and analysis, alternatives to that fuel should be sought so that the average carbon intensity of our fuel goes down over time. It may not be easy, but this is what we're recommending.

In researching and preparing resupply contracts, government would have to seek and confirm those suppliers who can and will supply information on the origin or blended average of a given batch. As more jurisdictions demand this information, the easier it will become to get it. As proposed, the standard will only apply to fuel purchased by the GNWT. Given the size of the GNWT and the scope of this standard, the GNWT could enforce the low carbon fuel requirements through purchasing policies. As a starting point, the GNWT needs to get information from different sources on the carbon intensities of fuels from different refineries or suppliers likely to bid on the resupply contract.

The GNWT would then have to set some carbon intensity targets for the fuel it buys. Setting these targets will be critical. If it sets the target too low, the target will not be meaningful. If it sets it so high as to preclude any tar sands oil, it may greatly reduce the number of refineries capable of meeting the standard. The GNWT would then calculate the carbon intensity of the batch of fuel based on a particular lifecycle analysis. As a small jurisdiction, it will be important to use an approach that is consistent with ones used in other jurisdictions. To that end, it would make sense for the GNWT to work closely with other Canadian jurisdictions to develop a comprehensive lifecycle analysis and a strong standard.

Initially, it's possible that the winning supplier will fully meet the carbon intensity target. In the future it is possible that the low carbon intensity supplier will come in at a higher price and, as a result, the GNWT would have to pay a bit more to meet its own standard, or the price will be the same but the distance transported will be greater. On the other hand, if the U.S. government and the federal

government introduce carbon cap and trading as expected, tar sands oil will have higher pollution costs and, therefore, it could be more expensive compared to conventional oil. In this case, as an established customer for conventional low carbon fuel, the GNWT may well be positioned for ongoing purchasing opportunities without penalty or even with savings.

I recognize that Minister Michael McLeod played the cost of living card and I found that an interesting strategy. I'm sure it elicited some fear in some people out there, but I think people are becoming more and more knowledgeable about this and what the opportunities are out there.

On the bigger picture side of things, Mr. Speaker, this motion is about clean water, it's about fighting climate change and it's about leadership. About recognizing we must now act and take a new path, as my colleague from the Sahtu said. Currently, most of our communities are located in the Mackenzie River watershed downstream of the tar sands. We are, by now, all familiar with the vast and toxic tailings ponds perched on the banks and in the vicinity of the Athabasca River which feeds directly into the Slave and Mackenzie River systems. We know that these man-made reservoirs are leaking to an unknown but significant degree, and that with catastrophic weather or other unpredictable events, there is some degree of risk that one or more could suddenly fail. The results are unthinkable. Except that we have to think about this, about the consequences and about what power we have to influence management of such situations. We need to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, how much do we value our clean water and the vibrant land it supports.

We are currently developing an NWT Water Strategy and we hope to eventually negotiate transboundary water agreements to safeguard our water and associated ecosystems. I believe I saw \$336,000 in the budget for this, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, Alberta has a reputation as a focused and hard-nosed neighbour. Alberta and B.C. might well respond to our attempts to negotiate but how much more likely would they be to negotiate if there were backup systems to ensure that we had their attention; systems such as leadership and purchasing practices that were tied to our principles and that were supported by all our communities and cultures. To negotiate with Alberta, the NWT will need to be strong, to be clear, and to be a jurisdiction with a record of performance of leadership and of standards. Adoption and conformance to low carbon fuel is one such decision that can indicate those standards. Let's take it to the bank, Mr. Speaker.

On the issue of climate change, we now know that all governments must do everything in their power to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. In the

Northwest Territories we see our Beaufort shoreline receding at an accelerated pace, necessitating the eventual and expensive move of Tuktoyaktuk. We see our wildlife under stress, affecting our diets and our community economies, our highways and building foundations requiring costly rehabilitation, and our sea ice and associated cultures disappearing. Over the past decade Canada has fallen far behind on the issue of climate change mitigation and we've gained a sadly deserved and tarnished reputation. We now know what is needed and here in the Northwest Territories we can act decisively.

The low carbon fuel standard does not hold a candle to replacing our use of fossil fuel with renewable energy as it has been highlighted today. Those things we are beginning to do in a big way. It does not have nearly the potential that conservation and increasing energy efficiency can achieve in our communities. Rather, it is meant to be an additional part of our response, an indication that we are aware and acting with that awareness of the need to reduce emissions wherever we can and in a way that supports other goals like clean water and healthy ecosystems that support us from the border to the Beaufort-Delta. We know there are other active partners, such as British Columbia, Ontario and other jurisdictions in North America, and that we can learn from their experience. On this year of the 15th conference of the party to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, decisive and knowledgeable leadership and action is needed.

Mr. Speaker, we are not seeking to have the government replace necessary products with lesser quality ones or unacceptable substitutes, as the Minister of Transportation would have you believe. Rather, when purchasing the products needed, find a supplier that produces the products with fewer carbon emissions, typically conventional methods of production as we've used for many decades, than those that require high energy inputs and high carbon outputs like tar sands oil. This motion does not seek to reduce our security of supply, but asks that we seek out those reliable suppliers who can meet our needs with conventional low carbon products. In short, it asks that we actually implement the green procurement policy we profess to have.

While adopting a low carbon fuel standard or doing the research and analysis towards this is not the biggest thing we can do, it will be a clear indication that we are a participant on this fast-moving train of cooperative action in response to climate change and threats to our water. It will be making a substantial statement, an indication that we understand the issues and that we have the adaptive management capabilities to take decisive action. It will add to our progressive work to replace

fossil needs with new renewable energy wherever we can.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the many comments made here during debate. I thank my colleagues for the consideration of and perspectives on this issue and the new way of thinking it demands. I look forward to supporting the motion. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Mahsi.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. Madam Clerk. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Krutko.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand.

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: Results of the recorded vote: seven for, three against, seven abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 15: MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill corrects inconsistencies and errors in statutes of the Northwest Territories. The bill deals with other matters of a minor, non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the statutes and repeals provisions that have ceased to have effect. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 15 has had second reading and will be referred to a standing committee.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy, and Committee Report 4-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election, 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: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Committee 4-16(3). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Motion is on the floor. Motion is not debatable.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 5:

PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act, be read for the third time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 9:

NORTHERN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SERVICES PENSION PLAN PROTECTION ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 9, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Protection Act, be read for the third time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 9, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Protection Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Clerk, item 23, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, March 12, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
 2. Ministers' Statements
 3. Members' Statements
 4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 5. Returns to Oral Questions
 6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
 7. Acknowledgements
 8. Oral Questions
 9. Written Questions
 10. Returns to Written Questions
 11. Replies to Opening Address
 12. Petitions
 13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 14. Tabling of Documents
 15. Notices of Motion
 16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 17. Motions
- Motion 17-16(3), Extended Adjournment of the House to May 27, 2009

- Motion 18-16(3), Removal of GST for Certain Goods and Services North of 60
- Motion 19-16(3), Presentation of Final Report on the Review of the Official Languages Act
- Motion 20-16(3), Appointment of Languages Commissioner

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2009-2010

19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy

- Committee Report 4-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 Election

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 12, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:15 p.m.