



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Tuesday, October 27, 2009
Members Present

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, 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 1:33 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 Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Ministers' Statements
**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 17-16(4):
H1N1**

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report today that H1N1 clinics in the Northwest Territories have been successfully launched and that the H1N1 vaccine is now being administered to residents in the Northwest Territories.

In the short period of time since the vaccine was officially authorized by the Public Health Agency of Canada last Wednesday, over 2,500 NWT residents have already received their H1N1 shot.

Mr. Speaker, this is a testament to the success of our efforts, both to prepare for, and to communicate the important steps that we are taking to ensure that this vaccine is available to all NWT residents as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that the GNWT has secured enough of the H1N1 vaccine for everyone in the NWT who wants to receive it.

Unlike some southern jurisdictions, we have already received our entire shipment of vaccine and there is no priority list for the delivery of our vaccinations. Everyone in the NWT -- young or old, healthy or with chronic conditions, pregnant women or young men, aboriginal or non-aboriginal -- will be vaccinated as they show up in our clinics.

Our vaccination schedule is posted and updated on the Department of Health and Social Services website. Catch-up clinics will be provided for people who miss the first dates.

Mr. Speaker, it is Health Canada that has the authority for evaluating the safety, efficacy and quality of vaccines to be used by Canadians to help protect and maintain their health. Health Canada

works in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada to protect the health and safety of all Canadians. I can assure all residents of the NWT that the pandemic vaccine developed in response to the H1N1 flu virus has been evaluated and authorized by Health Canada for distribution.

It would encourage anybody who requires additional information about the vaccine, including its ingredients, to call the flu hotline for this information. The number is 1-888-920-3026, and in Yellowknife it's 920-3026.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with the pandemic that is spreading across the NWT and throughout our country. We all have a role to play in protecting ourselves, our families and each other and, in doing so, to do everything we can to prevent the spread of H1N1 in our communities. Getting immunized against H1N1 is a key part of that.

All residents should get the H1N1 vaccine. Only those with lab confirmed cases of H1N1 do not need to receive the vaccine.

Mr. Speaker, while it is an individual choice, I would like to once again encourage all residents of the NWT to be vaccinated for the H1N1 virus. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 18-16(4):
NORTHERN MINING WORKFORCE INITIATIVE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to update you on collaboration between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the three Northwest Territories diamond mines -- BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc., Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. and De Beers Canada Inc. -- under the Northern Mining Workforce Initiative Memorandum of Understanding.

The memorandum of understanding was negotiated to assist the Government of the Northwest Territories and the diamond mines to work their shared goal of increasing the number of Northwest Territories residents employed at the mines.

Collectively, we have two objectives under the memorandum of understanding. Our first goal is to

improve northern skills and experience. We will address this through more coordinated training and through improved transportation options for getting workers from Northwest Territories communities to the mine sites. Our second goal is to attract and retain Northwest Territories residents so that as many mine workers as possible can be Northwest Territories residents.

Work under the memorandum of understanding is guided by a steering committee made up of the most senior and influential executives from the three diamond mines, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and myself. Staff assigned to working groups work together to investigate options and put forward recommendations to the steering committee.

Individuals from each organization involved in the memorandum of understanding have shown dedication, openness and a strong spirit of cooperation.

Last week the steering committee met to bring new momentum to our collaborative efforts to maximize northern employment at the Northwest Territories diamond mines. The steering committee reviewed the progress of working groups on training, travel and residency. These groups have been busy over the past year, investigating practical possibilities and examining problems.

Industry, Tourism and Investment has played, and will continue to play, a large role in the residency committee. The first major task of the residency committee has been to understand the opportunities and challenges of attracting and retaining a skilled northern workforce. The mines, Industry, Tourism and Investment and the Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics collaborated on a survey of the diamond mines' current employees.

Options for addressing longer-term challenges will also be investigated. The memorandum of understanding parties will look for opportunities to work with a number of partners, including community governments and other agencies and actors, to implement concrete actions that address challenges identified by the survey.

Industry, Tourism and Investment will continue to work together with Education, Culture and Employment and with the three diamond mines to achieve our shared goal of maximizing NWT employment at the Northwest Territories diamond mines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 19-16(4):
FUEL PRICE ADJUSTMENT FOR ALL
NON-GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY
GOVERNMENT CUSTOMERS IN
COMMUNITIES SERVED BY PPD

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak about the reductions in fuel prices that have taken place this year for communities served by the petroleum products division. These reductions represent significant savings for retail and government customers. During 2009, petroleum product prices charged to retail customers by PPD decreased by an average of more than 25 percent across the Northwest Territories. Gasoline prices have been reduced by no less than 16 cents per litre to as much as 33 cents per litre and heating fuel prices have been reduced by no less than 16 cents per litre and as much as 51 cents per litre.

Under the current FMB-approved pricing guidelines, the cost of purchasing, transporting and delivering fuel is recovered in the retail prices charged in the communities served by the petroleum products division. Prices are normally adjusted after each annual resupply to reflect the costs of the fuel purchased for resale.

Many of our communities are resupplied with fuel only once a year, and because of that, by December of 2008 customers in many of our communities were paying high prices while prices were falling elsewhere in Canada.

By January of 2009, fuel market prices had stabilized at a lower level, and a decision was made by this government to pass a portion of the future cost reductions to our customers well before the annual resupply adjustments took effect. With prudent fiscal management, the petroleum products division had accumulated a modest budget surplus. In January the petroleum products division used this surplus to reduce the retail prices of heating oil and gasoline by 16 cents per litre for all non-government customers and community government customers in all the communities they serve.

Mr. Speaker, communities also received further price reductions after their annual 2009 resupply. The price of heating fuel was reduced in Sahtu, Tlicho, Deh Cho and Nahendeh winter-road-supplied communities in April and in the barge-supplied communities of Fort Good Hope and Lutselk'e in August. Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk price reductions took place on October 1st. Gasoline prices in Fort Good Hope were reduced on October 20th. With barge resupply for Tulia now complete, the petroleum product price reductions will take place before the end of October.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that the use of more cost-efficient marine transportation routes, the prudent use of the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund, combined with the general decline in world

market prices for petroleum are factors that have converged to provide a measure of price relief to those most affected by the high cost of living in our remote communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 20-16(4):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jackson Lafferty will be absent from the House for the remainder of this week to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Justice Ministers meeting in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IMPORTANCE OF GRAVEL SOURCE ACCESS
IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The most important element of building public infrastructure is gravel, from those housing lots, to public roads, to water treatment facilities, to schools. Without the access to a year-round gravel source, these simple infrastructure needs take years to complete.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that communities have access to a gravel source so that they can meet these fundamental challenges. But, Mr. Speaker, add climate change to the mix and you have a whole different problem.

Mr. Speaker, with melting permafrost, shoreline erosion on our rivers and in the oceans, it makes it even a bigger challenge for communities just to maintain the existing public infrastructure and not have to also deal with the fundamental challenge of climate change. Every community in the Northwest Territories must realize that we're seeing more floods, more erosion, more affects on public infrastructure and collapsing buildings, to collapsing highways and roads. Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, must ensure that we do everything that we can to protect public infrastructure in our communities and shore up the public investment that was made to put this public infrastructure in all our communities in the Northwest Territories, and ensure the well-being of the residents of those communities are being able to have access to gravel sources.

Mr. Speaker, I have been talking for years about access to a gravel source in Aklavik to ensure that they can deal with the fundamental challenge of public infrastructure. To build simple things like a

water treatment plant or public housing unit that should take one year, takes three years.

In regards to improving access to improving public infrastructure such as the roads in the community, basically it takes three or four years of planning, but yet, Mr. Speaker, we have year-round access to a gravel source, which is the Willow River source, which is around 20 kilometres from the community. We will be able to expand the community infrastructure, improve the existing roads and airports in our communities. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will have questions directed to the Minister of Transportation in regards to where we go with the access road to a gravel source in Aklavik. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT RESPONSE TO THE MACKENZIE GAS
PROJECT JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report of the Joint Review Panel on the Mackenzie Gas Project is expected within the next two months. In past years, requests for new MGP-related departmental funding has frequently been turned down because we couldn't be sure the project would go ahead. Meanwhile, this government has trumpeted its support for the project, apparently on any terms.

The MGP would be one of the biggest events in the history of the NWT and, typically for mega projects here, the federal government stands to collect bounteous royalty revenues while the NWT faces social and environmental impact costs, not to mention the huge infrastructure, training and mitigation costs that will result from the project. The release of the JRP project will create an immediate expectation on this government for a timely reaction to its findings and recommendations.

I have been raising the point of Members' participation in shaping the major policy positions of this government. This issue is too big and its consequences too far-reaching for the government to respond to its details without the input of Regular Members.

While expectations will be high, the time frames are sufficient to allow the required thoughtful and considered response rather than an immediate and desperate yes-at-any-cost response. We cannot continue to rely on poorly funded NGOs to lead the analysis of impacts and costs, though their input will be key once again. We must ensure that the MGP will not once again create a boom that makes it too expensive for our citizens to live in their own communities.

Independent assessments have already pointed out that there is inadequate analysis of socio-economic

impacts resulting from the project. How will the project's doubling of NWT greenhouse gas emissions be mitigated? At a minimum, we must assess whether the JRP report has indeed addressed the shortcomings, which will require careful and detailed analysis.

Mr. Speaker, this government cannot blindly endorse a report without a firm plan for ensuring benefits and for dealing with the costs and impacts that will also flow through our citizens. I will be calling on the Ministers of ENR and ITI to outline plans for reviews and analysis and how Regular Members will be involved in analysis and development of a government response and position. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOME HEATING OIL SPILLS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk a little bit about a disturbing trend that has potential to be extremely damaging to the residents of the Northwest Territories. That trend is an increasing number of home heating oil spills.

Legislation in the NWT requires all homeowners who experience home heating fuel spills to report it to ENR. In 2007, there were 20 home fuel spills reported to ENR. In 2008, there were 32 home fuel spills reported to ENR. Already in 2009, there have been 43 home fuel spills reported to ENR.

These numbers may be lower than the actual as some people may choose not to report due to the fear of the potential costs of a clean-up. All homeowners are responsible under legislation to clean up their property when they have had an oil spill. Unfortunately, cleaning up oil spills on your property could be far more devastating to the pocketbook than most people might think. The reason is the standard insurance policy requires that the insurer cover the damage to existing dwelling and property; property does not include land. As a result, homeowners are on the hook for the costs of cleaning up their land. The cost for cleaning up even the smallest of leaks is generally around \$10,000. Where the cost of living is already high, this can be a bill that pushes homeowners past their financial brink. I know of one Yellowknife resident who had a spill that is going to cost in excess of \$60,000.

Due to the increasing number of spills, the insurance industry is expecting to tighten up this practice considerably, sooner rather than later. This suggests to me that homeowners will likely receive less coverage than they currently do. This is more bad news. I've talked to a number of businesses in

town, in Yellowknife, involved in installing fuel tanks. They have indicated that leaks are definitely on the rise, particularly with single-walled tanks. One brand of oil tank that is causing problems and presenting challenges is known as Tidy Tank. It's my understanding that their single-walled tanks use lighter gauge metal than most other brands and they are springing leaks as early as one to three years after being installed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to send a message to the residents of the Northwest Territories: please keep an eye on your tanks. Go out and check them on a regular basis. Don't let them get to the point where they leak, especially if you happen to have a Tidy Tank, they only offer a 12-month warranty.

If you are concerned with your tank, swap it for a new one, preferably a double-walled or double-bottomed tank. If you must go to a single-walled tank, please consider going to one made of a higher grade metal.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. ABERNETHY: If you must go to a single-walled tank, please consider going to one made of a higher grade metal. If you have the resources, consider going to a pellet boiler and avoid the possibility of oil leaks on your property altogether.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will have some questions for the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, where I'll be seeking his commitment to prepare and release a public awareness campaign warning homeowners of the risks and potential ramifications of home heating fuel leaks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NAHANNI BUTTE GYMNASIUM DEFICIENCIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On my most recent visit to Nahanni Butte I had the opportunity to tour the new gymnasium once again. The community is quite pleased with the building as it provides students and the community with a gymnasium for physical education and all community activities.

Regretfully, we have not yet had the official opening. Unfortunately, there are serious outstanding construction deficiencies that prevent full use of the gymnasium and negatively affect the comfort of the users.

One of the major problems is the gymnasium floor. Its installation was done by rolling out and gluing down synthetic flooring. Since then, moisture has seeped in and dissolved the glue, causing the floor to lift. There are large bubbles on the surface of the

gym floor. It is not much good for indoor sports and it could easily lead to accidents.

There are a number of other deficiencies. Light diffusers need to be replaced and there is water seepage in one of the back rooms. The ventilation system in the gym is so noisy that you can't carry on a conversation. As well, there's an acoustic problem. The building easily echoes, Mr. Speaker.

It seems that Nahanni Butte has been plagued with delays in completion of government projects. I recently expressed my concern with the deferral of the improvements to the winter access road, and last spring spoke to delays in completion of home renovations.

In this case, the end of the warranty period of the school construction project is coming up. I urge the Minister of Public Works and Services to review this matter and ensure that deficiencies that are the responsibility of the contractor are corrected. Then the students and community can enjoy the safe and comfortable environment they deserve. Then we would be deserving of a full opening ceremony for the community's dream: the Nahanni Butte gymnasium. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EXTENSION OF INGRAHAM TRAIL TO SLAVE GEOLOGICAL PROVINCE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to speak about the extension of the Ingraham Trail from Tibbett Lake to Lockhart Lake, which is located about 151 kilometres north of Tibbett Lake. This extension also has been referred to as a seasonal overland route into the Slave Geological Province.

Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons why our government should pursue this new road construction. I believe the time is right to get it started. The extension is expected to come in at just under \$200 million. This, hopefully, will lead to opportunities for local businesses and contractors to do the work, and also opportunities for training and workforce development. This project also will have to have partners in order to proceed. Industry, the federal government, aboriginal governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories will all need to work together to make this road extension a reality.

It remains to be seen as to what this road would do in terms of potential revenue for the Government of the Northwest Territories, but it will certainly increase the life of the existing mines and exploration. Mr. Speaker, that is the key. Much like the Mackenzie Gas Project, it will be a basin opening project. A road into the heart of the mineral rich Slave Geological Province will open up the

area for more exploration and could very well make the difference in whether a mineral deposit becomes economically viable to mine. Mr. Speaker, the potential in the area is absolutely immense.

I have said before that the future of our economy here in the Northwest Territories will depend greatly on resource development and, obviously, the potential development in the Slave Geological Province will hopefully one day help fund future government operations.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, we also need to continue to work with aboriginal governments and the federal government to work out a resource revenue sharing arrangement that is long overdue. Mr. Speaker, given the discussions that are currently underway on the extension of this road into the Slave Geological Province, this resource revenue sharing agreement is much more important today than it ever was before. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FLEXIBILITY REQUIRED IN DELIVERING HOUSING CORPORATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about programs and policies of the NWT Housing Corporation. Having just returned from Fort Resolution, I find that housing is still a big problem with many residents of Tu Nedhe.

Mr. Speaker, I think part of the problem may be changes made a few years ago with the corporation's housing programs. Unfortunately, when the corporation revised programs from 14 programs down to their current four programs this created a whole new set of problems for housing clients.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. BEAULIEU: According to the corporation at the time of the change, they said the change was driven by the clients. Mr. Speaker, with the amount of housing issues I've been working on in my riding, I find this very difficult to believe.

Mr. Speaker, the corporation is in a tough position trying to address a huge arrears collection file while, at the same time, trying to encourage and accommodate homeownership clients and doing so in a stricter context of accountability and efficiency. Mr. Speaker, I feel the corporation needs to be flexible with its approach and needs to work this flexibility into its programs and policies.

When the corporation made these changes, as stated in the press release, the four new programs provided standardized and consistent program requirements. Well, maybe standardization doesn't work in this case. How can four programs

accommodate the needs of over 3,000 families with core needs across this vast Territory?

Mr. Speaker, needs vary from client to client and even from community to community. A program designed to serve the needs in Yellowknife and Hay River will not do the same for clients in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e. The simple fact that some clients will receive huge gains by the market alone while others live in a non-market community says it all.

While I'm saying that although you can see the rationale for the consistent and standard approach for the delivery of programs when it comes to a variety of housing needs in the NWT, the NWT Housing Corporation must be more flexible. Each applicant will present their own unique factors and challenges and, therefore, I feel should be treated as such and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation is trying to make people eligible for programs as opposed to making programs that can be delivered to the people to take them out of core need. I believe that is the objective. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO
AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON
PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February 2008 the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation tabled the Auditor General's Report on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's Public Housing and Homeownership Programs. This report shed light on many shortcomings in the Public Housing Program and made 11 recommendations addressing three major areas of concern: the management of public housing, the management of the Homeownership Program, and the planning and reporting conducted by the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, my concern today is that these recommendations have not been addressed. What improvements have been seen in NWT public housing for our Territory? In the NWT Housing Corporation's response to committee's report on the Auditor General's performance audit, the corporation stated: "A key element of the NWT Housing Corporation's response will be a revised framework for action to be released in early 2009." The document I am referring to was tabled in October 2008. I have yet to see a revised framework for action that specifically details how the corporation plans to address the

recommendations from the Auditor General and, certainly, committee.

Another one of the standing committee's recommendations was the Minister provide periodic updates on the progress of the implementation of the Housing Corporation's action plan. The corporation agreed to this recommendation, but we need to clarify what this reporting period will be. What progress has been made in the area of rent collection? What is being done to get LHOs out of arrears? What are the results of renewed and upgraded policies and procedures designed to address issues raised by the Auditor General?

A new formal housing appeal mechanism was scheduled for implementation on April 1, 2009. Is this mechanism working well? In the overall picture, what progress is being made in the corporation's primary mandate of reducing the number of NWT households in core need from housing assistance?

Mr. Speaker, it is a challenging mandate and I acknowledge that, but we need to make sure they are moving in the direction of our goals. We owe our full accountability to public housing clientele and the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON
LACK OF COUNSELLORS AND SOCIAL
WORKERS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We come to these sessions several times a year and express our concerns from our home communities and our region. Some of our concerns are serious in that we bring them up every time we are here, and hoping and demanding the government act upon their commitments.

One of these issues is a lack of counsellors and social workers. Some of the communities never have access to counsellors, social workers, or the system lacks necessary resources and the effort seems unnoticeable, and that seems a shame. All across the Territory, communities, government organizations are saying the same thing: the community's number one problem is not enough counselling support. As a government, we must provide proper services that are needed in the community. The fact that communities lack real support for people returning from substance abuse treatment.

Centralization of these services does not work. People can no longer go to the Territorial Treatment Centre and then go back to their communities while all of the support systems are in the major centres, Mr. Speaker.

The solution to this is to provide the services in the communities. Social workers and counsellors work

in Inuvik and are supposed to be servicing the communities, but when talking to front-line workers in the community, they have never heard of visits of that nature.

What our communities need are facilities that people can go to without the huge paperwork and long waits. A small, fully functional, around-the-clock, fully equipped addictions centre with nurses and counsellors is what we need.

The Beaufort-Delta Social Services Authority and mental health addictions services office have operations in the Inuvik Regional Hospital. The office offers counselling programs for clients, people coping with loved ones dealing with drug and alcohol addictions or other social problems.

In order to receive service, we must see a nurse to be referred to a doctor and wait for the doctor's visits in the community. People with real problems, and often very complicated problems, have nowhere to go and no one to talk to. This contradicts the commitments made by previous governments and this government.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Capacity building with real social supports is very important and it's very critical that government commits and delivers the required support, not just deliver the rhetoric on local communities. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR GNWT SERVICE DELIVERY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is no secret that NWT communities are diverse. They are small, medium and large. They are on the road system and not on the road system. They follow the traditional economy, the modern economy, and sometimes both. Providing services to our communities is a serious challenge for the GNWT given this diversity. It is particularly difficult to ensure that the same services are available in each of our 33 communities.

My colleagues on this side of the House have often spoken to our failure in that regard. But do we, as a government, really know what level of programs and services we should be providing to our residents? Have we established standards for the delivery of programs and services in the NWT? If we have, they haven't made it to my desk, Mr. Speaker.

We should know what level of service and what programs we want or need to provide. We should have a target level of service, particularly in the areas of health and social services, education, income support, housing and community services, all of the GNWT service departments. For instance, should every community have a nurse and a doctor, a mental health worker, an addictions counsellor? What is the minimum acceptable level of service for our income support and housing programs? Should every community have staff on site or should service be provided by regional office staff? Should every community have a recreation officer and who should take financial responsibility for that position? Should every community have child care available for working parents?

I have no doubt that all of these questions have been considered by various Assemblies at one time or another, but did we get answers? Are the answers documented and in any organized and coordinated way? Have we, as a government, ever looked at the provision of GNWT programs and services across the whole system to determine the must haves, the nice to haves, and then delivered them as allowed by our available finances? I think not and I think we need to do that.

I realize what I am suggesting is a big undertaking, but it is a necessary step. To quote a well used expression, how do we know where we are going if we don't know where we are? We need to do the work to find out where we are, to determine the standards for our programs, the services required. We owe it to our residents, particularly those in our smaller, isolated communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize my dad. Mike Krutko is in the gallery. He is 94 years young. I noticed he drove over here today. Also, sitting beside my dad is Ed Jeske. Hi, Ed. And a friend of mine from Hay River, Rocky Simpson. Good to see you, Rocky.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize my constituent, Mr. Rocky Simpson from Hay River South and also in the visitor's gallery today is Al Stan who is with a company called Avro Canadiana up here looking at business opportunities in the North. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, first off, would like to thank the Member for Mackenzie Delta recognizing my two constituents. His father, Mike Krutko, a very well-known Northerner, and certainly Mr. Ed Jeske is a very well-known hockey supporter in this community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I welcome everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Mr. Ed Jeske, a long time educator, hockey supporter from minor hockey to old-timer, and also he now has an arena named after himself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 89-16(4):

GNWT RESPONSE TO THE MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report that came out in the National Post today reporting that the federal government has decided not to proceed with its investment with the MGP really changes nothing in regards to the need for a comprehensive reply to the Joint Review Panel report. The federal government could reverse its decision at any time or economics could improve for unexpected reasons. The independent analysis and even the comments of the members of the Joint Review Panel indicate that GNWT negotiated a bad socio-economic benefits agreement for our public with the proponents. We even may need to consider renegotiating this agreement, but we can't do that if the Ministers dash off a blind endorsement of the project. Will the Ministers commit to seeking input and review of Regular Members on the response to the JRP report and recommendations before they announce any firm positions on it? Mahsi.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a couple of Ministers or, actually, a number of Ministers working on this file between the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources and the Minister of ITI. The response will be a joint one put together. The Ministers will be collaborating as well as seeking input from Members on our response.

Just for the record, the article that the Member has raised in National Post is one where it is an article from a reporter. There is no confirmation, in fact, that the federal government has said anything regarding the pipeline itself and where that project is. There are a lot of stories floating about right now. We are trying to confirm just where things are. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate comments of the Premier on the news report and, like I say, I think, regardless of that, that could change any time. So we need to do this work. I will ask again, will the Premier, with the coordinated response of the split personalities of ENR and ITI apparently coordinating a review, as I understand it -- the Minister of ENR for the Joint Review Panel report, the Minister of ITI for dealing with the NEB documents and eventual decision -- will Members be assured of input to our responses? Will the Premier commit to ensuring our input to those responses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, we have stated earlier a number of departments involved in this. There will be a government position. We will coordinate that and we will be working with Members as to what gets done. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, a typically opaque response from the Premier. I will take it, though, as a yes. I would also like to know, will the Minister commit to referral of both the JRP report and the NEB decision for review by Regular Members, commit to forwarding those reports to us for our direct input into the process? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I believe I made a commitment to the Members of this Assembly, through that earlier response, that we will work with Members. It is a coordinated effort from the Government of the Northwest Territories. We will contact Members through standing committees as to the process we will adopt going forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, the reason I seek these assurances is because we did such a lousy job in the previous review of the submissions to the JRP panel. I really would like to hear the reiterative responses there. Recognizing that there is always demand on the staff and the expertise and to have a comprehensive and coordinated response, we need to have our staff ready to be able to reply within the time frames available. Will the Premier commit, and what preparations have been made to ensuring that our in-house expertise is clearing their desks and will be able to give a really meaningful piece of analysis and response to those reports? Mahsi.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the Member is entitled to his own opinion no matter where it goes or comes from.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories, the appropriate departments have been involved. We were the best organized, I think many would say, when it came to the hearings. We are involved in the negotiations of the socio-economic agreement. There are a number of fronts we are involved with from Municipal and Community Affairs, ITI and ENR.

Again, the Member is entitled to his own opinion on that. We will coordinate, we will respond and we will engage in Members through that response as we go forward.

I must remind the Member, when we put our budgets together, we propose to put a number of dollars in place to keep us, the machinery, moving, so that the desks are cleared so we have people ready, and at times Members recommend we redo stuff in a very particular area. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 90-16(4):

ACCESS ROAD TO AKLAVIK GRAVEL SOURCE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Transportation. It is in regards to my Member's statement and the importance of gravel resources for communities to develop public infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, as a government we have several access programs in regards to the Community Access Program and access road construction program. We have the Tuk access road program. We now have the road in regards to the Dettah upgrade access program. We have the Yellowknife bypass road program. We have tons of programs out there, but it just doesn't seem like you are able to assist communities to find access to the gravel sources, especially to realize the importance of gravel sources to communities to develop public infrastructure and also about programs and services on behalf of this government.

I know in regards to the Aklavik situation, they have received some money through Building Canada. There are other pots of money out there. We just heard about a P3 fund that is out there. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what can his department do to facilitate with the community of Aklavik to find a way to resolve the problem of getting a permanent access road to the gravel source especially, some 20 kilometres from the community?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member raised a very healthy list of projects that we are working on in the Northwest Territories with communities to find either improvement through the Access Roads Program to enhance road systems or, in some cases, to try and find a way to lessen the costs to have gravel into the communities.

We don't, as a department, have a gravel source program per se. We have really tried to reach out and be creative in a number of situations including the Tuk source 177 program where we were able to access the Building Canada Fund and work with some communities such as Aklavik to do a study that identified the cost, the route and alignment of road that is going to be required to access gravel for that community. There are still other communities that don't have a readily available supply of gravel. We would like to see if we could do more on that front. We would like to see more discussion through the rural remote community program. We are also exploring to see where we can go for next steps.

The study for Aklavik, something that has been in the works, he mentioned in his statement, for as long as he has been here. Well, that is quite a few terms, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to say the government of the 16th Assembly has finally picked it up and been able to move forward and wants to continue to do so. We are looking to taking the next step, which is the project development report and we have identified it is going to cost a little over \$1 million. We are working all avenues to see if we can find those dollars. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for that answer, but I think the challenge is still there. He mentioned other communities. I know there are other communities that are having that problem, in regards to Tulita and Colville Lake. We are talking about building airports and other public infrastructure. One thing that we are really finding when you go through the capital plan process is solid waste sites for communities. In a lot of cases, the communities have to expand outward, but again you have to have gravel to build these solid waste sites to identify where those infrastructure are going to be built, but, more importantly, skid a road to those sites to develop those areas. I would just like to ask the Minister in regards to the importance of this issue, working with your other ministerial colleagues, can you look at a program to ensure that it is part and parcel of the government programs and services by way of a community access road to gravel source program or whatever you want to name it? Is that something that the government is looking at to ensure that we have a program that's universal right across the Territories, so all communities can have access to that? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we, as the Department of Transportation and also through my responsibilities as Minister of Public Works, are looking at ways that we can try to accommodate communities with our need to gravel sources. The responsibility, of course, for gravel supply for municipal projects is under the municipality. That's been transferred over through the New Deal. The money for capital has also been transferred over, so it would be very difficult to see that clawed back so that we can start a new program in that sense. I am very keen to see what the options are. I'm also very keen to move forward and explore what the federal government has to offer.

I am convinced that we can put something together with the community of Aklavik. The report was only completed a few short months ago. We were not even able to consider it as part of this government's capital plan, because it was already submitted. So we have to find ways to do that. There are some programs out there. There are some other options that we'd like to explore. We want to meet with the community and come forward with a proposal to submit to the appropriate department or the appropriate program. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, one of the findings of the report the Minister mentions is that just on having a permanent access road versus doing a winter gravel haul where you have to build a winter road, an ice road, whatever, is somewhere in the range of 35 to 40 percent savings to government and to the public cost of building capital in the communities. If we can look at those types of savings and look at it in the long term, how much money can we save by simply having access to gravel sources as an illustration of how we, as government, could be doing things better?

So again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister in regard to the capital cost of gravel, we had a flood a number of years ago in Aklavik where, basically, we had to bring gravel in from Inuvik by barge and it was over a million dollar expenditure. Yet, that could almost look at a major gravel stockpile for Aklavik which will last a couple of years. So I'd just like to ask the Minister, have you looked at the economics in regard to long-term savings of building this road and, more importantly, the long-term savings to government when we're looking at 35 to 40 percent savings on capital costs because of having direct access to gravel sources?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I think all parties involved, all stakeholders, including the municipalities, have recognized that it's still cheaper to do an analysis of what the gravel requirements per community are for that year and provide a stockpile versus to try to find 20 to 30 million dollars to build a road. It's still very difficult to do so. I think there is merit to look at the long term and try to work with the communities, and I've committed to

do so. I'd like to see that move forward, but at this point there is no program and there is no budget that allows us to tap into for gravel source access roads. I'd like to see that developed. I'd like to have more discussion with the Rural and Remote Communities committee and see where that ends up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there's a way, there's a will and, hopefully, there's a lot of will on that side of the House, because, definitely, we have to find a solution to this problem. So, again, I'd like to ask the Minister to keep me informed as we proceed forward and try to find solutions to a major challenge for rural and remote communities. I'd like to ask the Minister, when was he expecting to have something going forward, especially in regard to the next phase in regard to the gravel program so that we can, hopefully, see a road built to that gravel source within the next short time? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: There is certainly no shortage of will on this side, and I'm sure if I did let it slip, the Member would be quick to remind me. The Aklavik road right now, a project description report for that project is something that we want to see move forward. We want to be able to contact the community quickly. There are programs out there like the Community Adjustment Fund that we feel we can tap into. We'd like to package that up into a proposal with a business case and take it to the next steps. We'd like to move that forward as quickly as possible and we'd be very pleased to include the Member in all steps that we take on this project. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 91-16(4):
HOME HEATING OIL SPILLS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources and are in follow up to my statement from earlier today.

Mr. Speaker, home fuel tanks are leaking more and more often and homeowners are increasingly on the hook. I believe this government has a responsibility to inform homeowners and businesses of the increasing number of leaks and the potential financial ramifications. Would the Minister commit to having his department develop a public awareness campaign outlining this issue and encourage homeowners to protect themselves and their property? 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. I'd like to acknowledge the Member for bringing this issue to light and commend him for his perseverance in pulling this together. He's come up with an issue that needs remediating. The answer is yes, I will be working to have a public awareness campaign and look at the statistics. There is a need for some type of message to make people conscious, as the Member has pointed out. So, yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ABERNETHY: I must say, I really, really, really like the answer yes. Leaks are becoming more regular. When can we expect this public awareness campaign package to be available for distribution to the public, taking advantage of the fact that leaks are occurring more and more often?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the staff are already at work on this. We'll make sure that we consult, as well, with the Housing Corporation, because they have a lot of units as well. So in the next number of weeks we intend to pull a package together and map out a work plan on how we want to get this implemented. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 92-16(4):

NAHANNI BUTTE GYMNASIUM DEFICIENCIES

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask some questions with regard to my Member's statement and the deficiencies at the Nahanni Butte gymnasium. I would like to ask questions of the Minister of Public Works and Services.

The deficiencies came to light some time in about May or March. Just after the spring thaw, the building started experiencing problems, Mr. Speaker. The community actually waited throughout the summer for the contractor to return and they had not. So on my most recent visit about three weeks ago to Nahanni Butte, they were wondering when the deficiencies were going to get addressed and when this company was going to return. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services, what is the plan for correcting the deficiencies at the Nahanni Butte gymnasium? Thank you

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The quick answer, I guess, is that most of the deficiencies have been addressed. The floor is something we are working to expedite the repairs

to. The material is on order. We have a contractor that's going to be coming to the community and we expect it all to be completed by the end of November. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHE: One of the other issues that the community had raised, of course, is their concern that the warranty period is coming soon for the Nahanni Butte gymnasium. Has there been a final inspection or is there going to be a warranty inspection for deficiencies done on the Nahanni Butte gym? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the work that was done was under, as the Member indicated, warranty. There are some deficiencies that have been addressed and there are going to be more that are going to be required. They are going to all be covered through the warranty period. Notification has been provided to the subcontractors of the contractors that were involved and we're dealing with the issue. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHE: So from our exchange, I'm given to understand that all the deficiencies should be completed within the next couple of months, by December. Is that the time frame that the Minister is giving me? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the deficiencies are going to be all completed by the end of November. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly like to see that done by that time, because the community is certainly looking forward to having a full opening ceremony for the building. If we can do it by December, I'd be pleased to see that; even January, Mr. Speaker. But I think the whole thing is our government has to take the time to correct the deficiencies in that building. So once again, I'd like to ask the Minister that we must get the contractor to complete these deficiencies. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'll certainly convey that to our officials, that this building better be done by the end of November. I should point out, though, the building is still usable and the community certainly can take advantage of it. We are very aware that they were very frustrated with some of the issues that came forward, but we're working very hard to get it all addressed, for the most part. Except for the floor, I think everything's done and we will ensure that it's completed by the end of November. We will inform the Member that we want to move forward and have an official opening at some point. We already deferred it on several occasions, so we'd like to see that happen also. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 93-16(4):
GNWT HIRING OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my questions to the Minister of Human Resources. I'd like to follow up on his statement from yesterday and some of the questions that I asked the Minister yesterday. In our exchange, I referenced the Employability Working Group and asked the Minister what the group had accomplished. In the results that he mentioned to me, he mentioned a number of things. One of them was that the department has consulted with a number of other different jurisdictions; another one was that they have implemented some sensitivity training. I'd like to know from the Minister what impact this past work has had on the number of persons with disabilities who have been hired in the last little while. How many more persons with disabilities have we hired since the Employability Working Group was established in June of 2008? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated yesterday, it's not something that we change overnight. It's a process that takes some time and it's a matter of working with partners and it's a matter of changing the culture of an organization. Anecdotally, I know of at least two additional people with disabilities that have been hired, at least one of them has self-identified as disabled. So it's our expectation that it's an ongoing process and it will take some time to have some achievable results.

MS. BISARO: I understand that change takes a while for it to be processed. It's good to hear that we have at least two more people hired who are persons with disabilities, but that still doesn't bring our percentage to any kind of a limit that is representative of our workforce.

In June of 2009 the Minister made a statement and he talked about the development of a recruitment strategy as a long-term goal, and this is a recruitment strategy for persons with disabilities. The percentage of persons with disabilities in the GNWT workforce has been at about .4 percent for quite a number of years. I'd like to ask the Minister how this long-term strategy is going to assist in increasing the number of persons with disabilities now and prior to the end of this fiscal year. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I get the impression that the Member has some issues with self-identification. The Member is correct; .4 percent is the number that has been on our records for the statistics for employing people with disabilities. We have undertaken surveys with regard to our Human

Resource Strategy, and of the 1,200-plus people that have identified, at least 1 percent have identified themselves as being disabled. So that would be approximately a 60 percent increase in the number of disabled people within our workforce.

Having said that, we are taking a very logical approach to increasing our statistics. We are looking at what others are doing. We're working very closely with partners, we're setting up committees that can ensure some real change, and we're working with our management teams so that they are sensitized and that they make real concerted efforts to hire people with disabilities. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I thank the Minister for the answer and I understand that, again, as I say, I know that change takes time and I guess to the Minister's comment that I'd have a problem with self-identification, I do, but I think perhaps we're on opposite sides of the fence on what the problem may be. If we look at .4 percent of our workforce as being persons with disabilities and if we consider that it is the policy of this government that our workforce should represent our general population, we should, therefore, have about 15 percent of our workforce be persons with disabilities. So the Minister says we've had an increase, and yes, I agree, but a .2 percent increase is not enough.

Yesterday the Minister talked about the strategic plan and goal number two. I'd like to know from the Minister how the Employability Working Group and the actions that it has done go toward the accomplishment of goal number two of the 20/20 brilliant plan. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'll just clarify that I think our objectives are the same when it comes to increasing the employability of people with disabilities and, again, you know, somebody said there's statistics, damn lies, but I'm probably misquoting it.

The statistics, if you look at the workforce for the Northwest Territories, it should be around 8 percent, and I think that's something we can probably reach agreement around what percentage we should be working towards. But nevertheless, I think what we're setting in place with the Employability Working Group with looking at best practices with sensitivity training, working with groups that directly work with persons with disabilities, I think we will identify different jobs that could be made available and then we would identify people that could step into those jobs. So I think that's where we see us going forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate that the department is doing things. What the department is doing is long term and it's

not going to assist us right now in increasing the percentage of persons with disabilities in our workforce.

I talked yesterday about priority lists. I'd like to ask the Minister what priority does he put on the increasing of persons with disabilities in our workforce. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. I could answer that and give my own opinion, but this is a government and we deal with the government policies. So right now, P1s, or affirmative actions, are the top priority. P2s, people that have lived more than half their lives in the Northwest Territories, are second priorities, and then we have P3s. I think that what we're reviewing is what would it take to give persons with disabilities a higher priority in our Affirmative Action Policy, and that's what we would be looking at. We are looking at ways and then, at that point, we would bring it back to see if we could change our policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 94-16(4):
LACK OF COUNSELLORS AND SOCIAL
WORKERS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today was adequate resources to counsellors in every community of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, given all across the Territory community governments and organizations are saying the same thing, that the communities' number one problem is not enough counselling and support, will this government commit to a small, fully functional, around-the-clock, fully equipped addictions centre or just assisting the communities in what they're trying to do to try to help their own people, instead of the communities taking all this on themselves? Hopefully the government will come on side and help us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the government does support communities. The Department of Health and Social Services is currently in the process of conducting a review of mental health and addiction services across the NWT. The purpose of this review is to examine the services offered in various regions and communities and how well they fit the needs of the residents. The Department of Health has also been working closely with aboriginal organizations to establish community-based, culturally relevant addictions programming options in the Beaufort-Delta region. These pilot projects will be offered as

a part of a continuum of services, which includes regular program, Community Counselling Program, and residential addictions treatment, both northern and southern. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: As I mentioned in my Member's statement, community leaders are identifying the lack of professional and social support as one of the most serious issues in the communities. People are very passionate about this issue; they have a lot to say. As a government, we must listen. We must act so that the government is to review the current territorial strategy on addictions and other counselling programs to conduct a comprehensive community-based decision to develop a go-forward plan.

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, we are listening to the community leaders and communities. We agree that it is time to act and this is why we are doing a review. As well, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned previously, I will be releasing the Foundation for Change Action Plan next week, which includes a number of actions related to mental health and addictions.

So, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member and I am listening. This is an area that we need to focus our energy on and work hard on, and I look forward to working with the Member to advance this. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Just to go back to what the Minister said, too many times, as a government, we go on too many reports and audits and different things. What we have to do is we have to act on it, and I'm happy to hear her say that, but again, I'm going to invite the Minister to my communities as soon as it's convenient in the next few months. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, I want to let the Member know that I am available most of November and December, except for the holidays, to visit Tuktoyaktuk and his other communities, because I have not been able to get there with the Member.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to assure the Member that this is a priority for the department and for the government. We understand that we need to do things differently in delivering mental health and addictions programming, and I commit to the Member that we have an action plan in place and we will work on those. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 95-16(4):
DEVOLUTION AND RESOURCE
REVENUE SHARING

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Premier and it gets back to my Member's statement. Here in the Northwest Territories we're on the verge of some

pretty substantial undertakings. I know the JRP report is due out soon, we're also talking now about an extension of the Ingraham Trail -- that's the seasonal overland route into the Slave Geological Province -- which gets me to thinking, the last time I saw the numbers that the Government of Canada took out of the Northwest Territories in terms of resource revenue is somewhere near \$300 million, and projections once the gas is flowing down the Mackenzie pipeline, once its constructed, is going to be over \$1 billion. Now, if you add into that potential mine development in the Slave Geological Province, it's a tremendous amount of money.

I'd like to ask the Premier today, what is the current state of negotiations on a resource revenue deal for the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The area of discussions right now on resource revenue sharing tied to devolution is one that we're starting to look at a reengagement strategy with the federal government. There have been a couple of recent meetings that have been held at a staff level that shows that the federal government is interested in coming back to the table. I've contacted regional leaders about reengagement, as well, and we'll be having further discussions on that.

There have been no real negotiations for quite some time and the numbers the Member has used, when you look at what was put on the table by the last federal Finance Minister, I believe the one that's in place today, limits what we can do. There is a 50/50 scenario, as we call it, where we'd keep 50 percent of it and we would lose 50 percent through our transfer payments to a yet determined cap. We've since learned of that cap and that's become an issue for us in meetings I've had with the Prime Minister and I've highlighted that's a very serious concern for us. That is why I've taken the approach of looking at an infrastructure plan that would be tied to devolution and resource revenue sharing for future years. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I personally am of the opinion that resource development is the key to the future here in the Northwest Territories and I subscribe to a lot of the things that the government is trying to do. But when we're going out to the communities, especially in small communities where, you know, they're disadvantaged, they don't have the opportunities that larger communities have, it's a hard sell. So I'd like to ask the Premier, how can Regular Members help this government deliver a resource revenue deal for our residents here in the Northwest Territories. Is there anything that we can do, as Regular Members, to help the government achieve that goal? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I think there's a lot Regular Members can do in helping us

get the message out there, whether it's to our northern leadership, aboriginal leadership, how we work together, the information, if there's a request for more information. If you're hearing back that there needs to be a certain type of information put out, let's get together and develop a package we can put out there. The message we send to Ottawa is an important one. They pay attention to what we say and do in this Assembly. So I think there's much we can do together in getting the message out about the North and the need for moving on with devolution/resource revenue sharing. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Premier for that and do look forward to us trying to work together to arrive at that goal. I threw some numbers around earlier and, you know, the \$300 million and the potential for upwards of \$1 billion on resource revenue taken by the federal government from the resources here in the Northwest Territories. I'm wondering if the Premier and the government can put together what is at stake here. What are we talking about in terms of the revenue that Ottawa is taking, what our stake is under the plan that the Premier has talked about, the 50/50 with the cap, and what that really means to the Government of the Northwest Territories going forward? Can he provide us with an updated forecast? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I'd be pleased to put that information together and set some time up for Members of the Assembly to look at where things are at, and to look at this reengagement process we are now having some discussions on and looking to move forward in that partnership. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know I'm not supposed to ask opinions or ask Ministers for their opinions, but I'm going to go with this. I want to ask the Premier whether he believes that he and his government can deliver a resource revenue deal by the end of the life of this government for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'm optimistic that we can, working together as leaders across the Northwest Territories. Not just the Government of the Northwest Territories but the aboriginal leadership across this Territory, the community leadership across this Territory can work together to develop a plan to bring that plan forward together as one group of people in the Northwest Territories. Not a difference between who we are and who we represent, but one people of the Northwest Territories representing a diverse group, of course. But I believe if we decide to work at this and put some effort and energy from our side in the North, I believe we can address the issue of

who should be making decisions in the Northwest Territories and who should benefit from those decisions. So I believe we can put a solid plan in place and we have to work together to get that done. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 96-16(4):
EVALUATION OF HOUSING CORPORATION
POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about programs and policies of the NWT Housing Corporation. I would like to follow up my Member's statement with questions for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if an evaluation of the four new programs, or programs that were introduced a few years ago, has been undertaken to determine their effectiveness in taking clients out of core need? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will be undertaking an evaluation of the programs in 2010-2011. We had originally intended on doing it this year, but we spent those resources making some adjustments to programs because of affordability issues. I have also directed the department that the evaluation used to identify gaps between programs and some recommended solutions for those gaps. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, it takes different types of programs to address different types of need. For example, seniors groups and singles groups may have different programs to address their needs. I'd like to ask the Minister if the Minister can tell me if the NWT Housing Corporation has a strategy to address core need levels of the various groups such as seniors, singles and various sized families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we're just in the process of finalizing our housing needs survey and that goes a long way in evaluating how our programs fit the specific target groups that were mentioned by the Member. If we need to adjust our programs and that, to meet some of the needs, this is our opportunity to do so. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, as is the case for addressing specific groups like seniors and singles and so on, specific communities also have different priorities and different core needs. Can the Minister tell me if the NWT Housing Corporation has a strategy to address communities with the highest need on a priority basis? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again, the housing needs survey will go a long way in determining the needs of some of the communities in the Member's riding, and we use this as an opportunity to adjust our programs and services and concentrate on some of the priority communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Assuming that the needs survey is roughly along the lines of the past needs survey as far as core need goes, can the Minister advise me if you will provide direction to the NWT Housing Corporation to ensure there are strategies in place to specifically target core need? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation is working hard to address the needs of all communities across the Northwest Territories and all the Members. But I can advise the Member that I have provided direction to the Housing Corporation and we are taking very seriously the needs of a lot of the smaller communities and we will be working with the communities. When we have the results of the survey, I'll look forward to sharing those results with Members and all interested stakeholders. From there, we can map out some direction for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thanks.

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

QUESTIONS 97-16(4):
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO
AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT
ON PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I raised the issue of the NWT Housing Corp and the response to the Auditor General's report, and certainly the follow-up report by the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Mr. Speaker, my first question would be focussed, obviously, to the Minister, which is: in the report it clearly says there will be a revised statement to be released in early 2009 on how to address many of the symptoms and issues raised in the committee's response and certainly highlighted by the Auditor General. When can we expect that response to this House? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're currently working on our strategic plan and we're looking to have that released very early, and this will identify some of the progress that we've made to date on some of the

recommendations from the Auditor General. Once we have that done, we will be sharing it with Members of this Assembly. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Some of the issues that were raised in that report, certainly committee's response, was the question of arrears and how it's done. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister have any opinion or comment on how the Housing Corporation has been addressing that issue, and where does the issue of arrears and clearing up arrears stand with the Housing Corporation? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we're working very closely, as far as public housing arrears go, with the LHOs to try and address some of their arrears issues and provide any input and help we can to them. As far as the mortgage arrears for homeownership, there's been some good progress on those. We've had a lot of people who have refinanced and they're making some excellent progress on the collection of mortgage arrears. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Further to my statement, Mr. Speaker, I highlighted the issue of the appeal mechanisms only come into force as of April 1st this year, and I'm just wondering what highlights the Minister can provide us to find out if it is working or if it isn't working. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the appeals mechanism was implemented just recently and we really haven't had time to evaluate it yet. Once we do, though, we will be providing that information to the Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the process of eviction obviously is a painful one for many people who are in rental accommodations. Of course, the Government of the Northwest Territories provides social housing, which is sort of the backstop of where they would go. When you're evicted, you really have no one to call after that, other than, of course, your MLA or, hopefully, ministerial intervention. But the long and short of it is, the appeals mechanism needs to ensure that there's a healthy process for people to engage before they end up on the street. Will this issue be further updated to make sure that there are lots of chances for people to solve some of those arrear problems when they're in rental housing and to make sure that they stay in public housing the last option for most of these people? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the eviction of tenants from public housing is a long process and it usually takes a year by the time you get to the actual eviction itself. You're given termination notices and tenants have the opportunity to speak to the LHO. If that fails, they

have the opportunity to speak to the board. I've known cases where they've spoken to the board two or three times, or were given an opportunity to. All they're asked to do is come up with a payment plan, as small as it is, as long as they show that they're making some progress towards writing off their arrears, and the LHOs are more than willing to work with them. But, Mr. Speaker, it takes buy-in from the tenants. The LHOs are more than willing to work with the tenants and not have to get to the point to where they're evicting them. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 98-16(4):

MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY PROPOSAL

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Premier questions regarding the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that some time ago the Government of the Northwest Territories put a proposal before the federal government regarding the Norman Wells oilfield proposal in terms of possibly looking at some funding options to see if this process could be looked at and see if the federal government could entertain this proposal to construct the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opportunity that I took was with the Prime Minister, looking at the devolution and resource revenue sharing talks, where that was as the cap that was identified, and put it forward to the Prime Minister that we come up with an infrastructure deal that could see us in partnership building a project like the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can the Premier tell me in terms of how this proposal was discussed amongst his colleagues in terms of this proposal that's continually worthwhile or another avenue that we could look at?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We have kept the discussion going at the political level with engagement from the Prime Minister's office, a commitment to have further discussions around an infrastructure discussion. There has been no formal proposal put in place, but we continue to engage, for example, with the Minister of Transportation and other Ministers around this idea and looking at how we can work with the federal government through the different pots of funding to even come up with, for example, what they have announced up in the Inuvik-Tuk portion of highway work that can be done. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can the Premier tell me if there is going to be any types of formal discussions in

terms of constructing the Mackenzie Valley Highway, similar to questions similar to what the MLA for Kam Lake has talked about? Can we see some solid commitments from the feds or can we see that there is a possibility of even looking at the beginning of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the construction part of it?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: There has been quite a number of Assemblies that have shown their support for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, this Assembly being one of them. There have been a number of reports that include infrastructure, highways. I think there are a number of reports out there that have been put forward to the federal government around connections, highways, transportation, airports, ferries, that type of scenario. What we've been engaged in was to look at how we can keep a devolution/revenue sharing deal on the table tied to future investments in key infrastructure in the Northwest Territories like the Mackenzie Valley Highway. The departments have been continually engaged on trying to find any avenue they can to keep this project moving and back. I would say the Inuvik and Tuk portion that was announced by Minister Strahl, I believe, there has been additional work to look at the project development phase and we continue to pursue any avenue along those lines. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue to press the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues to make this a top priority, as I think they are well aware of, in terms of the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway and how many people down the Mackenzie Valley will be very appreciative of this support here. Can the Premier tell me, if we build a Mackenzie Valley Highway, what would the revenue be to be paid to open up the Mackenzie Valley for resource development exploration and extraction?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the economic analysis of a Mackenzie Valley Highway is something that the Department of Transportation has undertaken and I believe they are prepared to set some time aside with Members to go over that work. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 99-16(4):
TRAPPING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are with regard to the outstanding trappers we have in the Sahtu and ITI's program. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Robert Kochon of Colville Lake had the highest sales in trapping and also the

highest pelts in trapping. What is this Minister of ITI doing in terms of supporting our way of life in the Sahtu, especially with trappers like Mr. Kochon? What are the programs he has to support this way of life?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of ITI has a long history of programs to support harvesters and trappers so that they can have a choice when it comes to maintaining a way of life. Certainly we have a number of programs, totaling in the neighbourhood of \$2 million, that would help support the traditional economy and, certainly, as anybody involved in sports knows, the future depends on getting youth involved and we've invested a lot, along with our many, many partners such as Education, Culture and Employment, MACA, industry and so on, into our Take a Kid Trapping program to introduce a significant amount of children into the outdoors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Minister McLeod alluded to the Youth Trapping Program. I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of strengthening the Youth Trapping Program, is that part of the educational curriculum for young trappers in the Northwest Territories? Speaking to young trappers in Colville Lake, Mr. Samuel Oudzi, who was the youth trapper in that community in the Sahtu region, would he be able to continue to have that type of opportunity to put trapping as part of his educational curriculum?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We've had a long partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and working with the schools and curriculum so that we could introduce school children to trapping, because it's been not only my view but the view of a lot of people in the education system that this lifestyle and ability to go out and earn a living off the land is something that fosters a lot of qualities that help children become successful in later life. Attributes like decision-making, leadership qualities and high levels of self-esteem have been associated with Take a Kid Trapping. Certainly if you look at Colville Lake where they have a school function to travel abroad, they had very limited opportunities for fundraising. So the school children, along with their principal, took it upon themselves to raise money by trapping and they were very successful in being able to raise funds that would go towards their trip.

Also, I think every school program in every community has a program to introduce school children to on-the-land activities. We have been working very closely with the teachers, and not only the Department of ITI, but wildlife officers from ENR have worked very closely with the teachers and

certainly even the education system, the DEAs and so on, have teachers or educators that are dedicated to this kind of activity. So we recognize it's a very important role for us to play and we work very closely with the education system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Gabe Kochon was chosen as senior trapper in the Sahtu region. Gabe Kochon is one solid trapper. I want to ask the Minister, with regard to trapping for seniors, are there some programs dedicated to seniors like Gabe Kochon to continue that way of life?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As I said, we have a significant number of programs. One of the most successful ones we had was the Western Harvesters Assistance Program where we partnered with all the aboriginal governments so that trappers could make some capital investments such as buying equipment and so forth. I think there is only one or two communities left that still haven't accessed that program.

With regard to seniors, certainly we talk quite a bit about our SEED program, our Strategic Environmental Economic Development program. We have programs in there under small business and micro business where people are making a living on the land or can access these programs, so they can get access to small amounts of money that would allow them to continue their activities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member to ask a final, short supplementary question.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, trapping is a strong life, it's a good life. It's a life that people certainly enjoy. I would ask if the Minister would work with his Cabinet colleagues to see how we can look at trapping in terms of how to get food into our communities and our local stores and start opening a discussion on how to support trappers in a lifelong passion to practice their way of life.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: This is something that we are committed to and I think the whole Cabinet is committed to, so we will continue to work with all regions and all communities so that people will continue to be able to make a choice so they can practice a way of life and continue to do so for some time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Petitions

PETITION 1-16(4): PRIVATIZATION OR MERGER OF THE NWT POWER CORPORATION

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of privatization or merger of the NWT Power Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 988 signatures of Northwest Territories residents and, Mr. Speaker, the petition requests that the Members of the Legislative Assembly vote against any proposal that contains privatization or merger of public utilities or services, closure of any public utility facilities or reduction in any service levels of any kind to NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 24-16(4): COMMUNITIES AND DIAMONDS: 2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES UNDER THE BHP BILLITON, DIAVIK AND DE BEERS SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Communities and Diamonds 2008 Annual Report of the Government of the Northwest Territories under the BHP Billiton, Diavik and De Beers Socio-economic Agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 25-16(4): POSTCARD: STOP PRIVATIZATION: NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 26-16(4): LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF NORTHERN WORKERS TO PREMIER ROLAND

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents I would like to table. The first is a postcard entitled Stop Privatization, and it says: "Dear Premier Roland, we, the citizens of the Northwest Territories, have entrusted our public utilities and services to your care. Do not break that trust by selling, leasing or in any other way

privatizing the NWT Housing Corporation.” It has a signature block for residents. Document number one.

Document number two is a letter from the UNW to the Honourable Floyd Roland outlining that 644 of these previously tabled documents have been sent, signed copies have been sent to Premier Roland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TAX ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 29, 2009, I will move that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

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

BILL 2:
FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2009-2010

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, October 29, 2009, I will move that Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010, be read for the first time. Thank you.

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

BILL 3:
MEDICAL PROFESSION ACT

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 29, 2009, I will move that Bill 3, Medical Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act.

---Unanimous consent granted.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TAX ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 1 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with the second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act.

---Consent granted.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TAX ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Petroleum Products Tax Act to replace the defined term “motor vehicle” with the new defined term “mobile machine” and to provide for application and commencement matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 1 has had second reading.

---Carried

The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 1 moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 1 will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration today.

---Unanimous consent granted.

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 1-16(4), NWT Capital Estimates 2010-2011; Tabled Document 18-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation No. 2 (Operations Expenditures), 2009-2010; Tabled Document 19-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation No. 3 (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2009-2010; Committee Report 1-16(4), Standing

Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 Annual Reports; Committee Report 2-16(4), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Auditor General on Contracting for Goods and Services in the Northwest Territories; and Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have several items in Committee of the Whole: Tabled Document 1-16(4), Tabled Document 18-16(4), Tabled Document 19-16(4), Committee Report 1-16(4), Committee Report 2-16(4), and Bill 1. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wish of the committee today is to deal with Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, we will deal with Bill 1. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he has some general comments. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to introduce Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act. This bill will address the ambiguity with the definition of the type of equipment that is subject to the motive diesel tax rate when consuming diesel fuel in its operation.

The new definition will clarify the intent of the Petroleum Products Tax Act that, with some exceptions, the motive diesel tax rate applies to all mechanical mobile contrivances including motor vehicles, cranes, excavators, backhoes, and drills on tracks if they are self-propelled when powered by diesel fuel.

The proposed amendment will be retroactive to 1991 and will come into force immediately upon assent.

Although not commonly used by the NWT, retroactive legislation of this nature has been used in similar circumstances in other jurisdictions in Canada.

This amendment is a very narrow one, focussing on one very specific issue. We recognize that the Petroleum Products Tax Act is a very old act, requiring review and updating to reflect the current

environment. Work is ongoing in this regard. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister brings in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness in.

At this time, I would like to ask the Minister to introduce his witnesses. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance; Mark Aitken, director of legislation, Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments in regards to Bill 1? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): If I can ask Members to turn to page 1 of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 4 inclusive approved.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 1 is ready for third reading?

---Bill 1 as a whole approved for third reading.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 1 is now ready for third reading. Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act. I would like to report that Bill 1 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act. Thank you.

---Consent granted.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TAX ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 1 has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Anthony W. J. Whitford, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills.

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Tony Whitford): Please be seated. Monsieur le president, monsieur le premier ministre, messieurs et mesdames les deputes, mesdames et messieurs, et amis, friends, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bill:

Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act

Thank you, merci, quanami, mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, October 28th, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 1-16(4), NWT Capital Estimates 2010-2011
 - Tabled Document 18-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation No. 2 (Operations Expenditures), 2009-2010
 - Tabled Document 19-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation No. 3 (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2009-2010
 - Committee Report 1-16(4), Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 Annual Reports
 - Committee Report 2-16(4), Report on the Review of the Auditor General on Contracting for Goods and Services in the Northwest Territories
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.
Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until
Wednesday, October 28th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 15:29 p.m.