



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, October 29, 2009**

Pages 3561 - 3596

**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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(Weledeh)

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(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, October 29, 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, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:34 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

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

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 24-16(4):  
MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT**

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, since the Joint Review Panel hearings concluded almost two years ago, preparations have been made to ensure that the Government of the Northwest Territories has all the necessary tools to participate and represent the best interests of Northerners and the regulatory process of this highly anticipated project.

We are nearing the end of the environmental assessment review process. The Joint Review Panel will be releasing its report and recommendations in two short months.

As we speak, much work has been underway to get ready for the release of this report. A Joint Review Panel review team has been established to coordinate the Government of the Northwest Territories review to the recommended measures. Even today, Mr. Speaker, Environment and Natural Resources employees are meeting in Calgary to discuss important issues regarding the Mackenzie Gas Project Joint Review Panel. We will have a short window to consider the Joint Review Panel report so we are ensuring we are ready to hit the ground running.

Based on the timeline for release of the Joint Review Panel report, the National Energy Board recently announced it intends to hear final arguments on the Mackenzie Gas Project application in April 2010. The National Energy Board has indicated that they will deliver their reasons for decision in September 2010.

We anticipate that, following a positive decision by the National Energy Board, receipt of a number of regulatory permits and updating of their financial

analysis, the Mackenzie Gas Project proponents will be in a position to make a decision to construct by late 2011.

With a positive decision by the proponents, our expectation is that construction on this unprecedented project will begin immediately. Gas is expected to flow from the Mackenzie Gas Project by 2016.

As you all know, up to this point significant human and financial resources have been invested to support our residents, businesses, aboriginal organizations and communities to help develop the necessary capacity that will allow them to take full advantage of the benefits generated by the project.

Apart from its numerous economic benefits, which I have emphasized time and again, this project also has environmental benefits which we must consider.

In North America, the completion of the Mackenzie Gas Project will help displace other fossil fuels that produce much more significant greenhouse gas emissions.

It is imperative that this cleaner fuel be brought to market to contribute to the battle on climate change.

It is encouraging to see the sustained efforts of federal Environmental Minister Prentice to ensure the smooth development and a fruitful conclusion to the fiscal discussions between the Government of Canada and the project proponents. As reported in the media earlier this week and confirmed to us by the federal government, these negotiations continue.

We also commend the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce and their success in having the Canadian Chamber adopt a significant resolution of support for the Mackenzie Gas Project and maximizing First Nations' involvement. This work will help keep the profile of this project at the highest levels in the business community and on the national stage.

Also more evidence that things are moving in the right direction is the recently concluded access and benefits agreement of the K'asho Got'ine district in the Sahtu region. This means that only one more access and benefits agreement needs to be signed

in order to ensure that all affected regions secure enhanced benefits along the pipeline corridor.

We remain hopeful that the Dehcho First Nations will also participate fully in the Aboriginal Pipeline Group and thus realize significant and long-term economic return from this project through direct ownership.

This project is another opportunity to ensure a positive future for our children. It is the first step of what promises to be an unprecedented era of prosperity and stability in our part of Canada.

As we reach the conclusion of the regulatory process, I invite all Members to join me in confirming our commitment to the economic future of the Northwest Territories and the environmental benefits that this project will bring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 25-16(4):  
UPDATE ON NWT HC'S 2009-10  
CAPITAL DELIVERY

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide an update on the delivery of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's capital acquisition plan for 2009-10. In May the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories announced in excess of \$117 million in investments in housing in the Northwest Territories over the next two years. These investments are intended to be an economic stimulus and job creation initiative, as well as an important investment in social housing.

As Members are aware, this funding has been characterized as "use it or lose it" as all funds must be committed by March 31, 2011, or we risk having them clawed back by Canada. We take this risk very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to inform this House that our successes and progress to date leave me very confident that every dollar announced by both levels of government will be invested in our communities through new housing construction and the renovation and retrofit of existing units.

As of today, nearly 400 housing projects have been completed or are under construction in our communities. This represents 67 percent of our planned delivery for this construction year. Housing construction and repair activity is ongoing in all our communities. New public housing replacement units have been provided in Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Lutselk'e and Aklavik. New homeownership units have been completed in Whati, Fort Liard and Fort Smith among other communities, while major modernization and improvements to public housing have been

completed in Behchoko, Fort Providence, Wrigley and Tuktoyaktuk.

Every community in our Territory will see investments in housing through this construction initiative. We will replace existing units through the Public Housing Program, as well as provide homeownership opportunities through our Housing Choices programs. The NWT HC is currently accepting applications for its Housing Choices programs, and residents are encouraged to contact the Housing Corporation office in their region to make an appointment to apply for assistance.

Dwellings constructed or repaired must be built to a high standard of energy efficiency. The NWT Housing Corporation's new EnerGuide 80 housing designs will exceed the minimum standards being asked for by Canada. Our new construction standards, together with the energy audits and retrofits that are scheduled to be completed this year, are an important part of the Housing Corporation's contribution to achieving the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly's goal of an environment that will sustain present and future generations.

Mr. Speaker, our investments in housing over the next two years will go a long way in achieving the goals we have set out as the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly to improve the lives of our residents now and into the future. Housing is a key contributor to the goals of sustainable, vibrant and safe communities, environmental sustainability, improved health and education rates, and is a key economic contributor in every community in our Territory. Our housing investments, together with the other initiatives of our government, are the right approaches for these times of economic challenge.

New housing construction and repair can have a significant impact on local economies. According to Statistics Canada, for residential construction activities in the NWT, 3.5 person years of employment are created for every \$1 million in activity. Mr. Speaker, with a total residential construction in 2009-10 of \$79 million, we anticipate that creating 279 person years of employment in the NWT.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, while we commend the federal government for their share of NWT investments made in recent years in northern housing, it is important to note that all of the federal spending has required the NWT to match dollar for dollar. The housing conditions faced in our communities and in Nunavut and the Yukon demand a longer-term solution. I, along with my colleagues Ministers Tootoo and Kenyon, are lobbying the federal government to agree to a new approach to northern housing. This approach is intended to make capital investments permanent and to include funding for the operation and maintenance of new units. It would also deal with the issue of declining funding for the operation and

maintenance of existing units. We look forward to the upcoming meeting with the federal Minister, which will occur sometime before Christmas, to continue to make the case for a new approach to providing housing in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANCER AWARENESS AND SCREENING STRATEGY FOR ELDERLY

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week I was talking with a constituent who had concerns about aboriginal elders. He thought that too many elders are diagnosed with cancer too late for them to benefit from treatment. There have been, in the past, cases of an elder living a very healthy lifestyle, who came to the health clinic in a very bad state. He was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in less than two weeks. It was a terrible shock for the family and the community.

Treatments for cancer have improved a great deal over the years. If there had been some kind of screening process to identify this elder's illness, with treatment he would have likely enjoyed many more good years. However, being diagnosed so late, he didn't have a chance.

We have very good health services in the Northwest Territories and we strive to make it better. We need to ensure that elders have information about recognizing signs that might be indicators of cancer. It is important that they receive this information in their own language as well, Mr. Speaker.

If we're able to reach elders in communities to ensure that they are screened for cancer, it would help. Early detection has proven to reduce death rates. For example, colorectal cancer screening programs can reduce death rates by 15 to 33 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to mention the joint efforts of North Cariboo Air or the pilot Steve Malesku and our health services in Fort Liard who have offered and donated flights to Yellowknife for breast cancer scans.

---Applause

These are the types of efforts we need to make sure that if an elder has cancer, it is detected early and it may be treatable. This could be done with an annual visit of a medical team holding a clinic specifically for elders and other people at risk. The clinic could be promoted and efforts made to get

people to attend. At that time, it should be possible to complete testing or at least schedule testing. This is just one suggestion for ensuring our elders get the individual care they deserve.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to develop a strategy to ensure that elders have the opportunity to be screened for cancer so that they can receive their rightful benefits to our health care system. Mr. Speaker, I will engage the Minister in a discussion of this matter during question period. Mahsi cho.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COR PROGRAM AND WORKPLACE SAFETY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about a program called Certificate of Recognition, also known as COR. As some of you may know, COR is a health and safety certificate program for the construction industry in Canada. In the Northwest Territories, this program is delivered by the Northern Construction Safety Association in partnership with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. The COR program is designed to equip participants with the resources and skills to develop and maintain accredited in-house safety management systems unique to their workplace. To be certified, participants complete three compulsory courses, one elective course and must conduct a safety audit. The Certificate of Recognition program is available to all members and associate members of the Construction Association, from owner-operators to larger corporations.

The COR certification program is designed to fit the specific requirements of the construction industry needs, whether the company is large or small. As an example, if you are a small employer, there is a COR program for your company with less than 10 employees. The COR program is intended to complement the Safe Advantage Program offered by WSCC, which recognizes the safety performance of large NWT companies by offering them some reduced premiums and improved performance.

Mr. Speaker, the program provides contractors with practical solutions for a safer workplace, offering a simple, straightforward approach to safety. Ultimately, and most importantly, these programs reduce the human and financial losses which are associated with workplace accidents. In many ways, the COR program seems to be the ideal fit for Northerners and industry. It is easy to deliver, simple to understand and implement, available in many of our small communities and various regions at simple request.

The goal of the Northern Construction Association is to increase the participation of NWT construction companies, both small and large, in the COR program, to ensure safe northern workplaces. One of the ways to achieve their goal for safe northern workplaces is to ensure all companies implement health and safety programs such as the COR program in their day-to-day operations. Other jurisdictions in Canada such as the Yukon have implemented legislation or policy requirements that these companies achieve and maintain their COR certification. I believe the Government of the Northwest Territories should consider and move towards implementing a similar program in the Northwest Territories to help companies move towards this type of goal.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will have questions for the Minister of Public Works to see if we can look into this initiative and make sure it is a territorial initiative for all large and small communities and all the large and small businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY ACCESS ROAD PROGRAM AND AUSTIN LAKE ROAD

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about an access road for the community of Lutselk'e. The community has been asking for a road to Austin Lake for quite some time now. Having this road will allow the residents access to points of interest, recreation and tourist opportunities and much used traditional harvesting area.

Mr. Speaker, the government has had a few access road programs, but over the years these programs have undergone change in both its mandate and, more importantly, its budget allocations. Currently, the Department of Transportation has a Community Local Access Roads Program with just over \$300,000 in the program. Three hundred thousand dollars to serve 33 communities works out to about \$9,000 per community. What can communities access with that?

Mr. Speaker, here in the NWT many of our communities, like Lutselk'e, are isolated. Many rely on traditional basic economies such as hunting, trapping and fishing to put food on the table and generate much needed income. Doing this will also help them offset some of the high cost that comes with living in smaller, isolated communities. So it only makes sense, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the communities, such as Lutselk'e, that we take another look at the Community Access Road Program and start making changes to the program or looking at introducing a new access program that can provide meaningful assistance to these

communities so they can start accessing these important areas.

Austin Lake is one such area, Mr. Speaker. It is a rich renewable resource harvesting area. In addition, many hydro projects have been planned for Snowdrift River, which is just outside of Lutselk'e and about half way to Austin Lake. The road can be built to the many hydro stations from Lutselk'e to Snowdrift River to accommodate the transmission line. With the mini-hydro already underway, we are presented with a great opportunity to incorporate a collaborative effort to kick-start the Austin Lake project.

Mr. Speaker, as I talked about before in the House, it is very important that economic opportunities for Lutselk'e for a project such as this be considered.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this project and the Austin Lake road project have tremendous opportunity to effect substantial changes for the community on many fronts. It's not only an access road for the community, it's an access road to community wellness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT ON COMMUNITY CENTRE CONSTRUCTION IN SACHS HARBOUR

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is on the project management and community centre construction in Sachs Harbour.

Sachs Harbour heard their funding was confirmed for the construction of the community centre. There was hope and optimism in the air. When the construction started and finished last December, the community was very excited. One year later it is problem after problem and the project keeps the doors closed for the community.

When the NWT fire marshal inspected the facility, he gave it a failing grade and he did not approve it for general public use. Last December the community centre was transferred to the Hamlet of Sachs Harbour, even though much more work was needed. Since then, the project has been stumbling along.

Mr. Speaker, Sachs Harbour is the most northern community in this Territory and experiences the most challenges when it comes to construction projects such as this, compounded by the hamlet office that is already overworked and overstretched. Every month that the facility is not being used, the



community does not generate rental revenue to keep that centre open.

Mr. Speaker, in a small, remote community like Sachs Harbour, the community centre is a focal point. It's where the people gather to share each other's company, where they go to participate in workshops and forums, and a place where they go to celebrate and hold community feasts. The community is afraid that the longer the facility sits empty, the more expensive it will be to complete the final details of the construction.

The community is asking for a project manager to help in the coordination and operation of this facility during the final phases of construction so that it can be opened to the community for their Christmas celebrations. Therefore, I urge the government to seriously consider the request from the community of Sachs Harbour regarding this building. Mr. Speaker, I will have more questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PEEL RIVER FERRY PROPOSED CLOSURE

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ferry service throughout the Northwest Territories is an essential service to deliver goods and services and also for the public to travel, hopefully as long as they can. Mr. Speaker, the ferry operations in the Mackenzie Delta have been closed on the Mackenzie River last week, but there's been talk about closing the Peel River Ferry at kilometre 74 this weekend, which, Mr. Speaker, I received some photographs from my constituency assistant and sent it off to the Minister to clearly demonstrate there is no ice on the river, it is wide open. Yet, Mr. Speaker, they're intending to shut down this ferry because of so-called ice conditions. Mr. Speaker, in most cases there is a process that's followed in regard to giving 72 hours notice and then they go to 48 hours down to 24 hours so that we can notify the travelling public.

Mr. Speaker, ferry service is an essential service in order to ensure that we are able to move goods and services and the general public for as long as possible, regardless if you're in the South Slave dealing with the ferry crossing in Fort Providence or the crossing on the Liard. Whatever we can do as a government and as the Department of Transportation to ensure we provide these services for as long as possible makes sense to do so, and basically the ferry operation is not a threat. I believe that we should do whatever we can, realizing the mild conditions we're seeing this fall, if there's a possibility of these ferry operations running well

over the present season and into possibly the next couple of weeks.

So I'd like, at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, to ask the Minister of Transportation exactly what can the department do to assure the residents of the Mackenzie Delta, and especially Fort McPherson, that we will continue the ferry operations on the Peel River and that it does not close this weekend. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENERGY INITIATIVES IN THE SAHTU

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a song that goes something like this, "wintertime is coming, wintertime is coming." However, I'm not allowed to sing it, so I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, that winter is here and it's time to turn up the heat in the Sahtu. I'm not talking about global warming, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about providing affordable heat to homes and businesses in the Sahtu region.

Earlier this session, I stood up and talked about the energy initiatives in my region and I would like to come back to that today, Mr. Speaker, because it's a hot issue. I don't think there are any or enough energy initiatives being done in the Sahtu. For example, I see significant investments in geothermal technology and expansion of residual heat in the Nahendeh and Deh Cho. The Inuvialuit Settlement Region will see a huge wind project and the South Slave has some very impressive projects to reduce the high cost of energy and they're fast to construct mini-hydro in other areas, then the Sahtu. Deline has been waiting 16 years to construct their mini-hydro project. Mr. Speaker, even a wood pellet boiler right here in the Legislative Assembly.

All of these energy initiatives are in the thousands of dollars, if not millions. Mr. Speaker, this year the Government of the Northwest Territories plans to invest \$100,000 in energy feasibility studies in the Sahtu. They hope the return of the allocated \$100,000 investment will see action in the Sahtu real soon, not eight years down the road. Heating costs in our communities have remained very high. We spend a lot of money building facilities like pools and arenas, but they become too expensive to operate, because we can't afford the heat and we have to close these key facilities due to non-payment of our power bills.

So this afternoon I would like to hear about the Mackenzie Gas Project update and how the Government of the Northwest Territories can look at the possibilities of converting some of the Sahtu communities to natural gas for power generation and heat.

Mr. Speaker, we need to use this energy wisely. We should consider residual heat and cogeneration facilities, where the heat generated from the power production is used to heat buildings in communities. It is frustrating to see energy waste when we pay so much to heat our homes and many of these costs in the small communities are paid for by subsidies that come from our tax dollars.

Mr. Speaker, public money should be put to good use. We need to invest in long-term plans to reduce the costs of living, to create sustainable communities. Mr. Speaker, the investment I see in other parts of the Northwest Territories let me know that we have the ability to develop better energy strategies for the Sahtu. We are at the beginning of another long, cold winter. We must act now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about the Deh Cho Bridge project. For years I've questioned the process that allowed the decision to build the Deh Cho Bridge. Mr. Speaker, I'm still of the opinion that both the Deh Cho Bridge Act, which was passed late in the life of the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, and the eventual process that allowed the Government of the Northwest Territories to enter into the concession agreement with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation was, indeed, thoroughly flawed.

The bridge is being built, Mr. Speaker, and I realize I just can't fight the process any longer. What I will and can do is continue to monitor the project in an effort to try to minimize our government's exposure to financial risks. I will question any increase to the already absurd amount of public dollars that are going to go into this bridge over the next 35 years.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of government would knowingly spend \$160 million to increase the cost of living to all communities in the North Slave region or those serviced by air from Yellowknife? The fact is, there are going to be tolls on all goods being transported across the bridge at Fort Providence. Rest assured these costs will be passed on to consumers on food, home heating fuel, gas, on building materials, on everything, Mr. Speaker.

From a public interest standpoint, there remains many questions. Firstly, where exactly is the finalized bridge design? How come it has not been concluded as of yet? It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that in order to protect the interest of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Department of Transportation has stepped into the overall management of the project in a big way and I want

to thank the Minister for doing that, although this does come with a cost.

Then, Mr. Speaker, how many liens are currently placed against the project? How exactly is the public purse exposed in these areas? I have never understood why the government did not include the installation, maintenance and operation of the toll system into the concession agreement, which to me continues to defy any logic. This large oversight has forced us to incur a million dollars in capital costs and the government does not yet have a handle or know exactly what the system will cost on an annual basis to add to our already \$4 million a year effort into that bridge.

Mr. Speaker, now that the bridge is being built and DOT is involved in the project management...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Ramsay, your time for your Member's statement is expired.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the bridge is being built and DOT is involved in the project management, we have to, now more than ever, step up the oversight on the project as it moves forward. I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANTI-POVERTY CAMPAIGN "DIGNITY FOR ALL"

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week I had the privilege of attending the Feeding Change supper at the Salvation Army. More than 50 individuals, representatives of low income residents and social justice groups and agencies, attended to discuss poverty issues and solutions and share experience and learn about the anti-poverty campaign, Dignity for All.

The Dignity for All campaign is a national movement partnering 14 social justice organizations and endorsed by 175 organizations and increasing numbers of politicians at all levels nationwide. The goals are the creation of a federal plan that complements provincial/territorial plans to eliminate poverty, creation of a federal act for poverty elimination, and federal investment for social wellness for all Canadians.

Confrontation of poverty is based on a fundamental assumption. All citizens have the right to a standard of living adequate to the health and well-being of their families and themselves.

The need for coordinated government action recognizes that the prosperity of all citizens can't

increase when governments spend about \$100 billion per year fighting the effects of poverty, money which might be better spent addressing the issue head on; a preferred approach, I believe, of our government.

Regionally, Quebec, Newfoundland, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Manitoba have all created anti-poverty strategies with fixed program budgets, comprehensive implementation plans and clear targets for evaluating progress. New Brunswick and Yukon are now working on theirs and community groups in Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan are all calling for their provinces to establish anti-poverty strategies.

Mr. Speaker, we have also been called upon to act, to confront social conditions and inequities that are amongst the worst in Canada. Alternatives North's report in 2006, Poverty, A Whispered Word, and their 2009 review of GNWT poverty reduction policies and programs calls upon this government to confront poverty with a clear, comprehensive and unified strategy. Currently we do not even have an official definition of poverty. While we have many programs dealing with the symptoms and results of poverty or housing and homelessness, addictions and mental illness, criminal justice in corrections, illiteracy and social assistance, we have no coordinated plan of attack. We can't cure the results without confronting the problem as a whole.

Despite our amazing economic growth...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Bromley, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, colleagues. Despite our amazing economic growth over the past decade, our poverty issues remain flat-lined or worse now. Evidence clearly shows that economic growth alone does not resolve poverty. Over the next week, I will be asking Ministers questions on this issue. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SECONDARY DIAMOND INDUSTRY IN THE NWT

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk a little about the secondary diamond industry in the Northwest Territories, specifically the cutting and polishing plants.

The Northwest Territories is a leader in the diamond industry within Canada. The North was the first jurisdiction to bring cutting and polishing of Canadian diamonds to Canada. Bringing the

industry here wasn't without significant challenges, many of which the Territory and the company cutting and polishing diamonds overcame. Others are still posing challenges.

As a government, we provided funding, facilitated training, conducted marketing, arranged for branding. The list can go on and on and on. We have done a lot. Unfortunately, the local industry is still struggling. Fortunately, there are still cutting and polishing plants in the NWT. They are still trying to make a go of it in these difficult economic times. They are still working to employ more workers. Arslanian Diamonds in Yellowknife recently announced that they are starting to rebuild their workforce after layoffs late last year.

You would think that as a Territory, the first area of Canada to pursue and support this secondary industry, we would have adapted and learned from the challenges that we faced. That this Territory would be the strongest secondary diamond industry in the country.

Unfortunately, recent evidence suggests that we are falling behind rapidly. It looks like other jurisdictions have learned from the challenges we faced and have found ways to make the secondary diamond industry work within their provinces, places like Saskatchewan and Ontario. We have forged the way and they have learned from our reactions and responses to the challenges that we faced.

Recently a new polishing plant has opened in Saskatchewan, Embee Diamond Technologies Inc. What is interesting is that they found a way to open a new facility in the same market conditions which almost completely shut down the NWT cutting and polishing industry. Even more interesting is that Embee's president, Mike Botha, is finding a way to make it work in Saskatchewan. Some of you might actually remember this name. Mike Botha worked as an occupational certification officer for the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and was also a technical consultant for the Department of ITI for the government Diamond Certification Program.

Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that our former employees learned enough about the industry to make secondary diamond industries work in different Canadian jurisdictions, yet we continue to struggle here. What is this government going to do to reverse that trend and put the NWT back on top as a Canadian leader in this secondary diamond industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
VOTER RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS IN THE  
NWT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been over a week since municipal Election Day. As with any competition, there were some winners and there were some losers. I offer my hearty congratulations to the newly elected mayors and councils and a sincere thank you to all of those who ran, winners or not.

In my Member's statement prior to the elections, I encouraged residents to get out and vote, and to get out and vote in large numbers. Well, that didn't quite happen, but we did have an increased voter turnout in at least three of the six communities where elections were held. Previous years' election data couldn't be confirmed for three of the communities, so that number could be higher. The percentage of voter turnout on October 19<sup>th</sup> ranged from 42 percent in Fort Simpson -- the highest they had ever seen, apparently -- to 67 percent in Norman Wells. That is not fantastic, but on average one of every two registered voters in the NWT came out to vote and that is pretty good.

Those results got me thinking about how we could increase interest in municipal elections and in community affairs. A very real impediment is the residency requirement for voters. Our eligibility requirement states that a voter must, and I quote, "...at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the day on which the person votes, been a resident of the electoral district." In municipal elections, that electoral district is not the Territory but the community. All Canadian provinces only require six months residency in the province, many with no residency restriction in the community at all. Ontario has absolutely no residency requirement except that a voter has to be a resident in the community on the day on which they vote.

Our 12-month requirement eliminates many residents on voting in municipal elections. And we are a fairly transient population. People move into the Territory on a regular basis and people frequently move from community to community within the Territory. Much more interest would be generated in our elections if the residency requirement was shortened. I suggest six months. That residency should apply to the Territory, not the community. If we must keep a 12-month residency requirement, make it apply to the Territory with a six-month community residency requirement. We will attract more voters, many of them young, and we will get greater interest in local politics, not just at election time but all year long.

Amendments to the Local Authorities Elections Act were contemplated earlier this year. MACA produced...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ms. Bisaro, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you to my colleagues. Amendments to the Local Authorities Elections Act were contemplated earlier this year. MACA produced a discussion paper and held consultations. I hope that the residency requirement was addressed through that process. I look forward to seeing the results. I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs later on. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Reports of Standing and Special  
Committees**

COMMITTEE REPORT 3-16(4):  
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the Human Rights Commission 2007-2008 Annual Report and commends it to the House.

**Introduction**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations reviewed the 2007-2008 Report of the Human Rights Commission. The committee would like to thank Mary Pat Short, chair of the Human Rights Commission, and Ms. Therese Boullard, director of human rights, for their appearance before the committee.

The 2007-2008 Annual Report was the fourth report on the Human Rights Commission since its establishment on July 1, 2004. There were no recommendations in the report.

The committee was pleased with the level of activity that occurred in 2007-2008. The Human Rights Commission hosted a national human rights conference in Yellowknife in June of 2007 with 150 delegates attending. Experts presented on aboriginal rights, duty to accommodate family obligations, drug and alcohol testing and other topics. In addition, the commission visited seven communities to give presentations and sponsored audio conferences on human rights in four communities.

The Human Rights Commission received 317 inquiries and 33 new complaints in 2007-2008. The most common type of alleged discrimination was disability.

The committee is very pleased with the commission's efforts to provide education and awareness workshops on human rights and the NWT Human Rights Act. We look forward to seeing continued outreach to communities and encourage you to pursue opportunities to reach people throughout the NWT.

### Conclusion

The committee commends the commission's work and the achievements to date and looks forward to monitoring the continued advancement of human rights in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the Review of the Human Rights Commission 2007-2008 Annual Report.

### MOTION TO RECEIVE AND ADOPT COMMITTEE REPORT 3-16(4), CARRIED

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 3-16(4) be received and adopted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### COMMITTEE REPORT 4-16(4): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner and commends it to the House.

### Introduction

The Standing Committee on Government Operations met on September 28, 2009, to review the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner and the special report Speaking of Health: Official Languages as part of Quality Health Care in the Northwest Territories. The committee would like to thank the former Languages Commissioner, Ms. Shannon Gullberg, for presenting these reports. The committee would also like to thank the recently appointed Languages Commissioner, Ms. Sarah Jerome, for attending.

In 2008, the committee urged the Languages Commissioner to conduct more outreach and visit

more communities in order to promote her role and office. In her 2007-2008 Annual Report, the Commissioner noted that she had completed a number of radio interviews; however, she personally visited only Behchoko. The committee was disappointed with this limited amount of travel and is pleased to see that the current Languages Commissioner has already begun attending public functions and offering presentations in communities.

The committee looks forward to hearing more about her activities in future annual reports. The committee is concerned that members of the minority language groups may not be aware of the Commissioner and her role. Her responsibility is to ensure that the rights, status and privileges of the speakers of each of the 11 official languages in the Northwest Territories are protected within government institutions. One of the mandated activities of the Languages Commissioner is to investigate complaints from NWT residents on language issues. The Commissioner received only two complaints in the past two years and relatively few inquiries: 11 inquiries in 2006-2007 and 21 in 2007-2008. One committee member observed that, in his role as MLA, he had received five or six complaints on language issues in 2007-2008. The committee would like to see the Commissioner promote her role so that people with language concerns would bring inquiries and complaints directly to the Languages Commissioner.

I will now turn the floor over to my colleague, Mr. Glen Abernethy, to finish reading the rest of the report. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Menicoche.

### Recommendations

In her 2007-2008 Annual Report, the Commissioner made 13 recommendations, six of which were raised in previous reports. Nine of her recommendations were addressed by the Standing Committee on Government Operations in its Final Report on the Review of the Official Languages Act. This report, Reality Check: Securing A Future for the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, was presented to the House in May of 2009. The response to this report was tabled in the House on October 15, 2009, by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Minister is committed to providing a follow-up response in the fall of 2010. Given this ongoing process, some recommendations in the Language Commissioner's 2007-2008 Annual Report did not fall strictly within her mandate. The committee has limited its recommendations to the following:

Since 2004-2005, the committee has advocated for the training and certification for interpreters in all language groups. In recent years, Ms. Gullberg and the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act spoke to the need for capacity building through the development of translation standards as well as training and certification standards for interpreters and translators.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories make planning for the implementation of the training and certification of interpreters and translators a priority, and further that the government report back on the status of this initiative.

The ability to provide language services and revitalize official languages requires a cadre of qualified interpreters and translators.

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the GNWT establish a registry of interpreters and translators for every official language.

Websites can be an excellent means of providing general information. The committee recognizes the need to clarify when two or more official languages should be included on government websites.

#### **Recommendation 3**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct a review of its website policies and report back on whether they are in compliance with official languages policies, guidelines and legislation.

The committee was pleased to see the Commissioner's report *Speaking of Health: Official Languages as part of the Quality Health Care in the Northwest Territories*. The report, tabled in June of 2008, includes 15 recommendations regarding improving language services throughout health care centres and hospitals.

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a formal response to *Speaking of Health: Official Languages as part of Quality Health Care in the Territories within 120 days*.

#### **Conclusion**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations acknowledges the work that Ms. Shannon Gullberg has done over the last four years. The committee also appreciates Ms. Gullberg's continued support of Ms. Sarah Jerome as she begins her new term. The committee looks

forward to working with Ms. Jerome and to her active participation in publicizing and promoting the role of the Languages Commissioner. During her tenure to date, the committee is pleased with her approach to fulfilling her mandate. Ms. Jerome has embarked on many community visits, and the committee supports her initiative at attending assemblies and other community events and her willingness to make presentations on language rights.

#### **Recommendation 5**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the Review of the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner.

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

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 4-16(4) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called.

---Carried

Committee Report 4-16(4) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### **Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to welcome people belonging to the Goyatiko Language Society in Dettah. First, I'd like to recognize Mary Rose Sundberg, instructor, and her students: Lena Drygeese, Francis Betsina, Nora Crookedhand, Stella Martin, Andrew Crapeau and Margaret Baillargeon. Welcome to the House. Maybe a hand for those people, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Also, Mr. Speaker, we had students and teachers of Grade 6 Weledeh School. It was great to have them in the House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 111-16(4): CANCER AWARENESS AND SCREENING STRATEGY FOR ELDERS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement, the idea from one of my constituents from Fort Liard about beginning cancer screening for our elders. I know that we have a great program in diabetes screening and diabetes workshops that we provide in all the communities. I see there's good uptake on that. I, myself, take the opportunity to check out my blood sugar levels with that program. His idea was that in the past there have been cases where elders are diagnosed too late for any treatment and he thought that since elders are going to health centres, is there a program...They're probably getting blood tests to start counting their white blood cells or even institute a cancer clinic for elders, Mr. Speaker. Is there such a system in our health care system right now that can provide for this service? Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise the House that in the Foundation for Change Action Plan we have a precise action identified in this area. One is to establish a chronic disease management model for the NWT which would work to upgrade the screening program for chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease and cancers. We will also be looking to address colorectal cancer through staged screening of stool samples. We will also be looking at implementing a territorial screening mammography program and increase education about modifiable risk factors and screening.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'm pleased to see that they're going to provide some resources in the upcoming year, in the 2010 budget year. Currently, what practices are being used with regard to screening for cancers or chronic diseases, as the Minister has indicated? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I should note that that action plan, the timeline for that is it's a three-year plan to expand our work in all of these areas. Currently, we do have a screening program for breast cancer, we do have a screening program for colorectal cancer, prostate cancer and also, obviously, our health care

staff in all our regions do their best to respond when the residents do come and raise their health issues.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** What type of modelling would the new program be based on? I had indicated the diabetes model. It's quite successful. It's quite visual. It sets up at Northern Stores, et cetera, in the smaller communities. Is this something similar that they would be pursuing in this new program that's going to be rolling out next year? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** This plan will be released next week and there are three important pillars in this plan. One of them is accessibility. What we are wanting to do and what we recognize is that Northerners need to be able to access the right health care and know where and how to find it. We want to focus our attention on a primary community care model where focus and attention will be on each community, and in each community we will work to establish a chronic management program that is organized, that is comprehensive, so that we keep track of diabetes, heart disease and cancer, and we step up to the plate on screening. We are already doing that, but not in as comprehensive a way as this will allow us to do.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the intent or the idea is, of course, to prevent cases where somebody comes in at the last minute with a chronic disease and/or specifically cancer which is untreatable and it leads to tragic consequences.

In the smaller communities I could probably foresee visits just specific to this issue as opposed to doing regular medical visits. Is that something in the plan, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I am aware that we have done such a program, especially for colorectal cancer screening. In fact, the focus was in the Deh Cho region where a coordinator went in to the region and worked with the men in the area, and encouraged everybody to go through the screening as a preventative measure. So that's the kind of thing that we hope to be able to do more of in this new plan.

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

#### QUESTION 112-16(4): CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY CENTRE IN SACHS HARBOUR

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement was on the community complex in Sachs Harbour. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of the issues regarding the Sachs Harbour community complex?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. MACA is aware of the situation in Sachs Harbour regarding the capital project that they put together. There are some outstanding issues that the community has to deal with, working with the consultant and the contractor. My understanding is they're starting to deal with those issues as we speak and, hopefully, we'll have a positive resolution here for the Member soon. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Can the Minister inform this House if MACA is monitoring the situation in Sachs Harbour?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, obviously, MACA has an interest in this, as this was done under the capital money that we advanced to the community. So we are monitoring the situation very closely. We're hoping to see that some of the issues that are taken care of. There were some issues with not complying with the Fire Code and there were other issues that were identified by the office of the fire marshal. My understanding is they're taking steps now to try and resolve some of these so Sachs Harbour can enjoy the use of their community complex. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Mr. Speaker, given that in the small, remote community of Sachs Harbour the community centre is a focal point, and given that on the last date of December the community centre was transferred to the Hamlet of Sachs Harbour even though much work was still needed, will this government commit to assisting the community of Sachs Harbour with the resources they need to complete the facility in time for the Christmas celebrations?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, this project was taken on by the community and they identified it as a priority. They funded the project themselves, using their capital infrastructure dollars that are provided by MACA. They are the project manager and they took care of all the arrangements, so they do have an idea of the issues that are affecting the opening of the community complex. My understanding is that they are taking steps to try to address some of these issues so they can have it opened fairly soon. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been 11 months to date. Can the Minister talk to the staff in the Inuvik region to assist the community to get this community complex completed before Christmas? That's all I ask.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I will give direction to staff to work with the community of Sachs Harbour

to assist them in trying to resolve some of the issues and see where they can improve. There's still the issue of compliance with the Fire Code. Those have been identified and those need to be taken care of before they will issue a completion of this project. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 113-16(4):  
ENERGY INITIATIVES IN THE SAHTU

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about the energy initiatives in the Sahtu region of the Northwest Territories. I was pleased to hear the Minister, during our debriefing this morning on the Mackenzie Gas Project, on the possibility of how the GNWT can help the communities of Tulita, Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope in terms of the conversion to natural gas. Can the Minister inform me in the House in terms of where they are at with this study in terms of converting to natural gas in communities in the Sahtu?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have undertaken at least two studies on the feasibility of undertaking community conversions to natural gas along the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline right-of-way. We also participated in the Ikhil transmission line where Inuvik converted to natural gas. So we participated in that process. A large part of whether we continue with natural gas conversion in the communities the Member mentioned is the Joint Review Panel of the Mackenzie pipeline to see what the recommendations would be contained therein.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Can the Minister inform me as to how much has been invested into the feasibility studies for the natural gas conversions?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I don't have the exact numbers, but I think the first study was \$50,000, and I expect the second one to update the original study was probably in the neighbourhood of \$25,000.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister look into the possibilities of developing a cogeneration plant in the Sahtu?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This government, for the first time, put in a \$60 million budget to look at alternative forms of energy so that we can reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. We have a number of projects in the works, including a hydro symposium in the Sahtu, and certainly we are looking at all forms of alternative energy and we would be prepared to look at cogeneration. Thank you.



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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People in the Sahtu certainly appreciate the funds for the hydro symposium. Can I ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, as a result at the conclusion of the hydro symposium, would this government seriously look at construction of some of the initiatives that they could do in the Sahtu to reduce the cost of energy?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** There are quite a number of possibilities not only for the Sahtu region, but with regard to the Sahtu. I guess the immediate one that comes to mind is the conversion to natural gas that would reduce the cost of living. Secondly, you'd be looking at hydro, also mini-hydro, hydrokinetics that could work under the ice and certainly cogeneration and, of course, biomass, which would be a significant form of energy as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 114-16(4):  
INCREASING FUNDS TO COMMUNITY  
ACCESS ROAD PROGRAM  
FOR AUSTIN LAKE ROAD

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement of today and have questions for the Minister of Transportation pertaining to access roads.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if he is willing to work with the Rural and Remote Communities committee to get some money redirected to the Community Local Access Road Program to increase the budget as soon as possible? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a difficult question to answer, as I sit as a member of that committee and so does the Member that's asking the question. Certainly I think this is a very worthy discussion that needs to take place and I certainly would be pleased to be part of that discussion with the Rural and Remote committee. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** With respect to the specific project for Austin Lake road, will the Minister be prepared to develop a strategy in conjunction with the mini-hydro project to start the Access Road Program discussions? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I'm not prepared to be the lead on the Austin road project at this point. The community has a role to play here and ITI has identified the project in the area. There have been some discussions that have taken place and we

have been involved, but I am very hesitant to say that we will be the lead.

It's a municipal piece of infrastructure that is required. We do have a program that can be tapped into for a small amount of money and we've also had some discussion with some of the people from Diavik that are very interested in working with the community to help coordinate and pay and give some advice in that area. So we'd be pleased to be part of any type of group that would be considering to make plans and invest, but as to being the lead, I don't believe that's our position. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Then is the Minister prepared to develop and present a new expanded Access Road Program to the House? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I'm glad that several Members have raised the issue and concern regarding the amount of funding in the Access Road Program during our presentation. Yesterday it was raised by a number of Members also. So I certainly will have a discussion with our officials in the Department of Transportation and also people in Finance for consideration for the next budget that comes forth. Thank you.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister sort of answered the question that is he prepared to seriously examine substantial budget increases to the Access Road Program starting next year. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I'd be glad to bring more money to the table in this program. However, consideration has to be made by all departments and the Department of Finance as we move forward with our priorities. But I will certainly take his advice and have our officials look at what could be improved on and how much money that would take, and bring that forward in the next budget that we bring forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 115-16(4):  
COR HEALTH AND SAFETY CERTIFICATION  
PROGRAM AS PROPOSED NWT STANDARD

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about a program put on by the Northern Construction Association. It's called Certificate of Recognition, also known as COR. Mr. Speaker, it's a very successful program across Canada and it's about safety management. It's also implemented by all if not most provinces, which also includes the Yukon Territory, where they work on this accreditation on public service and construction projects. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Government

Services, is his department today looking into this accreditation program and are they considering this as a certain standard level on all government service contracts as well as construction contracts going forward someday? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, we are considering it at this point.

**MR. HAWKINS:** As I mentioned, the Yukon Territory is able to use this standard called COR throughout their Territory as well as their small communities quite extensively. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister had any engagement with the Yukon Territory to see if it is possible to use some of their phase-in model that they used over there where they had only significantly high contracts the first year and then they kept lowering them down until we could expand the program throughout the system in a fair and reasonable way, recognizing that they're small contractors, small service providers, as well as large ones? Has the Minister used the opportunity to engage the Yukon on their process? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We are quite familiar with what the Yukon has done in this area and the staged-in approach that they had utilized. We've had discussions. So the answer is yes.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Could this be described as an initiative that the Department of Public Works does support and do they see it as something they'll be implementing in a timely way and what would that mean? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Other jurisdictions have engaged in the process. Right now there's only, I think, five companies that are considered to be certified. We are looking at the consequences of what it would mean to all the different departments involved and communities and their different contractors and different sizes of contractors. So it's something being considered right now and we'll be looking at it very seriously. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You don't get to hear this often as a Yellowknife MLA. Would the Minister of Public Works be willing to meet with me and some constituents who want this issue to be seriously considered by the Department of Public Works, because there are a lot more than five construction businesses that actually use this and certainly there are businesses in Fort Smith, Norman Wells, I believe Inuvik, as well as Yellowknife that use this? So it's a territorial program I'd see in the long-term, but the question really is, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister willing to entertain a meeting with some of these northern

construction folks to see how they could help move forward on this initiative? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We are already engaged with the Construction Association on this issue. I don't see the relevancy of having the Member attend. I'm sure they would invite him if they thought he should be there. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 116-16(4):  
ESTABLISHMENT OF ANTI-POVERTY  
STRATEGY IN THE NWT

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no one Minister responsible for addressing poverty, which may explain the lack of a focus and strategic effort on the issue, so I don't know who to direct this to. Perhaps the deputy minister or the Minister of Health and Social Services; Deputy Premier, excuse me.

The extreme pattern in distribution of incomes in the Northwest Territories presents some challenges, and certainly, given our economic status in Canada and the Northwest Territories, the numbers of children and families in Canada and the NWT that are in poverty is nothing short of scandalous. What is the Minister's view on the need for a comprehensive across-government plan to attack poverty similar to those being adopted by progressive governments across the country? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That type of fundamental policy debate I think is always good for any government. We spend now 65 cents of every dollar on social programs; we invest a tremendous amount of time and effort in a host of program areas from housing to education, income support, health to assist in those kinds of areas. We have a focus on cost of living to communities. So we would be interested in that type of a broad policy discussion. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you for the comments, Deputy Premier. I think certainly those comments reflect where many of us are. Given that a well thought out and implemented strategy with ongoing evaluation is demonstrably more effective than independent reactive policies, such as we put in place now -- and we have put a lot in place, I'm the first to admit that -- what action is this government willing to take to now move to the next level of developing a comprehensive strategic plan to tackle the issue? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We, as a 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, laid out some very fundamental, basic and laudable principles to address some of those issues. If there is an interest and need to look at

that and how do we reconfigure some of our program areas, and if we have to coordinate differently, then I think there would be an opportunity and need for some further discussion with the Members, maybe the Social Programs committee, to get a better sense of how we could collectively look at how we're going to possibly readjust. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Again, I appreciate those remarks from the Deputy Premier. I know the members of Social Programs are listening closely today and I suspect there is, indeed, interest and need.

As I've mentioned, most governments across Canada are now taking this action, in recognition of the gains to be had. In fact, the federal government has announced a deficit of more than \$50 billion owing to its effort to get Canada out of recession, but, meanwhile, one in five Canadian families, one in nine children, live in permanent economic recession. What is the Minister's view on the need for a national anti-poverty plan and the legislation, and will he push the federal government to make this a priority? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** That may be a step that we would want to consider first, though I would suggest we have some discussion as a Legislature to see what our thinking is and have our own plan so that when we stand up to the federal government to ask them to do something, we know clearly what we're doing back home and how we think that should be better reflected on the national stage. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I appreciate those comments. I suppose the last question, really, is, is there a time frame -- given that we're slightly over halfway through our term here, and I'd like to see some good progress here, I know many of us would and it sounds like the Deputy Premier as well -- that we can expect for this initiative to come from Cabinet or does he see Social Programs leading that effort? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Member has raised the issue in this House and, as a suggestion, I believe there is opportunity for us to collaborate on this. The issue is going to be just to arrange the time. If there is an interest signified to us that the Social Programs committee wants to have a thorough discussion on this, then we would be happy to comply with that request and just work on the scheduling, which is a challenge in the normal course of events. But I think if there's an interest, we have about 18 months, by my estimation, of time left where we could actually do substantive work. So we don't have a lot of time left in the life of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly given all our other multitude of priorities. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 117-16(4):

DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Transportation. It gets back to the Member's statement where I talked about the Deh Cho Bridge project. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, I fought the process for four years and that's a fight I obviously didn't win. The bridge is being constructed. This House is going to be begin appropriations for that bridge as we move forward. I would like to ask the Minister how exactly is the Department of Transportation involved in the overall project management of the Deh Cho Bridge project today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, our contract with the Deh Cho Bridge, or our agreement is with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. They provide all the oversight in terms of construction, design and onsite management. We do have staff people who are dedicated to this project and working very closely. We do provide a review of all invoicing. We do provide a review of all changes that are made and things of that nature, so we are quite involved. We have a person strictly dedicated to this project. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I thank the Minister for that. Does the Minister have any knowledge about what it is costing the Department of Transportation and the Government of the Northwest Territories on an annual basis to be involved in the project, as you mentioned, onsite, have staff dedicated to that and, as well, the cost of anything charged by the Department of Transportation to the Deh Cho Bridge project? What are those costs to date?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** The Member is asking for a very specific price tag. I can inform the House that we have, I believe, it's a position and a half dedicated to the project and related expenses for these people. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Another question I think is important to ask today is it appears evident that the bridge is going to be delayed for a period of time, so it's not going to be built on time. Is it going to be built on budget? I think that's the question many people have. How confident is the Minister that the bridge will come in at the price that was quoted, \$160 million? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** The bridge project is still on budget and it's still on schedule. We anticipate that there are going to be some delays as the review of the design required some changes.

That's being done. We expect that to be completed and final revisions by December or January and any further changes to the contracts will be out by March. So we expect that there will be a delay of at least a half a year or more, probably that it will be one year. That shouldn't reflect in any additional costs.

The cost that is of concern is the first payment that is going to become due in December of 2010 and that's going to be for \$2.5 million, which is the interest payment to lenders. If the bridge is not completed by June of the following year, then there will be an additional \$2.5 million. So there is a good possibility that the payments will become due and there will still be no revenue being generated from the traffic that crosses the bridge. So that may be of concern and we haven't yet calculated how we would recover those dollars. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. One other area that I wanted to touch on on the financial exposure, and that's through the lien that I know of. I wonder how many liens are out there on the project itself and what future financial liability might the Government of the Northwest Territories incur because of the liens being put against the project, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** There are no liens against the Government of the Northwest Territories. There has been a lien placed on ATCON, the company that is doing the piers right now -- that's Ruskan -- and there is also a lien filed against the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation by Structal, which has been there for some time, I believe. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 118-16(4):

#### SECONDARY DIAMOND INDUSTRY IN THE NWT

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for ITI and are a follow-up to my Member's statement. As mentioned in my statement, it appears as though former GNWT employees have taken the lessons learned as part of the NWT secondary diamond industry and are applying them in other jurisdictions. These southern operations appear to be successful. If this knowledge works in other jurisdictions, why does the NWT secondary industry continue to struggle while others grow and what is the Minister's department doing to revitalize the NWT cutting and polishing industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of ITI, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I heard two questions there. I think we have no problem with the Canadian diamond industry growing. We think it's to the benefit of the Northwest Territories, and certainly with a strong diamond sector, we can change the definition of a Canadian diamond, which will be to our benefit. We don't believe that we are falling behind, but there are some challenges.

Everybody knows that it's much more difficult and more costly to operate up here in the Northwest Territories. Secondly, the provinces where these operations are being conducted, Ontario, Saskatchewan, they are provinces. We are a Territory. They collect royalties and they reinvest it in the diamond industry, whereas our royalties go to the federal government who have not seen fit at all to invest in the diamond industry.

Another factor is we have a diamond policy. A large part of our diamond policy, which is the provision of loan guarantees, has been eliminated. So we have undertaken a review of our diamond sector and we will be presenting our recommendations with regards to what we should be doing to revitalize and improve our diamond manufacturing.

I should point out, also, that we do have three manufacturing facilities that are still, compared to other jurisdictions, a leader in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** I would like to thank the Minister for that response. I'm glad to hear things are happening and things are being done to revitalize this industry.

Earlier this week, I met with a constituent who happens to be a former diamond cutter in one of the plants in Yellowknife. When laid off, due to downsizing last year, he and his family decided to stay in Yellowknife in hopes that he would be able to return to his diamond cutting and polishing position once the market returned. Now he has been contacted by Embee to go to work for their factory in Saskatchewan. He tells me that 13 families are considering leaving the Northwest Territories to work for Mr. Botha in Prince Albert. Thirteen families are roughly 39 people at \$22,000 per person. This means that at least \$858,000 of federal transfers will leave with them. This affects Northerners, all Northerners. What is the Minister going to do to help expedite this revitalization that I hear you talking about of the local industry in the hopes that these 13 families don't have to leave the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Certainly Canada is a free country and people can move to where they want to live. I think the diamond cutting family, if I could call it that, has fit in very well into Yellowknife and is a

very important part of the community. So I would hate to see that happen. But I think on our part the best way to keep these people in Yellowknife is to have a strong secondary diamond manufacturing and polishing industry, and I think the best way is to ensure that 100 percent of our NWT diamond allocation is bought and cut and polished here in the Northwest Territories and that's what we are working towards, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. I agree with him. Anybody can move and live anywhere they want within this country and I agree that Yellowknife is a great place. My question was more specific. It's what are we going to do -- and I understand a lot is being done -- but what are we going to do to expedite this revitalization? What is the Minister proposing now? Are there meetings taking place? What's happening to revitalize this industry in the Northwest Territories today? Because people who want to stay -- and I stress want to be here in the Northwest Territories -- are leaving. What are we doing to revitalize? What are we doing to expedite the revitalization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I don't want to get too far ahead of myself, but I think the main thing we want to do right now is we want to make sure that all of the factories are operating. Diamonds have been produced in the Northwest Territories for 10 years now. We have learned a lot over the 10 years and we think that we can find ways in working with the manufacturers so that their operations can become more effective and efficient, and, hopefully, we expect that they will become more feasible. So we feel that there are things we can improve upon. We can become more effective so we can move faster. We can have a little more flexibility so that the cutters and polishers can have a more feasible operation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister mentioned that diamond cutting and polishing has been in the Northwest Territories for 10 years. That's true. Unfortunately, I don't believe our diamond policy has changed in 10 years. I understand that about four years ago we actually did some significant reductions within the Department of ITI in the diamond division. I am curious who in the government, who in the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, is actually moving forward on this diamond policy and looking at reviewing it if our division was mostly gutted, for lack of a better word, and when can we expect to see some improvements or modifications or modernization of our diamond policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I wouldn't call the diamond division as being gutted. We still have our

marketing side of the Diamond Program and the responsibility for the diamonds was factored into our mineral section. So we have recently focussed more of the diamond file to an associate director position. We do have a proposed revised diamond policy, and our expectation is that we would brief standing committees very shortly, with a view to coming forward and having the policy approved once we have received the input of the committees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 119-16(4):  
RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR VOTERS  
IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I think he realizes that I have some questions with regard to the Local Authorities Elections Act. I mentioned that there were some consultations done. There was a discussion paper put forward. I think the end of consultation was in February or March of this year. I would like to know if the Minister can advise what the results of that consultation and that discussion paper are. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct. There was a discussion paper put out for some input into some of the proposed amendments to the Elections Act. We are assessing some of the results of the questions that were proposed out there, and we are just preparing a draft report and we are hoping to have that done fairly soon, so we can share that with the Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that update. I expect that I will probably be asking what "soon" means later on, but I would like to ask the Minister first...The residency requirement wasn't really addressed in the discussion paper. It was referenced, but somewhat obliquely. I want to know from the Minister whether or not there will be an opportunity once results of the consultation are out, whether there is an opportunity to go back and discuss particularly the residency requirement eligibility for voters section. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** One of the questions in the consultation/discussion paper was around the issue of residency requirements and a lot of the folks that did respond did say that there needed to be some adjustments made to the residency requirement issues. So this was taken into consideration and then we will be preparing a report to present to Members. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I think the reference to the residency requirement had to do with allowing for temporary absences. I don't believe the question addressed the length of residency that is required to allow somebody to vote in a municipal election. So I'd like to ask the Minister again whether or not that particular section of the act, the length of time that's required for a resident to live in the community or make it, sorry, not the community but make it the Territory. Will that be addressed? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the questions that the Member raises will be addressed. There will be an opportunity for more input into the process. We are, between now and the summer session, wanting to come back with an LP and that will give Members an opportunity to suggest some changes, with a possibility of introducing a bill in the May/June session. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to now ask the question to the Minister -- he says we'll get the report, the results of the consultation and the report soon -- what might "soon" mean? I have to ask this question very often of Ministers. Are we talking one month? Three months? Six months? Two years? Hopefully not two years, because he's talking about an LP soon. So when might that be? And at that time when those results of the consultation come forward, will there be an opportunity for further input, not necessarily from Members but from the public? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** By soon...I have to remember to do that when I'm responding to the Members' questions, because I always leave myself open for that. So in the future I will come up with a specific date; November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, type of thing. So I will follow up with the department and see where we're at with this. Hopefully, if there's an opportunity to get this out within the next month, then I would commit to doing that.

There's always opportunity for input into some of the things we're doing. We are proposing an LP come forward between now and the May/June session, so we can introduce the bill in May/June and have committee take that on the road. But there's always opportunity for input into this process. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 120-16(4):

#### PEEL RIVER FERRY PROPOSED CLOSURE

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of

Transportation and it's in regards to my Member's statement. I received several calls at my office in Fort McPherson in regards to the closure of the Abraham Francis ferry on the Peel River this coming Saturday. People were raising the concern that there is no ice on the river, so why are we closing the ferry, there's no visible threat to ferry operations. My assistant took some pictures, which I sent to the Minister's office, showing him visually that you can actually see there is no...If anything, the river is wide open where the ferry is crossing. So I'd like to ask the Minister, is it possible to extend the season so that we can stick to a 72-hour notice or a 48-hour notice and move forward with the understanding that there's no threat to operations? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering if we're looking at the same picture. The Member did send a picture to my office and there was some water, but there was lots of ice on both sides of the channel. So I guess that I have to ensure that we're looking at the same image that he's talking about.

Mr. Speaker, he's correct; there was a date set for closure. Notice has been given for Saturday. But there has been some consideration, since the weather has warmed up, and we expect that we can squeeze a few more days out of the operations there and we will do our best to continue operations. Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that there are a number of things that are considered. Of course, ice is one thing, but safety for all the people travelling on our ferries always has to be number one. Those decisions are based on the captain's discretion, along with our marine manager and our regional superintendent. So we're going to do the best we can to ensure that the ferry runs a few more days and see how things are at that time. It would have to run on a very short closure notice basis. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the decision was made here in Yellowknife and not in the community operations. If anything, they agreed that they can still operate. I would like to ask the Minister if it is possible to extend the season as long as possible so people are still able to move goods and services and the people back and forth, people working on the highway, people out at 8 Mile, so they are able to get back and forth across the river. But, more importantly, with the mild weather that we are receiving here in Yellowknife that we are probably going to see a short winter season this year, because of the mild weather that is out there. I wonder if it is possible to extend it so we can take advantage of the crossing, more power to it. I would like to request the Minister if he can

keep myself informed and maybe look at the possibility of a 72-hour notice and basically go forward. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, once again, we don't tell our captains what to say when it comes to closure of the ferry services. It is the same as we can't tell the captains of an airplane when they should fly. Mr. Speaker, that is against federal regulations. We will not interfere politically as to the operations. Weather permitting, ice conditions permitting and safety factors all considered, we will do our best.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, this may be a very unusually warm winter with the climate change. That channel may stay open all winter. We don't have the resources to operate all winter. We can confirm that we will do our best to operate, depending on all the factors that I mentioned, but I can't confirm that we will do any more than that. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, again, if we put a bridge there, we wouldn't have this problem. I think if the Minister put his emphasis on that, then we wouldn't have to worry about the season, the rain. Again, this ferry operation is basically operated on the cable system. I believe the people that operate the ferry only have to have a Class 3 licence. You don't need a Class 1. Again, it is a hydraulically operated ferry. There are no captains on this vessel. Again, it is a hydraulically operated system. I think that, if anything, we should do whatever we can to extend the season and make use of the operation. I know cost is a factor, but I think we are only talking a couple more weeks here. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that a bridge would solve all these issues, but that is a \$70 million question that hasn't been resolved yet. Actually this ferry has been operating longer now than it has in the last 10 years. So it is certainly an indicator that we are feeling the effects of climate change, but that could change overnight. Cold weather could set in. Again, we will look at all the conditions around operating this ferry and do our best to operate as long as we can and keep the Member informed of what we plan to do in terms of our actions. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 121-16(4):  
H1N1 FLU VACCINATION CLINICS  
IN NUNAKPUT

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in my Member's statement I was speaking about the H1N1 virus that is happening right now across the globe. Listening today on CBC Radio, I was listening to one of my elders from Ulukhaktok, a well-respected elder, Robert

Kuptana. I would like to ask the Minister today if she could clarify if there is a vaccine in the community of Ulukhaktok and what time they are going to start vaccinating the elders and the kids in the schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could advise the Members that as soon as we got the shipments of vaccines, they were transported to Inuvik so that we are prepared to deal with all of the areas from Inuvik. From Inuvik, vaccines are being transported by hand by a nurse, because the vaccines are very temperature sensitive so they can't be shipped on the plane. The temperatures have to be monitored. They are being distributed into health centres in many different ways, but they are handled by nurses. The action teams are going into communities. As well, visiting regularly scheduled nurses are going into health centres with the vaccines. Lastly, I could advise the Member that we have begun vaccinating in Ulukhaktok today. I cannot tell him what time or anything like that, but we are vaccinating in Ulukhaktok today. Vaccines are there today. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** That is good to hear. My elders in Ulukhaktok won't have to worry so much about their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement yesterday, I spoke about the timelines for Tuk and Paulatuk and Sachs. I hope the Minister's department is seeking to get the vaccine into the communities a lot sooner than within two weeks. That is what the dates in the community are saying. I would like to ask the Minister if she could make sure that the dates are moved up a lot quicker, hopefully by Monday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, the latest information we have is that Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour will start vaccinating next week, starting Monday. Mr. Speaker, also I have to say that our health staff and the Territorial Emergency Response Committee have done a spectacular job. As of yesterday, we have vaccinated 7,445 people. This in comparison to 10,000 that Ontario was able to vaccinate in three days; so given the size, geography and challenges we have, I have to say kudos to the people who are involved in this. They are really stepping up to the plate. We are moving fast. We are moving quickly. Our plan was to have everybody who wants to be, vaccinated by November 21<sup>st</sup>. We are on schedule and I think there is every possibility that we will be done even sooner than that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** I would like to thank the Minister and her department for working so fast in the southern part of the Territory. I see now it is moving ahead to the communities. I just would like to see

and make sure that the H1N1 for the communities, people are really scared and that their staff get out there and let them know that they are working on it to get everybody inoculated and to go on from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. I didn't hear a question there. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 122-16(4):  
GNWT FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a few other questions for the Minister of Transportation as it pertains to the Government of the Northwest Territories future financial obligations to the Deh Cho Bridge project. The Minister had mentioned that our first payment, I believe, is due in January 2010. I just wanted to clarify with the Minister what that payment is going to be. Is it going to be \$3.8 million? Mr. Speaker, that is the question that I have. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I said the payment was due in December for \$2.5 million.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I thought I heard January, but it could have been December. That would, from my knowledge, include \$1.8 million and that is the cost of the ice road crossing there, and the ferry operations, and the \$2 million that we can thank the last government for as a top-up on that payment. That is \$3.8 million that the government is going to have to pay whether it is in January or December of next year some time. I would like to ask the Minister where that money is going to come from and if that is the correct amount, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the money I was referring to was the payment that was due to the lenders. We expect that we would probably be in the position to have to cover that portion of it and have a recovery plan through chargebacks of some sort. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister what the government's yearly payment is going to be to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation for the Deh Cho Bridge once the construction has concluded. Is it going to remain at \$3.8 million or does the Minister foresee it going higher than that? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the payment is going to be the subsidy that is going to be provided to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, \$2 million and a portion of the operations that we currently operate right now through the ferry service and the ice bridge construction, minus the operation

of the toll that we are going to be holding back. We expect that to be around \$300,000. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering if the Minister can give us an estimate. I know the \$2 million and if you add that to the \$1.8 million...I want some assurance from the government that it is going to be a certain amount. I don't think it is something that we can just guess. I think we need to know what we're getting ourselves into. Is it going to be the operation to the ice crossing and ferry operations at the time or is it going to be what we were told two years ago when the bridge was being talked about then? That was \$1.8 million, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we certainly can provide that information to the Member. We have already indicated how the calculations are going to be made, what formula is going to be used and how much our subsidy is. He is asking us for specifics on dollars and cents here, so I would be very reluctant to give him that information from the top of my head. We will calculate it. We will provide it to him in short order. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 123-16(4):  
GNWT-WIDE WORK PLAN AND POLICY  
ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources in regards to the time frame and the implementation framework on the Traditional Knowledge policy. I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of this policy going forward in terms of a work plan. When can we expect to see some type of work plan that would start seeing the department have some staff orientation and other department staff orientation on the traditional knowledge framework?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There would be information contained on that in the business plan that was presented to committee. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, in regards to the traditional knowledge work that this department is leading, how soon or when would we see these types of traditional knowledge information be implemented into government-wide policy with all departments?



**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** You already see evidence of it. For example, if I can point to our science agenda where there is a clear recognition, the Water Strategy that we are going to be tabling. We will have a very clear central role for traditional knowledge. Environment and Natural Resources already has it in play. The work that we are doing with all the communities and all the co-management boards on caribou, for example. There is an extensive curriculum in the schools already that exists, and other departments that don't have a major role in this are also doing that as a normal course of their business are going to be building that into their business plans as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a short supplementary question. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the training of employees and training of the departments, when can we see this department in terms of the type of training programs that will require staff members to really get a sense of the essence of traditional knowledge from our elders and how they would be implemented into future policies and programs and services within the GNWT?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, the longer-term plans and the formal training for folks will, as well, be built in and reflected in the various business plans. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 8, oral questions.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

### Oral Questions (Reversion)

#### QUESTION 124-16(4): PROTECTION OF COMMUNITIES FROM SHORELINE EROSION

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Aklavik is located on the west side of the Mackenzie Delta and, as we all know, global warming and shoreline erosion is a major problem. Mr. Speaker, I got a call, just before the House started, from the council in Aklavik with their concern with the shoreline erosion. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we, as government, realize that they had a major flood a number of years ago and they had to move the road inland because of the erosion on one of their service

roads. Yet, Mr. Speaker, very little is being said from this government in regard to what we are doing to protect communities from shoreline erosion and, more importantly, the effects we're seeing from climate change.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do have some funding sources we've been getting into from Building Canada funds, Disaster Relief funds. I would just to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs exactly what is the department doing to assist the community of Aklavik, knowing that it has flooded over the years. We're seeing the effects of global warming and shoreline erosion throughout the Mackenzie Delta. So I'd like to ask the Minister, does his department have any programs and services that communities can access to deal with shoreline erosion in that community?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm well aware of the flooding issue in Aklavik. I've been through a couple of them and I know that there was some shoreline erosion done a few years ago and that seems to have worked very well. There are some issues that still need to be taken care of. We do supply -- and I go back to this because I do all the time -- the communities with capital infrastructure money and they decide that if it's a priority to have this work done, then they have the capital means to do so. If there are other programs out there, federal pots of money that we can access to assist the communities with some of the work that they propose to do, then we are willing to do that. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, this is a major fiscal undertaking by a community. There's no way the community, with the resources they get through gas tax and whatnot, are going to have to deal with this problem. We're talking millions of dollars here.

Mr. Speaker, under the Building Canada Fund in regard to infrastructure planning, there's money available for research and development for climate change. I'd like to ask the Minister, have you considered looking at accessing some of these federal dollars through the Building Canada Fund for dealing with shore erosion in communities that are affected by climate change?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, a lot of the programs that we have applications that have come through for the Building Canada Fund, I have yet to see any application from the community. Maybe we should encourage them to put an application in with some of their requirements, and then we can go and look to access some of the money. If there's money available for doing some research, then we can pursue that too. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago when they had the flood in Aklavik, as part of the Disaster Relief Fund you had to do a report at the end of the program in regard to infrastructure funding for the community. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs that under that plan they did identify that as an issue that had to be dealt with. I'd just like to ask the Minister to direct his department to seriously look at that report in regard to the last flood in Aklavik. What has the department done in regard to that report and why is it that you're leaving the onus on the community and not the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, who is responsible for disaster relief?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I will have discussions with the department and follow up on the Member's comment on the report. I haven't seen the report personally and I would be quite interested in having a look at it. I will follow up and see what recommendations or actions may have come out of the report because of the flood of a few years ago.

I'll say again that we continue to assist communities in identifying a lot of their priorities and if shoreline erosion is one of the priorities from Aklavik, then we'd be willing to work with the community to try and identify sources of funding for the project and assist them any way we can coming forward with a proposal. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to formally invite the Minister to travel with myself to Aklavik, hopefully after the adjournment of this House, and deal with this problem, because I believe we have to deal with it this winter. We can't wait for another flood next spring. It has to be put on the Minister's priority list, because we are talking about the safety and the security of the community -- and erosion is a real threat to that community -- so we can avoid whatever, if that's possible. I'd like to formally invite him to Aklavik after the adjournment of the House. With that, I'd like to ask the Minister if he's available to bring his staff, the people that bring the cheques, and we'll sign it off in Aklavik at the end of the House.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Member is twisting my arm to get me into Aklavik, but I will make that commitment that I will make it into the Member's community. With that, we probably will have staff. We'll leave the chequebooks in Inuvik and then we'll...Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

## Written Questions

QUESTION 8-16(4):

VACANCY OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

In regard to vacant public housing units in the NWT:

1. What is the vacancy rate of housing units by community?
2. What is the range and average period of vacancy for units?
3. Are vacant units heated or are they winterized and not heated until needed?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

## Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 29-16(4):  
NWT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND  
INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document titled NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Annual Report 2007-2008. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 30-16(4):  
2009 VOLUNTEER SUMMIT REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 31-16(4):  
NWT HIGH PERFORMANCE  
ATHLETE GRANT PROGRAM

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents titled 2009 Volunteer Summit Report and the Northwest Territories High Performance Athlete Grant Program. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 4:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHILD AND  
FAMILY SERVICES ACT

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, November 2, 2009, I will move that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

BILL 5:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
COMMISSIONER'S LAND ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, November 2, 2009, I will move that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 2:  
FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2009-2010

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010, be read for the first time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010, has had first reading.

---Carried

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 move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 3, Medical Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Bill 3, Medical Profession Act, has had first reading.

---Carried

Before we go any further, colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the gallery to Mr. Dick Abernethy, father to Glen Abernethy, who is with us

today, the former deputy secretary to Cabinet. Welcome to the House.

Item 19, second reading of bills. 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; and 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, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have 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; and 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. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 1-16(4), NWT Capital Estimates 2010-2011, to review Public Works and Services and Municipal and Community Affairs today. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we will take a short break and come back with the Department of Public Works and Services. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break, we agreed to carry on with the capital estimates for Public Works and Services. With that, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he would like to bring in any witnesses. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree he brings in his witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance; Paul Guy, acting deputy minister of Public Works and Services.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Can we turn to page 5-2, Public Works and Services, department summary, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$27.260 million. That will be deferred. To page 5-4, Public Works and Services, activity summary, asset management, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$18.953 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to page 5-7, Public Works and Services, activity summary, Technology Services Centre, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$7.042 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Page 5-10, Public Works and Services, petroleum products division, activity summary, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$1.265 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can't help but make my perennial comment here. This commitment, obviously, I think to date we've spent somewhere in the order of \$9 million looking after our tank farms and there are new federal regulations requiring additional monitoring equipment and fairly expensive equipment and so on. Of course, we have these tank farms in many of our communities. Again, I hope that this is brought into the accounting equation when we consider other energy infrastructure; for example, the Biomass Strategy implementation, should we get around to that when talking about what we should be spending money on and what we shouldn't be. This is a very expensive approach and something that's been avoided big time by Nordic countries. There's no reason in the world why we can't avoid these costs and shift the resources, the millions and

millions of dollars we're putting into this, to much better priorities for our people. Just by way of a comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Finance, did you want to respond to the comment?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over the long term we all agree we want to get in the same place. We recognize that we're in a time of transition. The Nordic countries, to be sure, have advanced their case much faster over the generations than we have. But as we look at the significant \$60 million investment to alternative energy that we are putting out there with a plan with biomass and all these other areas for alternative energy, we must recognize that we still have to maintain the current infrastructure as we transition to a different type of energy generation and, hopefully, distribution. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate those comments from the Minister. I didn't want to ignore completely, either, the efforts we are making in another division here, asset management, which we approved, but during which we're making significant investments with very reasonable payback times, and I think those are good investments. Those are showing the payback times and whatnot. I think we had some 40 projects in that area. I'm very supportive of getting that work done. There's at least another 400 of those that we could all come up with, should the resources permit. So I'm very supportive of that approach. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We appreciate the support from the Member on these efforts. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 5-10, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products division, infrastructure. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, just a question to the Minister in terms of the Tulita tank farm and shelter that they use. The Minister has written to me, I've received some good correspondence in terms of the future plans for the shelter or the shack that we have in Tulita for handling the fuel in our community. I'm just trying to get a sense, I know it's been delayed and I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of the next couple years before you start putting the real building in there, in between there are some safety mechanisms we should be looking at in terms of the quality of this building in terms of performing its function as a place that we sell products such as the petroleum, diesel and gas in the community. Can the Minister indicate as to what type of measurements would be taken to ensure that this building is in good shape and we don't get any more complaints from our people in the community that are selling fuel?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Public Works, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we have had correspondence back and forth on this issue. The Member has raised concern regarding the condition of this operator's shelter in one of his communities and we have indicated to him that we'd be making some minor upgrades to ensure that the building continues to be useful and viable. This project is in our plans, in our five-year capital needs, and is scheduled to begin in 2011. So we're very reluctant to invest a whole lot of money as this building is going to be replaced very quickly. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products division, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$1.265 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Okay, you can return back to department summary, page 5-2. Department of Public Works and Services, department summary, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$27.260 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Does the committee agree that we've concluded the Department of Public Works and Services?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. With that, I'd like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee wishes to go on to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we'll turn to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Minister, are you going to be bringing in any witnesses?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witness in. Is committee agreed he brings in his witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witness?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Michael Aumond, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witness. We agreed we'll move on to Municipal and Community Affairs. I'm looking at the department summary, page 4-2 that we'll defer to page 4-4. Page 4-4, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, regional operations, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$28.002 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to mention again the issue of building codes and our lack of requiring such codes when we transfer this funding to communities. It's perhaps a sensitive situation in a way, but we have these high standards for ourselves and with that we enjoy the returns and the benefits that that brings. Our operational costs are going down, we're now saving millions of dollars per year and yet we're not providing our communities with that same opportunity by requiring that level of building standard.

Now, I recognize that we are, in the longer term, requiring communities to come up with their energy plans and integrated community sustainability plans and so on, but there are no requirements for those building standards to be in those plans. Hopefully the department is profiling this and sharing our experience with them, but it's almost as if our communities are our poor cousins and we're not too worried about them having the same benefits and opportunities we enjoy by requiring these standards, and it's committing them to a fossil fuel future and that's an expensive future, which limits the options that they have to make best use of their dollars. So I'm wondering if we are planning on putting this requirement in or whether we're going to continue to let the unfortunately slow progress of developing a bunch of community energy plans that may or may not have these standards in them for our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's concern. As you pointed out, we are working with communities to have their energy plans and we can't assume that the communities are incapable of building infrastructure that would be to their advantage to build it according to the highest standards possible. I think we're starting to see that in a lot of the communities. They understand the savings that they could potentially make. So we're starting to see that. We'll continue to work with them and encourage them to look at the standards that they're building. But I'm fairly confident and I've always been confident in the communities' ability to build good practical infrastructure that would take advantage of all the energy savings possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister's confidence in the communities and so on, but you need to base that on evidence. It may be improving, but it's improving very slowly, as evidenced by, for example, the completion of I believe it's three community energy plans out of our 33 communities.

We are finessing our communities into a fossil fuel future and that is something we can no longer tolerate as a society. We know what the costs are. There is no excuse for that anymore. Simply putting in these building standards will plug that hole immediately and bring immediate benefits to the communities.

We know, for example, that our public housing has now got an EnerGuide for houses 80 standard, very high quality standards, and we are building those in all our communities frequently and the communities are building those units for us. So the expertise is out there. In fact, we've built R2000 units years ago in the communities. So there is experience, there is the capability. What we need to do is put those standards in place as a condition when we transfer these dollars and start helping them enjoy the immediate benefits of that. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We'll continue to work with the communities and ensure that they are looking at building the highest standard. I would hesitate to go as far as imposing it on them. I mean, we can encourage and support them and we've tried to devolve a lot of the responsibility of local infrastructure. We're able to do that with, as the Member mentioned, the Housing Corporation, and we're able to do that because we basically control the capital dollars so we can impose standards on them as far as the communities go.

I'll stick to my guns and say that I'm absolutely confident. The communities know best for themselves what's good for them and if they realize that they can make a significant saving with the money that they're receiving from the government by building infrastructure that is of the highest quality, I believe they will do that and I believe we've seen a few examples of that already happening. So I think we'll continue to see in the future a lot higher standard buildings being built by the communities, and then they'll be able to reap the rewards and not use as much of their O and M money to pay for upkeep of these buildings. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Of course, there's probably nothing I could do to prevent the Minister from sticking to his guns. It's just, you know, a very irresponsible position to take, decision to make.

The best example I can think of is the youth centres, for example, that we are training our youth to have absolutely no respect for the natural world and their future when we build youth centres that you can see daylight under the doors, and don't have porches and some of the very basic principles

of energy conservation, not to mention the high costs associated with that and the lack of ability to pursue other options with those dollars that they are blowing off into the air.

So I am very pleased to hear that there are a few examples that the Minister can think of high efficiency, but I think we have a responsibility to move on this and I will keep trying to help him see the light of day on this. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I appreciate the Member's concern for the small communities and the infrastructure that they are building in the communities. I don't think it's irresponsible of us. I think it's very responsible of us to work with the communities and ensure that they are building buildings of the highest standard, and I believe they are doing that.

I said before, we can't assume that the communities are incapable of making good decisions that affect their own infrastructure without us imposing it on them, and I will continue to hold that position unless I hear differently from the communities that maybe we do need to think of imposing this on them. Until then, I would suggest that we will continue to work with the communities ensuring that their infrastructure is of the highest standard, and I am confident in their ability to put good products on the ground. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Again, these dollars that we're transferring to communities are investments. I am the first to get in line in terms of transferring responsibilities to our communities. We want to do it in a responsible way and I know when I make investments personally, and I suspect most people do this, they make sure that it's done in a responsible manner and in a manner that gets the better dollar for the buck, the best value for the dollar; recognizing, of course, that you are not just making the investments for the benefit only of the entity that's receiving the dollars. You have the benefits of all of your family or the Northwest Territories, in this case, much beyond communities.

So we have a new Minister here still. Perhaps there is room to be working on that. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I am not sure if there was a question there. I think it was more of a comment. As I said, we appreciate the Member's comments and his concern for the welfare of the small communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, have similar concerns as Mr. Bromley, but I think realizing it's not only the requirements that we are putting on communities with regard to developing energy plans and looking at infrastructure, but also capacity for communities, especially when this was being implemented to give communities more ability

to make decisions and invest in our capital. I think we overlooked a few things in that process and one of them is the incorporation of communities.

We are finding now that eight communities aren't able to access capital dollars because they're not incorporated. I think it's important that that step should have been solved before we made the decision to transfer all of those authorities to all communities in the Northwest Territories, and made sure that they were incorporated and made sure they had the capacity to take it on. More importantly, that they have the infrastructure in the communities to be able to sustain such a transfer. So I would just like to ask the Minister of Finance or MACA, what are we doing to ensure that through these dollars, they are being accessed by these communities -- all communities, 33 communities -- to be fair to all communities and we are not holding back money simply because they're not incorporated?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are addressing the need for capacity and we have heard the Member's concerns. We are working with HR, as I announced, to develop a strategy for communities to train and retain. A lot of the people that work in the communities and actually had a meeting with members of LGANT this afternoon and there were probably three-quarters of the SAOs in the Territories at this meeting. There were some band communities there, and the band communities are the ones we are working with right now to form development corporations so they can own real property. We've made a lot of progress and the bands are realizing it's in their best interest to form these dev corps, and then the money would start flowing to them and then they would be able to decide on the infrastructure in their community.

I have not heard yet from any community in the Northwest Territories that has said don't give us this money, we can't handle it. We've had communities saying we need some help and the regional offices are very good about going out and helping the communities, but I have had no one say yet that this is not a good idea.

This is something that many of us who have lived in small communities and who have served on small community councils realized at the time we were a very small speck in the overall government picture, and our local infrastructure, which was important to us, once it was buried in the corporate plan, we had to wait a long time to see anything on the ground. Now with all the money that is flowing to the communities, they know best what is a priority in their communities and they know best the infrastructure they need right away. There are some challenges, but I think for the most part those

challenges are being addressed. The communities are adapting very well to the new responsibility they have. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I'll try to repeat the question. My question is that there were eight communities that were not incorporated and would not be able to spend their capital investment dollar because they were not incorporated. They did not have the ability to own assets. I think for ourselves, as a government, before we made this transfer, that problem should have been solved and not told sorry, you are getting a bunch of Building Canada funds but you can't spend it because you are not incorporated. That is the issue. I think as a government, that should have been solved or find ways to mitigate the problem so we don't have to go through the problem of having to tell people sorry, we have your money in a bank, but you can't access it because we don't think you've got your driver's licence yet. That's exactly what this scenario is turning out to be.

We can give money to NGOs, we can give money to non-government organizations, no questions asked. But when it comes to communities, because you are a band council, you can't own assets. For me, that is the issue I am talking about here. Again, if there are capital dollars being allocated to all the communities, they should be spent by those communities and not held back because of public red tape. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the Member's question, we have made a good deal of progress, as the Minister stated, on getting these band governments to undertake the necessary steps to be able to own real property. Three of them have already made, have fulfilled that journey and can now...We flow the money to them to undertake their own projects. Some communities are almost there. Even those communities who are not able to own real property, at their request we are going to be undertaking projects for them such as water treatment plants in four or five of the band communities. It is not like we are telling them they can't have the money and they can't undertake any projects. It is just that they can't or have not yet taken those steps and we are working with them so they can own real property. But even in the cases where they don't, at their request, we will undertake projects for them so that they can have the infrastructure in the community. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Another issue I have a problem with especially in regards to capital, is that we seem to put the onus on communities that any assets that this government transferred to the community, it is up to them to repair it, fix it. If it breaks down, that is your problem.

I think this government has to realize that a lot of these assets that we did transfer to communities are going to have to be replaced. But with the existing dollars that they get, you cannot replace a water treatment plant. You cannot replace a major piece of infrastructure like a utilidor system with the existing dollars that they have. But as government departments, we know that every time the government department has an issue, it is either a forced growth issue or basically, well, because of emergency circumstances where we have a culvert collapse or basically a bunch of pilings are falling down around a building. We find funds for those things, because they are so-called emergencies.

I think there has to be some sort of capital funding project for communities to access similar to the question I raised today, shoreline erosion in the community. Shoreline erosion should not be the responsibility of the community. If anything, it should be a government obligation to ensure we protect communities by emergency funding resources so that they are treated just like any other government department. I think, for myself, it is something that I feel quite strongly about, especially communities that have systems that basically have to be replaced.

I use Fort McPherson for instance. They have a water utilidor system. Inuvik had a utilidor system. There is a major capital influx to change that system in regards to capital dollars from this government. But yet, for the communities that have utilidor systems, now it is their obligation to find those capital dollars.

Another example is water treatment plants. We had five water treatment plants replaced. Thankfully, MACA hung onto it and did it as a project for the bulk of those projects, so they delivered. But again, that is the role government has to retain and play in regards to capital expenditures in communities to ensure there are emergency funds or disaster relief in regards to forest fires, like I mentioned, major floods. We see it every other year in most of our communities. It is a capital cost associated with that, but we can't leave the communities hanging there without having assurance from the government that there are going to be emergency situations where this government will come in to help. I would just like to know, under disaster relief or whatever we want to call it, that capital dollars are going to be there when those incidents happen and it won't come out of the municipalities' pocket. It will come out of the government's pocket. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Disaster mitigation is one of the requirements of applying for... There are many pots of money out there. If there is a disaster in the

community, I know for a fact that we wouldn't leave it to the community to deal with the effects of that disaster. We would do whatever we can to find monies to help them. Applications could be put in for some federal money, Building Canada project. There was an opportunity there for them to seek some money from there and then they match it.

I don't mean to keep harping on this, but am I the only one in this building that has confidence in the communities' ability to deal with their infrastructure? I have not had one community say to us that this is a bad idea and we don't like it. If there are extraordinary circumstances, then, obviously, we never leave the communities hanging anywhere. If there are extraordinary circumstances, then, obviously, MACA will step up to the plate and see what we can do to assist the communities.

I told LGANT this morning. I have spoken to the NWT Association of Communities, which is all the elected officials from across the Territories. I have spoken to LGANT, which are all the SAOs and the band managers from across the Territories. They all seem quite happy with the program and I actually had a couple of them say to me today that they are pleased with the new program. Until I start hearing from them that they think this is a bad idea and maybe we should go back to the old corporate capital plan and we can wait years for our small little projects to get on the ground which are important to us but not as important in the big picture, I will continue to maintain my confidence in the community.

As I said, it is not MACA's intention to leave any community hanging if anything happens in the community that requires us to assist them in any way possible, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a lot of questions. I want to express a concern and perhaps hear from the department what they are doing about it, but my concern has to do with, again, the infrastructure that communities are receiving from GNWT and the need, then, for communities to look after those buildings and to fund the operation and maintenance of those buildings. Tied in with that is the fact that as buildings need to be replaced, communities need the extra funding to do those capital building, capital replacements, capital cost replacements.

But I am more concerned about what seems to be a trend anyway, at least for several years, from what I am aware of, that the infrastructure contribution to communities is steady at a certain dollar amount, but, at the same time, the communities are more and more acquiring buildings that require them to provide for the O and M for those particular buildings.



I guess my question really goes to the future. How long is the department going to maintain the same infrastructure dollars for our communities that we currently have? How are they planning to assist communities in taking on these extra costs, which basically are the result of extra O and M? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess with respect to the amount of infrastructure funding that we are providing communities today, there is no intention at this time to look at changing that amount. Some communities, as the Member made out, are saving that amount of money on an annual basis for a project that they want to undertake.

However, having said that, we do acknowledge the concern that the Member has expressed. We will be reviewing our funding policies with the NWTAC to look at what is out there adequately funded to upkeep those buildings that they currently have and were transferred to them. In many cases, the buildings that were transferred to them, they were already funded to provide O and M for the government just to own them. In terms of ownership, the community governments had the money to maintain them originally. It is something that is on our radio screen. It is something that we will work in concert with the NWTAC on and see how we move going forward, given the amount of resources MACA has in its budget to give to communities for that purpose. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for the answer. I appreciate a lot that this is recognized, that the concern of the communities is recognized and that the department is looking at doing something about it. If there is a review of either the formula funding or just the total funding for communities, is there any idea from the Minister or the deputy minister when that review might be done? If there is any change, and I presume upward, would it be for the next capital estimates year or is it conceivable that it might be done midway through this next fiscal year so there is time for some back and forth and feedback and discussion? Thank you.

**MR. AUMOND:** We plan on undertaking the review of our formula for O and M over the next 2010-11 fiscal year. With respect to the amount of capital, we have not had any expressions of interest to change that amount of money that has been flowing to the communities. It has only really been flowing at the amount that we have to date for three years. This will be the fourth year coming up. That has not been a concern that is passed on to the department, but certainly with respect to the O and M and how with the impacts of the infrastructure on the O and M, it is something that we will be looking at. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I have just one last comment. That is good to hear. I imagine most communities are reasonably happy with the amount of capital funding they get with the gas tax money and Building Canada money. They probably have almost more than they need at this point, although nobody would ever say that out loud, except me, I think. I just want to express my appreciation to the department that they have recognized this need and that it is going to be dealt with. That is all I have.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comment. We are constantly, when we do meet with our federal counterparts, we are always mentioning the fact that they do flow a lot of money into the Territories. We need to start looking at the O and M, because there are a lot of projects going on the ground, so we need to increase the O and M funding. I think we all know that there has been an increase in the O and M for the last couple of years, recognizing the fact that they are getting a lot of new infrastructure on the ground. We will continue to work with the communities and will continue to speak to the folks in Ottawa on our need for more O and M money for a lot of the infrastructure dollars that they have given us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments I have for the Minister are in terms of the empowerment of the communities to take over the facilities and some of the assets that are going to have some decision-making authorities. I would like to talk about the water and waste treatment plants in our communities and our ability to meet these new standards in Canada now. I want to ask the Minister, over time, how are we going to support our communities to meet these new national standards in our water and in sewer and in wastewater treatment plants and also the regulatory requirements that will be attached to these facilities?

I know in one community that our water plant is being an issue, because of the high cost of maintaining it. Sometimes lack of resources depletes that budget item for looking after that water plant, so the community is quite hesitant to see if they want to take that water treatment plant over. I just want to ask the Minister in terms of some going forward plans in terms of these water national standards.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I think the first part of the Member's question, if I understood it correctly,

was wastewater and the new standards. Obviously that is a concern, because if they were to impose a new standard on us, I think that we all realize that it would be a multimillion dollar investment. We could never expect the communities to try and fund that. Even as a territorial government it would be awfully difficult for us. So they would obviously have to pony up some money for us to impose these new standards on the communities, especially with the possibility of that changing.

As far as water treatment plants go, we have come a long ways in the last little while to standardize a lot of the design so water treatment plants between communities have interchangeable parts. I am not sure if the one the Member is referring to is in a community where they have to order filters from England. Those were issues that we dealt with in the early part of this. We will still continue to see what we can do to improve situations like that and see what we can do to help them standardize a lot of the equipment that they have, because it is an issue with a couple of communities that have water treatment plants that were built before we started bundling. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, certainly the Minister pretty well knows which water treatment plant I was talking about and it's certainly an issue here. Now, I guess, the other one is up in Colville Lake regarding the new water treatment plant and the ability for them to have proper O and M budget to maintain that new highly technical water treatment plant there and meeting the new national standard.

The Minister is correct, you know, if we do want to come up to the new standards of waste and water treatment plants, this money's got to be attached to it by the federal government to us to pass it on. I mean, we just can't give it to the communities. So he's certainly correct there. So is there anything that this side can do to support the Minister in terms of asking the feds for these types of dollars if we are to meet the national standards? Otherwise, we're not doing any services to our communities and we try to allow them to take over these facilities here. So I guess I want to ask the Minister, in terms of the regulatory requirements, how stringent or how flexible is the appropriate federal agencies or the government here in having these regulatory requirements set for our communities' water treatment plants and wastewater treatment facilities?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Obviously, all our water treatment plants meet the Canadian standards for drinking water. Then we'll have to, I think, deal with the wastewater potential being imposed on us when we come to it. I'm not quite sure where that's at right now. So we're monitoring that quite closely to see if they decide to impose that on us, then I think we'd have to have a serious discussion as the

Legislative Assembly and with the federal government as to the funding for these new sewage treatment plants. It's going to be awfully expensive for one of our smallest communities like Kakisa with 42 people to be expected to put in a multimillion dollar wastewater plant. So we'll have to have that discussion and I'm not quite sure where those regulations and standards are at right now.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** If I could ask the Minister if he could maybe forward where some of the regulation requirements, if he could forward it over to us in terms of seeing where things are at with the federal government and the Minister, I would certainly appreciate that. So we could possibly give a heads up to our communities that this may be coming down and somebody should look at it when we're looking at planning or constructing or whatever through the New Deal and what's required of them, possibly, in the future. So then we know what's coming down the tube from the federal government.

I want to also ask the Minister about the land issue. I know it's a big issue here and there are a lot of things that need to happen in the communities in terms of making sure that land is made available for project infrastructure. We did have an issue, and I'm not too sure...it's cleared up right now in my community of Tulita, and there are other issues in the Sahtu in terms of building housing projects. However, because of the land issue dispute between MACA and the Housing Corporation and the community, it kind of got lost somewhere. For example, one of the leaders in Tulita reminded me that we lost some houses because we couldn't get our land issue in place there. So I hope that this is something that the Minister can help with by talking to the Minister of the Housing Corporation to see if they can work together on how to get the land issues settled so we can have houses on the ground in Tulita or in the Sahtu. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** In response to the Member's first concern, we will forward all the information that we have to the Member so they can see where this particular initiative is at with the federal government.

On the second point, we continue to work with the communities to identify lands that are available. I'm not quite aware of the situation in Tulita, but I will have a chat with the Minister of Housing and see if we can come up with a plan for dealing with that. But I will find out about it and I'll get back to the Member, and maybe he'd be able to let me know the exact issue there.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Just in closing, I want to say, Mr. Chair, that after being in Tulita for a bit there, I noticed some of the young employees of the hamlet in terms of the water treatment plant operators that...The young guy that I met at the airport in Tulita talked about going to Norman Wells and getting some training to be a certified water plant

operator and this type of initiative has really been appreciated by me. This person was very proud to say that he has been certified as a plant operator. It does go a long way with our young people in terms of training them. So I wanted to let the Minister know, and his staff, that there are some challenges and, certainly, some agree to disagree on some of the issues, but when this young man talked to me about his certification and him being a plant operator, you certainly see the pride in him in terms of his ability to do services to the people. So I just wanted to let the Minister know that. There are other issues we need to talk about; however, we'll do them at some other time. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you. I appreciate the Member's comments. He's absolutely correct with the infrastructure that we're putting in the community. I think the department has taken the lead in trying to get as many community people trained as possible. It's an initiative that we're quite proud of and I think we're seeing a lot of positive results come out of this. So I thank the Member again for his comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, getting back to my questions, I don't want to leave the impression with the public that's out there that we don't care for our municipalities and the Minister is the only one that does. I don't think that's an appropriate comment. I've been here for 14 years raising issues on behalf of my constituents, and I'm still raising issues that haven't been resolved for 14 years.

Regardless if you transfer that authority to municipalities or whatever...In the past there was a funding source called extraordinary funding which was there to assist communities whenever there was some sort of an unforeseen expenditure that had to be covered, which was a budget item in the budget of the government. I'm wondering why is there not such a fund today in this budgetary process that allows for extraordinary funding so that when communities do get in trouble, that they are able to get some assistance from this government, unforeseen or not. There has to be such a fund in place to assist them in regard to disasters or whatever. I'd just like to ask exactly why is that something that is not part and parcel of this budgetary process and is that something that can be considered.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member wanted to make something quite clear and so do I. I never made the comment that Members didn't care about the communities. I don't think I'm that stupid, to be quite honest with you. What I said, and the Member talks about the 14

years that he's been here, and he's been able to see the devolution of authority to the communities and he's able to see the past history where a lot of the small community projects got into the corporate plan and they were basically just bumped and bumped and bumped each year when other emergencies come up. So I just wanted to make sure we clarified that. I'm still very confident in the communities' ability and I think that was my point to deliver the product.

I'm not quite sure about the extraordinary funding. I'm really not sure how to respond to that. I mean, the bulk of MACA's money, infrastructure money, pretty well all of it goes to the communities. If things happen in the communities where they need help, if something happens, a flood, a disaster, then we will assist those communities any way we possibly can. If it means coming to this Legislative Assembly for extraordinary funding, that's something we'd consider as the need arises. If it means going after the federal government to see what pots of money they have there to assist the communities to deal with the situation, then we'll do that too. As far as a pot of extraordinary funding, I don't think that it's in the budgetary process right now. I suppose if it was the will of this Assembly, then we would have to consider that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Maybe I can refer that question to the Minister of Finance. Since he's the banker here, he might have the answer to that one.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as Minister McLeod indicated, communities will not be abandoned. There are opportunities for support under other pots of money, emergency measures money. If there are extraordinary circumstances, then, as the Minister has committed to, the communities will not be left on their own trying to deal with these unplanned extraordinary events. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, Mr. Chair, getting back to my original point in regard to unforeseen events, like I mentioned, the shoreline erosion communities, one of the biggest challenges the communities are going to face, especially in the Arctic, is permafrost. We can see what permafrost is doing to communities such as Inuvik in regard to the infrastructure from roads to public buildings. For us, that cost is an unforeseen cost. That cost is not part of the capital expenditure funds that were given to communities. The formula funding does not contemplate what that is and we realize that could be in the billions of dollars. I think for this government to totally not apply it under this situation is...We realize that that is the reality of what's going to happen in the Arctic. I'd just like

assurance from the government that as part of the planning process, you also realize that you cannot leave that situation to be resolved solely by the communities, and this government has to take the responsibility of ensuring that we do have the ability, as not only government but as communities, to take on this threat that we all live with in regard to global warming, climate change, melting permafrost and, basically, the effect it's having on public infrastructure, not just highways and airports and government infrastructure but community infrastructure. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I just want to reassure the Member and the House that as we move forward with our climate change adaptation plans and mitigation plans, that we will be spending money. Right now it's not clearly budgeted for. I can point to, for example, the response that we had to undertake with the rotting piles issue as the ground has warmed up and all the piles across the land and the buildings up north required replacement or adjusting or repair, that we came forward through our own budgeting process with money that was built in to accommodate that.

The same is going to happen in these circumstances. As they come to bear, soil erosion or other permafrost-related issues or other totally unanticipated issues, that we, collectively, are going to have to be working out how we're going to pay for those, trying to anticipate what they're going to be, how we're going to respond, and then come up with the money to pay. There is going to be a cost and we are going to be in the lead on this, because this is our responsibility. We will work with communities. The community funding is for the day-to-day running of their operations. They are not in the position, as the Member has indicated, to anticipate what's going to happen on their own. So collectively we're going to work on this. Thank you.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess, just looking at the capital funding and the New Deal for MACA, I just want to make some general comments and ask a couple of questions for clarification. I've always felt that the smaller communities in the NWT have less infrastructure, less good infrastructure than the larger communities. I understand that a lot of that infrastructure is built up with property taxes and so on that may not be levied as high in small communities and that creates a market, that creates incentives for individuals to ensure that their own properties are of a higher standard to get a better market value. Unfortunately, in small communities there is no market, but I still feel that the government is under some sort of obligation at this time to get some sort of equalization into equalization funding or catch-up funding in some of

the communities that are lagging a little further behind than others, like some that don't have basic roads and so on. We have communities that don't have roads even within the communities.

So I think that I understand that we are working towards that by changing the status of some of the communities. My first question for the government is, when a band government, a First Nations government incorporates, does the funding then come to them at a level of hamlet status or settlement status is what the community gets now although they are not getting the transfer at this time, but they are funded at a settlement status, for a lack of not knowing what else to call it? That's my first question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the band community decides to incorporate and become, for example, a hamlet, then they would be funded in accordance with a formula that we have for hamlets. If they were to become a village, for example, then they would be funded as a village or a town if they became a town. So they would get that. That would reflect the amount of responsibility they would take, depending on what status they chose for themselves. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Specifically Lutselk'e, are they incorporating to become a hamlet? If they choose to incorporate with the negotiations going on right now between Lutselk'e and MACA, are they incorporating to get hamlet status or settlement status?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Lutselk'e is forming a development corporation. They are not, as far as I know, making any attempt to become a settlement or a hamlet. They are looking into forming a development corporation so the money could start flowing to them. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would that money be equivalent to what a settlement of that size would get or a hamlet of that size?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The community of Lutselk'e is looking at forming a development corporation or a society that can own real property so that we can flow the money to them. They are not looking at changing the status of their community in terms of their lawmaking authority or their governing structure. They are still planning on being a band community like several

others and they are just going to form a legal entity that can own real property, so that they can undertake the expenditures that we can provide them through our infrastructure contributions through our capital plan.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** My question for the department is, should the band government or First Nations government decide not to incorporate if they felt that incorporation at this point would have some impact on the current governance negotiations that is going on between the three governments, First Nations government, federal government and territorial government, and they decided not to incorporate, is there another avenue in which they can still receive the funding whether it be through a contribution agreement where they would be allowed to spend it or would the government, or can the government, come in and do the spending in the community themselves?

**MR. AUMOND:** If the community decides not to form a development corporation or a society for the purposes of owning real property, one option is that the GNWT I guess could, like we are, with respect to Lutselk'e and looking at building a water treatment plant for them, undertake to develop infrastructure in that route. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Next on my list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I want to follow up on the line of questions from Mr. Krutko, MLA for Mackenzie Delta, on the extraordinary funding that communities used to have and just hear the exchange between the Ministers and the Member here in terms of the communities that want to understand that some of the unforeseen disasters happen and communities know that MACA will be there for them and there is a clear understanding about funding if something happens. For example, last year the ice breakup in Norman Wells and certainly they appreciated the support from MACA where some discussions happened in terms of how the community was going to be compensated for taking care of this crucial facility for the community. They had worked out some of the arrangements, but some of the circumstances like that, that happened in our communities, we do what we have to do and hopefully the policies will catch up after. You have to get the water plant fixed up and done and then we catch up with the policies and the paperwork after. They were somewhat concerned that they may have to eat the cost; however, through the grace of this department here, they worked out arrangements where the funding could be reimbursed back to the communities.

I guess that's what I am more focussed on, is a clear understanding that this extraordinary funding was a good initiative and what I am hearing from the Minister of Financem there are other pots of money that could be useful. I hope there is no grey

area in terms of what I am hearing also for municipalities or hamlets to make sure that this is the money for floods and damages of fire. So they know there are no grey areas and they are very clear that they will do what they have to do.

The Aklavik motto is "Never say die." They do what they have to do to support the community, because this brings up a very important issue for us in the small communities.

I hear what the Ministers are saying. I hope the communities get a clear understanding that when they come to something like that, they know what to do, there is funding in place. I just want to raise that as a comment, maybe a question; that that is clearly communicated to the communities. This extraordinary funding was a good thing, I thought anyhow. I just wanted to make that comment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is no grey area. The formula funding is flowed to the communities to deal with a lot of infrastructure that is required in communities and the community makes the decision as to how they want to spend the money that's flowed through them. You can't budget for unforeseen. It's impossible to budget for unforeseen. We deal with those as they happen.

There was a situation that the Member was referring to where something happened in his community. The community saw that a need was there and they took care of it right away and, working with MACA, we were able to reimburse them some of that cost, because they needed to get the work done right away and I commend them for that. They took care of the work right away.

So, Mr. Chair, I think the communities are quite confident that if something does happen in their community, that it won't be expected of them to foot the whole bill. We'd do whatever we can to see what pots of money there is out there that we can access on the community's behalf.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, certainly the Minister is correct. It's very difficult to budget for something that you're not going to expect. I do recognize that and realize that, however, it's good to know that something that may happen is part of our contingency budget on any type of infrastructure. I think we also experienced this in Fort Good Hope when we had the floods there, not knowing the extent of the floods and they had to work through different departments, and even the federal government, in terms of emergency on floods in the community.

Just again, I know that sometimes, through the paperwork, through the policies and regulations, that our expectations and sometimes the departments' expectations are different. So we

have clearer lines of communication. I think this was noted very clearly in the Fort Good Hope flood. There were a lot of good people went the extra mile to make sure that things were taken care of by the departments in this government here, in the community of Fort Good Hope. However, there are sometimes situations where they require more discussions, in terms of funding, what the community is responsible for and how the government can help with some of the reimbursements on some of the bills that they accumulate over the months and weeks. I think that's what I'm getting at. I hope I'm making myself clear -- I hope I'm doing that -- to show that there is strong communication lines in terms of funding that's going to be there for the communities when they want it in some of these unforeseen circumstances that may happen in their communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Robert C. McLeod. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate the Member's comments. We are committed, as a government, to working with the communities, through the arrangements. We do have a huge commitment to empowerment and making sure the money flows directly to the communities, recognizing there's going to be, from time to time, extraordinary or catastrophic situations that require the territorial government to be there, to backstop and to work in collaboration with the communities to sort those issues out, and the commitment is that we're going to continue to play that role. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. We're on page 4-4, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, regional operations, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$28.002 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Committee, we'll move on to page 4-8, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, community operations, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$12.138 million. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I just have a question with regard to the Building Canada Fund. Again, I mentioned earlier there is a pot of money that's there for research and development and also for climate change. I'm wondering if the community is able to access that fund. The only department so far that has accessed that fund, I believe, is the Department of Transportation. So I'm wondering, is that also something that the communities are aware of, that there is research money dealing with

climate change, and is there a possibility that those dollars can also be allocated to the communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; Transportation has been allocated a sum of money out of the Building Canada plan to undertake research for climate change and specifically dealing with permafrost issues. There is no provision to allow for communities to access that pot of money, but certainly any of the research that comes out of that and the findings that come out of that research would be made available to communities or anybody else in the Northwest Territories who wanted access to it. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, just on that point from the deputy minister, I think the argument of permafrost and the effects we're seeing in the community of Aklavik in regard to the shore erosion. Again, we have other communities such as Tuk, we're seeing that in regard to having the possibility of moving public infrastructure, because of the effects we're seeing in regard to shore erosion regardless if it's in the ocean or on a river where a community is next to a river system. So I'd just like to ask if there is any way that this government could make a provision that a certain amount of those dollars will be designated to resolve some of these climate change challenges the communities are facing.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of the communities have applied for Building Canada money for specific projects that they've identified in their communities. For example, I think Aklavik used their portion of it for the new sewage lagoon and they matched the dollars and some of the dollars came from BCP. They've also identified some money for road upgrades through the economic stimulus fund. So the communities will let us know what their priorities are and we continue to work with them on capital plans.

As far as Mr. Aumond said, we've shared findings of the report with the communities and we understand that there are some issues facing some of the communities as far as climate change goes, and the Building Canada Fund would have been a good pot of money that the communities could have accessed to deal with some of the issues that they're facing as far as shoreline erosion goes. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you. We're hearing one thing from the deputy and hearing something else from the Minister. The deputy just stated that the municipalities can't access this fund, it's only the Department of Transportation. So, again, how can the Department of Transportation ensure those

research dollars are spent on research in regard to shoreline erosion in communities?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Transportation will be looking at issues related to roads. We also have a broader mandate with some marine, as well and making sure that there's consultation. With the communities, we recognize very clearly that there are some key communities that are going to be targeted by shoreline erosion, and significant dollars have already, over the years, been spent there. As the polar ice cap melts and they say the water levels are going to rise and the severity of storms increases, it's going to be an issue that's going to require more and more attention.

I just get back to the commitment as we look at the long-term planning and we've met with myself and the Member, with the members of Aklavik, and the work they're doing at laying out their plan for the future and some of the things they have to do. Those issues we'd have to work collectively to address along with the departments that have, in some cases, mandates that sometimes would seem to overlap or are definitely closely related with Transportation and MACA. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** My final question is, can we get a commitment from the Minister of Finance that basically there will be some coordination with the Department of Transportation to look at the whole area of shoreline erosion and try to access some of those research dollars that they have so that you can try to find a way to resolve this issue by some method so we can avoid the melting permafrost and the effects we're seeing on communities and public infrastructure?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, there will be collaboration. I appreciate the good advice from the Member. There will be collaboration amongst the departments to make sure we have a coordinated approach as we deal with the needs of the communities as well as trying to factor in the effect on specific communities of climate change issues such as shoreline erosion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see a proportion of the projects proposed here have been approved by Canada. I am wondering if more have been approved since I was last updated on that. Also, perhaps just for some perspective, have projects just generally been approved in the past? We've got a little bit of experience now on this. I am wondering if most of our projects or all of our projects in the past have eventually been approved by Canada. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With respect to the Building Canada plan, there have been several projects that have been approved to date, as the Member had mentioned. There are some communities that have undertaken BCP projects, Building Canada plan projects, but still have not used their total allocation that's available to them, so they will be able to come back. For other projects, there are some communities that have not chosen, at this particular time, to uptake their allocation that's available to them for the Building Canada plan, but can do so over the next four and a half/five years for the length of the program. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate those comments. So have we had any projects rejected by Canada or is it pretty much a matter of negotiating it through to the end, getting approval? Thank you.

**MR. AUMOND:** By and large, most of the projects that we have submitted to Canada or asked them to consider have been approved. The criteria is well known and we have had some good experience over the years, so our success rate has been quite high. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We are on page 4-8, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, community operations, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$12.138 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Agreed. Okay, let's turn back to page 4-2. This is Municipal and Community Affairs, department summary, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$40.140 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Is committee agreed that we have concluded our review of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Agreed. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** I will now rise and report progress. Mr. Minister, if you could please thank your witness and, Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out, that would be great.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 1-16(4), NWT Capital Estimates 2010-2011, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan):** Orders of the day for Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
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

- Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010
- Bill 3, Medical Profession Act

### 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, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:27 p.m.