



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**4<sup>th</sup> Session**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, January 27, 2010**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>3749</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3749</b>
41-16(4) – NWT Caribou Conservation Measures (Miltenberger).....	3749
42-16(4) – Deh Cho Bridge Project (M. McLeod).....	3751
43-16(4) – Mackenzie Gas Project (B. McLeod).....	3752
44-16(4) – Notice of Budget Address (Miltenberger) .....	3753
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3753</b>
Passing of Respected Elder Maurice Lockhart (Beaulieu).....	3753
Home-Grown Solutions to Northern Issues (Groenewegen).....	3754
Pan-Territorial Approach to Workers' Compensation (Hawkins).....	3754
Mackenzie Gas Project (Ramsay) .....	3755
Condolences to Nunakput Constituents on Passing of Family Members (Jacobson).....	3755
Ministers' Absence at Dene Leadership Meetings (Menicoche) .....	3756
Family Literacy Day (Bisaro).....	3756
Achievements and Contributions of Lena Pedersen (Abernethy) .....	3757
Condolences to Sahtu Constituents on Passing of Family Members (Yakeleya).....	3757
Session Priorities (Bromley).....	3758
100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hamlet of Aklavik (Krutko).....	3758
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>3759</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>3760</b>
<b>RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>3769</b>
<b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>3776</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>3777</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b> .....	<b>3777</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, January 27, 2010****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:34 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Please be seated. Good afternoon, colleagues, and welcome back as we resume the Fourth Session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

I know that you have met together in committees earlier this month, but as this is the first time in 2010 that we have come together in this Chamber, I trust it is not too late to extend my personal best wishes to you and to your families and, indeed, to all the residents of the Northwest Territories for a happy and healthy New Year.

On a much sadder note, I wish to extend the sincere sympathies of this House to those affected by the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Although it seems like a great distance exists between Haiti and the NWT, watching the devastation that has occurred draws us all together. We send our thoughts and prayers to the people of Haiti as they attempt to carry on in the face of this disaster.

I also know that some of us have lost friends and loved ones since we were last in this Chamber, and I want to pass on my sincere condolences to the families and communities affected and to let them know that my thoughts and prayers are with them.

I know you are eager to turn your attention to the work at hand, colleagues, and I will close with my customary request. I ask that we work together, as always, in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories and that we work with dignity and respect for the institution, for each other and for our constituents.

It is now my duty to advise this House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the passage of:

- Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2010-2011;

- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2009-2010;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2009-2010; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2010-2011

during the Fourth Session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Yours truly, Anthony, W.J. Whitford,  
Commissioner.

Thank you, colleagues.

Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger. .

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 41-16(4):  
NWT CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, for the last four years Environment and Natural Resources has been working with wildlife co-management boards, aboriginal governments and organizations, communities and user groups, to share information on declining barren-ground caribou herds and develop and implement conservation measures. These have been very difficult decisions but there has been a willingness to work together so that this valuable resource can be sustained for future generations.

As Members are aware, the GNWT, through the NWT Act, has a responsibility to manage game in the NWT. In implementing conservation actions, our government recognizes and respects aboriginal harvesting rights as set out in land claim agreements and treaties and as protected by the Canadian Constitution. The emergency measures implemented January 1<sup>st</sup> are intended to ensure the long-term survival of caribou herds so that these rights can indeed be exercised by current and future generations.

I would like to inform Members what has been accomplished by working together and what

remains to be done to conserve caribou in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, caribou numbers cycle over time and both traditional and scientific knowledge have documented these changes. Many factors influence these cycles but there are only a few factors that humans can control. Mr. Speaker, I must stress when caribou numbers are low, the level of harvest will influence the rate of recovery.

In 2005 and 2006 surveys to obtain new estimates of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East and Bathurst caribou herds indicated these herds were all in serious decline.

After the 2005 surveys the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtu wildlife co-management boards recommended that all resident and outfitted hunting for barren-ground caribou from the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East cease in their regions. These regulation changes were made in 2006.

After the 2006 surveys the Inuvialuit Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) recommended that all hunting of the Cape Bathurst herd cease. For the Bluenose-West herd, the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtu wildlife co-management boards recommended that a total allowable harvest be established at 4 percent of the 2006 herd estimate. This meant a total of 720 tags. The boards had previously developed a formula based on historic harvest to allocate any quota among the three regions. These were implemented in 2007 and 2009.

The good news in 2009 was when new estimates of the Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-West herds were obtained, this data showed that management actions, in combination with good calf survival, had stopped the herds from declining further.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the other herds in the Northwest Territories.

In 2006 the Bluenose-East herd numbered around 66,000 and the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board recommended that hunters should work towards a voluntary total allowable harvest of 4 percent. In 2009 weather prevented completion of a survey to update Bluenose East herd's estimates; however, there are no indications to suggest this herd has increased.

The Ahiak herd, which is shared with Nunavut and Saskatchewan, has also declined. For the past four years surveys to delineate the calving area have been undertaken and a trend analysis shows a 60 percent decline over the four years.

Unfortunately, weather this past year did not allow for a full survey of the Porcupine herd. Despite this, the GNWT continues to work with the parties to the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement on the

development of a long-term harvest management plan.

In 1994 survey results indicated that the Beverly herd was estimated at 276,000. Systemic reconnaissance surveys of the Beverly calving grounds in 2007, 2008 and 2009 indicate that the Beverly herd has all but disappeared. Limited collar information suggests that some of the last Beverly cows have shifted to the range of the much larger Ahiak herd.

However, our gravest and most immediate concern today is for the Bathurst herd, which ranges between Great Slave Lake and Bathurst Inlet. The 2009 survey showed a drastic decline to 32,000 caribou from over 100,000 in 2006. In the 1980s this herd numbered well over 400,000 animals. Small steps were taken in 2007 to reduce both the resident and outfitted harvest. Resident tags were reduced from five to two and only males could be hunted. The number of outfitter tags was reduced from 1,500 to 750. The department had submitted a proposal for management actions through the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board to keep harvests below 4 percent of the herd estimate. However, significant public controversy prevented further action.

To address these concerns, a peer review of territorial caribou studies was undertaken by the Alberta Research Council. The peer review recommended some improvements, but, overall, outlined that survey methods were sound and that the data indicating declines were occurring was solid.

In accordance with the Tlicho Agreement, the department and the Tlicho Government submitted a joint proposal for management actions to the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board in November 2009. These actions related to the three caribou herds that spend part of their winters in the Wekeezhii. Agreement was reached on actions related to resident and outfitted harvests, but there was not agreement on actions related to aboriginal harvests in Wekeezhii.

The department then set up meetings to consult on the joint proposal with communities and user groups in November and December. It was anticipated that recommendations from the board might be received late in 2009, in time to address the winter hunt, which is when the majority of caribou are taken. In early December it became apparent that recommendations would not be received until April 2010 and so the department began to consider the need for interim emergency measures. In mid-December the department met with aboriginal organizations in the North Slave region to discuss the interim emergency measures and how to address hardships that might result. On January 1, 2010, the interim emergency measures changes were implemented. These were focused

on creating a no-hunting zone where the Bathurst herd was wintering, and eliminating resident and outfitted harvests throughout the North and South Slave regions to reduce the pressure on the neighbouring Bluenose-East and Ahiak herds. Radio and print ads were placed in mid-December to inform people. Aerial and land patrols were undertaken.

The Tlicho Government has been supportive of these interim measures and the Tlicho communities are accessing financial assistance to undertake community hunts and reconnaissance flights. This has been a very difficult but necessary decision by the Tlicho Government.

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation has also recognized the caribou need help. They were the first to take a leadership role when they cancelled their fall caribou hunt. The department continues to meet with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation to address their concerns related to the interim measures.

It is important to note that no rights are absolute. All treaty and aboriginal rights are subject to government measures to ensure conservation. Where conservation measures actions may affect aboriginal harvesting rights, ENR is working directly with the aboriginal governments and organizations to develop solutions that will protect, preserve and ensure the survival of caribou for future generations. It is our responsibility as a government to protect the vulnerable population that without conservation measures may well become extinct in a few short years.

The next step will be the public hearing to be held by the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board on March 22 to 26, 2010. Recommendations are expected by early June and the department will consult with the Tlicho Government on implementation.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the department will take steps to work cooperatively with co-management boards to address overlap issues associated with this valuable resource. In 2010 surveys will be undertaken to obtain a new estimate for the Bluenose-East and Ahiak herds. These herds are shared by communities from the Kitikmeot, Inuvialuit, Sahtu, Tlicho, North Slave, South Slave and northern Saskatchewan. The department will work with boards, users and governments to share information and assess management actions.

I look forward to support from Members, aboriginal governments and our co-management partners as we navigate these challenging waters. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we are looking for the same thing: a way to help these herds survive so they in turn can help sustain current and future generations. Thank you.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-16(4):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to provide Members and the public with information on the progress made to date on the Deh Cho Bridge Project.

The Deh Cho Bridge Project is being undertaken as a public-private partnership with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, which is owned by the Dene and Metis of the community of Fort Providence. In years to come I expect the Deh Cho Bridge will be a symbol of what can be accomplished through community partnerships.

This project has had its share of challenges, but these challenges have been effectively addressed as they have arisen. As a result, I am pleased to note that the project is now 50 percent complete and will soon reach a significant milestone: the completion of the foundation work. That will be the point at which we are out of the water, leaving behind the highest risk component of the entire project.

We've also undertaken a detailed review of the bridge superstructure design. The review, which is now essentially complete, will result in a design that is more conventional, simpler to construct and at a lower cost. The new design will ensure that the bridge will serve us well for its entire expected lifespan of 75 years.

The project is on track for completion by November 2011, one year later than originally planned. We will soon have a new general contractor able to complete the remaining two years of the project. The Government of the Northwest Territories and our partner, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, have, therefore, risen above the challenges which we have been presented and are ready to complete this project, with benefits to the people of the North Slave region and to all the residents of the Northwest Territories.

The Deh Cho Bridge Project has been talked about and planned for over 50 years. From the time the highway was constructed connecting Yellowknife to the rest of Canada, it has been recognized that the economic life of the North Slave region was connected to the rest of the Northwest Territories by a very fragile thread, with seasonal and occasional interruptions in service affecting road transportation and travel for several weeks of the year.

Through this public-private partnership, the Government of the Northwest Territories at last received the means to move forward with this

important piece of infrastructure, without depleting our limited capital resources which are needed for infrastructure requirements in other parts of the Northwest Territories.

Many benefits come from the construction of the Deh Cho Bridge. Some of the examples include an all-weather road access to and from the North Slave region that will be available for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and no longer will travellers have to choose air transportation or put off travelling altogether because they chose the wrong time of the year to cross the Mackenzie River.

The bridge toll was also set so that the economic benefits associated with the bridge will be greater than the cost of the toll. The bridge will result in savings from efficiencies and trucking operations. Commercial carriers will be able to operate their fleet year round without interruptions for breakup or during freeze-up. Their drivers will be able to travel the highway 24 hours a day, without overnight waits or even the wait for the ferry to get to their side. More competition can be expected as the risks associated with freight transportation over a ferry and ice crossing system is reduced. A more efficient trucking system will further reduce the costs for businesses, industries and individuals in the North Slave region.

And let us not forget the environmental and safety risks that exist any time you operate a ferry service or an ice bridge. The risk of fuel spills will be substantially reduced once a permanent bridge is in place. Idling vehicles waiting for the ferry will also no longer be necessary. The need for approximately half a million litres of fuel currently being used by the Merv Hardie will be eliminated, helping the GNWT to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets, and damage to the ferry from ice will no longer be an occurrence.

There are other benefits that arise any time you improve transportation infrastructure. Residents lose the sense of isolation that comes from being unable to travel when and where one chooses. Potential investors will look more seriously at the region with a reliable transportation system. Employment and economic opportunities increase and people everywhere in the Northwest Territories benefit.

We are looking to the future of the Deh Cho Bridge Project with confidence. A key piece of infrastructure will be put in place without sacrificing roads and bridges that are needed in other parts of the Territory. The completion of the bridge will be a significant achievement for the government and people of the Northwest Territories. In less than two years this will be a reality. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-16(4):  
MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we have reached a crucial milestone with the Mackenzie Gas Project.

On December 30, 2009, the Joint Review Panel released its long awaited report assessing the environmental and social impacts of the MGP.

What I will talk about today is what this government is doing, and has done, to ensure our work on this project is timely and efficient. And I will talk about the potential benefits this proposed project, if done in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, could bring to the Northwest Territories and to Canada. But I am not here today to focus on this report and the response our government is preparing, since the lead department for this is Environment and Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT was prepared for this report upon its release and we were able to start working on it right away. This government has dedicated significant resources to prepare a response to the report, and we are committed to delivering that response in a timely manner in accordance with the June 2002 cooperation plan. We also await the National Energy Board's decisions on this project, which is expected by the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, we do not know what that decision will be regarding the Mackenzie Gas Project. But if it does proceed – and, again, I stress it will only proceed if it can be done in an environmentally and socially responsible manner -- it will provide economic opportunities, lead to infrastructure development, and has the potential to provide a brighter future for the people of the Northwest Territories for generations to come.

It will also offer opportunities for economic diversification, as many of our communities may have access to a secure supply of clean and affordable natural gas.

Aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories in particular, through direct ownership of the pipeline through the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, stand on the cusp of an unprecedented era of sustained prosperity and growth.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Gas Project will also create jobs, much needed jobs, not just for the Northwest Territories but for the entire country. These jobs will help the Canadian economy recover from the recession that has gripped it for the past two years. The establishment of a related economic activity in the NWT will sustain that recovery for decades.

The project can also help in the fight against climate change, by increasing the continental supply of natural gas, thereby allowing natural gas



to replace dirty coal as the fuel of choice at hundreds of power plants. And our Arctic gas resources will be a critical element in the overall natural gas supply mix, providing a cleaner, more secure energy source for the entire continent.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government also has a large role to play in this process. We understand that the Government of Canada continues in its discussions with the project proponents on fiscal arrangements regarding the Mackenzie Gas Project. We encourage the parties to reach a conclusion as soon as possible on those arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my statement by emphasizing once again that done right, the Mackenzie Gas Project presents the Northwest Territories with tremendous opportunities.

The actions we take over the next few years in working to ensure that -- economically, socially and environmentally -- this proposed project benefits the residents of the Northwest Territories, may well be the most significant contribution the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly makes in meeting its vision of a thriving, strong and economically sustainable Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 44-16(4):  
NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Thursday, January 28, 2010. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Colleagues, before we proceed, I would like to draw your attention to the visitor's gallery, to the presence of a former Member of the House. Lena Pedersen is in the Chamber today.

---Applause

Also, colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge another milestone in the life of this Legislature and in the life of our Clerk. Please join me in wishing Mr. Mercer a very happy birthday today.

---Applause

I may also suggest that you walk not quite so quickly and speak a little slower so that Mr. Mercer adapts to his advanced years. Thank you, colleagues.

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PASSING OF RESPECTED ELDER MAURICE LOCKHART

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Last year two of our elders and residents of Fort Resolution passed away and just recently the oldest resident of Tu Nedhe, Maurice Lockhart of Lutselk'e, passed away. Maurice Lockhart was born to Baptise and Louise Lockhart just after the first snowfall of winter in Lutselk'e. His true age was never verified but he was baptized in 1910. He was born at a time when there was no modern technology. They didn't even have canvas, which is very valuable to hunters and trappers.

Mr. Speaker, life is sustained only by what Mother Earth provided, which were heat, caribou hides for clothing, and dog teams for travel, and hunting. Maurice spent most of his life on the land mainly near Timber Bay and Artillery Lake area.

Maurice survived the 1925 flu epidemic and did his part to help others through that difficult time. In 1935 he married Judith Casaway of Lutselk'e and built a home on an island near the old Lutselk'e. All of his children were born out on the land. Alfred, Emerence and Joe were born at Tthaili, Felix was born near Lutselk'e and Tom was born in Rocher River.

Maurice lived a nomadic lifestyle, travelling with the seasons to hunt and trap in the vast area. He often took his wife, Judith, to visit her family at Nonacho Lake. Maurice is known as a spiritual man. People would tell him their problems and through his dreams he would help them. He prayed for his family members every day, as well as for the community of Lutselk'e. Maurice was well known for his public speaking at political and social gatherings.

Mr. Speaker, one of Maurice's greatest passions was the love for music. He loved to imitate people in his fiddling and dancing, and the people of Lutselk'e enjoyed his imitating and loved him. Mr. Speaker, that was evident at his funeral, which I had the privilege to attend. There was both the traditional drum dancing, modern fiddling and square dancing. The whole community and many visiting guests took part in the last dance to remember and honour Maurice Lockhart.

Please join me in honouring this much respected elder in sending our condolences to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
HOME-GROWN SOLUTIONS TO  
NORTHERN ISSUES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are back to the budget session, the longest session, the longest sitting of the year for MLAs. Of course the budget is still under lock and key so we can't talk about any specifics, although we have certainly had some part in consulting with the government on what it contains in it, and we can talk about a budget in general terms.

Mr. Speaker, we have extensive resources but we also have considerable challenges. How do we measure the well-being of our Territory? It is usually through landscape glimpses, through statistics, which can report good news or bad news. It is our job as legislators here to apply our resources to the needs of the people that we serve. In doing so, even with the best of intentions, I believe that we fall short in one area. Our constant need to look for direction and solutions to our challenges from without, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars every year, has always been a source of great frustration to me.

We as a government, as a way of doing business, have for too long placed too much stock in a consultant or an expert or some other outside resources through the many, many studies and reviews that we undertake.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the level of our financial resources and the level of our needs here in the North, I am of the strong belief that many of the answers, many of the solutions reside within our people themselves, but we as a government have inadvertently thwarted greater gains in addressing our needs by depriving our own people, our NGOs, our community governments, our leaders, our elders, of the resources that they need to find local solutions to local problems. We have created a culture of dependency as people look to us for answers, which many times often lie within themselves.

People who are passionate about specific needs have the ability to harness resources and input that cannot be bought with any amount of money. It is their own knowledge, experience, culture and traditional knowledge that they have and possess that I believe is the answer to many of the challenges that we face and do not make enough progress on.

As we consider yet another budget in the next six weeks or so, I believe we need to challenge ourselves about the way that we do business and what challenges for social and economic prosperity go unanswered and remain in the rut of the status quo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PAN-TERRITORIAL APPROACH TO  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce launched a petition asking their government to consider outsourcing the Yukon's Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to B.C. The petition was based on a number of employers complaining that the Yukon premiums are too high. With little consideration of the matter, in the end neither government supported the petition, possibly because when balancing the significant differences between the provincial and territorial workers' compensation acts and in considering that B.C. has a significantly larger population and administers the WCB differently, then the province would likely have to set separate rates for the Yukon and administer it differently in a way that may conceivably have the Yukon rates increase to their employers when taking in consideration of the service costs.

Mr. Speaker, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce petition may have been rejected, but it's unfair to compare the Workers' Compensation Board there to B.C., but there is obviously some discontent among their members in the Yukon business community that their WCB for them is starting to look elsewhere for solutions in other jurisdictions. For some people in our Territory this may sound all too familiar when we talk about high costs of rates.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps there is a mutual solution that lies to the east of the Yukon with perhaps joining the NWT and Nunavut WSCC system. Perhaps someone needs to present a pan-territorial vision for the evolution of the WCB that blends similar rates, experiences, problems, solutions and environment into one system that we all could work together. As we all know, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut already work together under the same legislation and administration and thus we provide a clear and excellent example of a multi-jurisdictional approach that works. Now, if someone had the audacity to think outside of this opportunity and reach for this chance that could tie us together for a new type of venture that could move towards the future rather than finding ways to divide us, a solution may be found.

Mr. Speaker, people see that the three territories have similar businesses, similar people, similar problems. I don't believe that we're so dissimilar that an idea like this couldn't work. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity really lies before us. Let's not overlook this potential chance that we could be doing

something great for our people as well as our businesses that employ these people. Mr. Speaker, undoubtedly, we could work together in a way that would protect individual autonomy, but yet work better for all Northerners territory to territory to territory.

Mr. Speaker, later today I'll have questions for the Minister of WSCC about potentially launching a new venture and new vision for our three territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to speak today about the Mackenzie Gas Project.

Last month I had the opportunity to accompany Minister Bob McLeod to Calgary, where we met with proponents of the project and industry representatives. Everyone we met with was still very positive about the future of this project, and I believe now that the Joint Review Panel report has been released the time has arrived for our government to ramp up its efforts to demonstrate the tremendous benefits of this project to this Territory and to everyone in this country.

Minister Bob McLeod has done a great job at championing the cause, but we need to show our support as an entire government body to demonstrate that we fully support the MGP and everything it means to the future of our people and Territory. A motion to that effect is in the works.

This project will represent the beginning of an era of prosperity and growth for our Territory. I would expect that the project would proceed in an environmentally and socially responsible manner which will lead to sustained oil and gas activity, economic and infrastructure development, prosperity, stability, and a brighter future for the people of the Northwest Territories for generations to come. All residents have the potential to benefit from this project, not only through access to jobs and business opportunities during the construction phase but also through sustained opportunities as we see the re-emergence of this industry in the Northwest Territories.

This project and resulting diversification of our economic base can also contribute to governments in the Northwest Territories taking on more of a leadership role and demonstrating that we are capable of managing our own destiny. This will be further evidence to strengthen the argument for shifting responsibility and authority to the people of the Northwest Territories.

The benefits of this project will not only accrue to the Northwest Territories but to other parts of this country, particularly Alberta and Ontario which will

see contributions to the economy in the order of \$10 billion and \$5 billion respectively. The overall contribution to the Canadian economy is expected to be in the neighbourhood of \$86 billion. Make no mistake, the Mackenzie Gas Project will be a nation-building exercise.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. RAMSAY:** It will address the federal government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to seeing Canada's North reach its full potential, and a clear expression of Canada's commitment to Arctic sovereignty. These are lasting legacies that the federal government cannot continue to overlook.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO NUNAKPUT CONSTITUENTS ON PASSING OF FAMILY MEMBERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. I always start my Member's statements by paying respect to the people who have passed away, to their families and friends, since the last sitting of this Assembly.

In the community of Tuktoyaktuk we lost Henry Nasogaluak. I'd like to give condolences to his brothers, David, William, Eli, Joe, and Bill; his sister, Sarah Anderson; and his common-law, Viasha; his young son, Henry; and his two sons, Darryl and Jason, who I grew up with back home. Henry will be sadly missed by Tuk Search and Rescue. Anything that was ever needed by the community in that sort, Henry was always there. He was one of the all-round hunters and one of the best sport hunting guides in the Territory.

I'd also like to give condolences to Mavis Chicksi and her family. Her common-law, Brian; her son, Brian Jr.; Aaron, Petra Lisa Alikamik, and to their family.

I'd also like to pay respects to Angus Kikoak; his mother, Susie; his brother, Steven; his sisters, Brenda, Caroline, Lena, and Violet.

I'd like to pay respects to Andrew Gruben, grandson of Eddie Gruben, who will be sadly missed. Condolences to his mother, Louisa Gruben; his father, Peter Louie; brothers, Peter and Matthew; sisters, Kristena, Liz and Effie. Condolences to you guys back home. It was a tough three months.

In the community of Ulukhaktok three well-respected elders -- Jimmy Memogana, Margaret Egotak, and Harry, her husband -- passed away this past winter. They'll all sadly be missed. Our

communities are small, very tight-knit communities, where everyone knows everyone.

The communities of Ulukhaktok and Tuk are very small, close-knit. The loss of one person impacts us deeply.

I, lastly, wish to give my condolences to the people of the Northwest Territories who lost loved ones in the past few months. Our prayers are with you all and your families.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
MINISTERS' ABSENCE AT  
DENE LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, last week I was proud to be the hosting MLA at the Dene Nation Leadership Meeting in Fort Simpson. This was the first meeting of the year, in which they are celebrating 40 years of presence in the North, of which I once again extend my congratulations.

---Applause

Given the importance of this event and emerging treaty rights issues with the GNWT temporary hunting ban on the Bathurst caribou herd, I was very dismayed that our Cabinet did not send one ministerial representative to this meeting. Invitations went out to the Premier, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and the rest of the Cabinet in early January, but no response was given by anyone to the Dene Nation. In fact, the Dene national leadership had to pass a motion in their assembly requesting their attendance. Our GNWT government has taken great pride in recognizing aboriginal governments, but I feel in not responding positively to the request of the Dene national chief to attend this important meeting was a big mistake. The AFN national chief, Mr. Shawn Atleo, took the time to go to Fort Simpson and pay attention to the needs of the Dene Nation, but not our government.

In the week previous to this, the entire Cabinet attended the Beaufort-Delta meetings, which they do often. There was no willingness to attend this Dene Nation Leadership Meeting, yet one could have predicted, from recent media coverage, that issues related to the Government of the Northwest Territories would be high on the agenda. I think that shunning the invitation to Fort Simpson demonstrated a lack of judgment. There is a cost: criticism of the GNWT -- of which I am a representative -- and the weakening of the GNWT working relationship with the Dene National Assembly. I believe that with a Cabinet ministerial representative, the current issue of the hunting ban on the Bathurst caribou herd, treaty rights, and

consultations could have been better understood by both sides. Regretfully, now we have a situation where we are negotiating and disputing the issues in the media and not face to face.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** This was an opportunity to engage each other on this very important issue. In the future I hope that the GNWT Cabinet members give due respect and attend Dene national leadership meetings and give equal weight to all aboriginal government meetings. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FAMILY LITERACY DAY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to be welcomed back to the House and it's nice to see all Members here ready and eager to get back to work.

Today, January 27<sup>th</sup>, is Family Literacy Day. Today, and all this week all over the Territory, communities, schools and families are engaged in activities to celebrate and highlight literacy.

One of this Assembly's goals is healthy, educated people. But our priorities, unfortunately, do not mention literacy; the value of which is well documented and irrefutable. Literacy, which includes numeracy skills, is necessary for work, for learning and for life in general. Unfortunately, many NWT residents still do not have the necessary life skills -- and that's literacy and numeracy -- to succeed at a job, at running a home, at volunteering, at helping their children with schoolwork and so on. Without adequate literacy levels, reading the instructions to try out a new recipe is a struggle for a parent. Without adequate number skills, finding the best price for a sale item when grocery shopping can be a challenge.

Here in the NWT we are lucky to have a number of organizations which exist to help NWT residents, especially adults, improve their literacy and numeracy; organizations such as the NWT Literacy Council, Yellowknife Association for Community Living and Aurora College adult learning centres, to name just a few.

On this day, Family Literacy Day, I encourage all residents to recognize the importance of the three R's, reading, riting and 'rithmetic, and to take part in a literacy activity in your community. Or you can be literacy active in your own home with your family. Together you can read a book, play a board game, write stories or letters together for family or friends to enjoy. Good literacy and numeracy provide the

foundation for the learning of all other skills, and a skilled people are a successful people.

So on this day I urge NWT residents to make a promise to each other as a family, that you will do at least one literacy activity each and every week all year long. It will benefit each one of you and the end result is an improved NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF LENA PEDERSEN

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of a person who has devoted much to improving the lives and situations of people of the North. This January marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lena Pedersen's election to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

This anniversary is especially noteworthy, because in 1970 Lena was the first woman to be elected to the Assembly, then called the Territorial Council.

Born and raised in Greenland and upon coming to the Northwest Territories in 1959, Lena has lived and worked throughout the North in communities from Coppermine, Pangnirtung and Cape Dorset to Yellowknife and Rae.

The constituency she represented was the Central Arctic, made up of Pelly Bay, Spence Bay, Gjoa Haven, Cambridge Bay, Bathurst Inlet, Bay Chimo, Coppermine and Holman. One of Lena's early accomplishments in the Legislative Assembly was getting funding to build the Kitikmeot boarding home for out-of-town patients to stay at when in Yellowknife for medical care. It is named in her honour. During her term Lena was a member of the Housing Corporation and she chaired a special education report. Getting schools built in communities was a very important goal for her. When she was elected many communities had one-room buildings that taught grades 1 through 5.

Another success of Lena's is how she was able to get an extension on the airstrip in Coppermine. The project was not in the government's capital budget, but she was able to come up with a creative solution that involved negotiations with Gulf Oil to support the project financially.

Lena's community activities involvement did not end with her groundbreaking term in office. Over the years she has worked as a drug and alcohol program coordinator in Kugluktuk, served as a board member for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, and served as a commissioner for Nunavut's Law

Review Commission. Her activities in Yellowknife have included time spent working at the Yellowknife Women's Centre, where she has used traditional and cultural and language activities to help the people build their self-esteem and reduce feelings of isolation that some have experienced.

Lena has been a board member for the Native Women's Association of the NWT, is an active member of the Yellowknife Seniors' Society and continues to be involved with Bosco Homes Territorial Children's Treatment Centre. Throughout, Lena has acknowledged that if a person is going to be able to help improve a situation, listening carefully to the people involved is an important first step. She continues to encourage effective and positive communications between and among people, not just elders and youth or politicians and the people they serve.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Lena for all that she has done for the people of the Northwest Territories and the role model that she continues to be.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO SAHTU CONSTITUENTS ON PASSING OF FAMILY MEMBERS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Twenty years ago when I first decided to put the bottle away, I sat down with an elder in Tulita and this elder and I were walking in Tulita along the streets there and the elder was talking about some of the old people that passed away in our community. The elder bent down on the ground -- it was during summer -- picked up the dirt, put his hand in the dirt and the dirt started falling out. The elder told me, he said, "this dirt," he said "that's my relatives, it's in our blood," he said, all the dirt falling out of his hand. I didn't understand what the elder was talking about. The elder was Fred Andrew Sr. The elder was telling me that our relatives that go back into this land, this is our land and that's where our blood is.

Mr. Speaker, before I came here last Sunday -- we have ceremonies in our communities on Sundays, ceremonies in some of our communities that we go pay respect to the elders and people who passed away over the years in our communities. Some of the elders teaching say that it's a special day because the angels come on Sunday and they come into the birch trees. That's where the angels come and that's where our relatives come to visit us. Sometimes we make fire. Sometimes we cook out there and make offerings to the fire for our relatives.

Mr. Speaker, over the last year in the Sahtu we lost about 16 people, 10 of them were elders. In Deline

we lost Jimmy Mackeinzo; Mary Therese Mackeinzo; my uncle, Adrian Menacho, my auntie, Jane Neyelle; and Margaret Kenny. From Fort Good Hope we lost Eileen and Alfred Orlas, Dorothy Cotchilly -- she raised a blind son by herself, this old lady -- Charlie Gully. We lost some young people also: Tyler Harris, Michael Pierrot, Alana Boniface and Kenda Shae. From Colville Lake we lost a really good elder, Joe Martin Oudzi, and a young trapper named Tommy Kochon. In Norman Wells we lost a young man, Joe Richie.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pay respects to these people and give my condolences to all the people in the Sahtu for their loss and that we pray for them, and that these people here left us some good, strong messages to continue on our life. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to all the other people who we have lost, people in the Northwest Territories, we certainly pray for them also. Mahsi cho.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SESSION PRIORITIES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, greetings to you and all my colleagues, as once again we gather in the House to do important business. Today I begin by reviewing my perspectives and some priorities for this session.

Caribou play a central role in the life of most Northerners, and we are facing some dire situations resulting from a failure to manage this resource properly. We must stop herd declines and build cooperative conservation while political issues get resolved through separate discussions.

As economic recovery has begun in the North, I see the need for renewed focus on economic diversification that will provide more stability for the northern economy at less environmental cost.

Development of biomass projects for heating could be major support to local economies providing labour intensive business development and replacing fossil fuels with clean energy. Enhanced fisheries and agriculture have roles to play. Avalon Minerals' Nechalacho rare earth metals project and Fortune Minerals' NICO proposal present regional development opportunities. Maximum benefits will only result if we insist on local renewable energy and human resources for sustainable development.

We have many independent programs for people living in poverty, but we do not have a comprehensive, coordinated and cross-departmental poverty reduction strategy. Other jurisdictions are realizing significant achievements with this approach. As I highlighted last session, we need an NWT anti-poverty strategy.

Our archaic approach to energy supply, with its missed opportunities, must end. Let's take the

NTPC and rate reviews and build an intelligent energy future. Small hydro developments can serve our communities and replace costly fossil fuel power with clean and cheaper energy.

An ambitious and fully implemented biomass strategy is another good step. Meaningful progress on Taltson hydro could contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, extend the life and sustainability of our diamond mines and promote success of aboriginal corporations. It is abundantly clear that we must set and plan to meet science-based greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the results of the housing subsidy review and the housing needs surveys. We must use this information to make immediate improvements in the quality, cost and accessibility of public housing. I see the need for new revenues to help with housing costs. It is not too early...

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

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. BROMLEY:** It is not too early at all to see the implementation of the Heritage Fund. The public and Members are calling for full value from resource revenues and saving some of these funds to build a future. Resources and revenues leave the NWT faster each year. Mines pay down their development costs in no time, yielding huge profits. A revised resource revenue tax is a simple, quick answer to our years of complaint over lost revenues.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Joint Review Panel's report on the Mackenzie Gas Project highlights issues of government capacity and oversight. The panel said all of its recommendations must be met if the project is to go ahead. There is enormous work to be done quickly if we are to responsibly contribute to the next stage in realizing the panel's vision of a truly sustainable development project. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAMLET OF AKLAVIK

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start off this session with a good news story. Mr. Speaker, this year the hamlet of Aklavik is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this is a great accomplishment, considering 100 years ago the Hudson Bay Company made a decision to establish a trading post in a location where Aklavik is today, which was built by the late Alexander Stewart.

Mr. Speaker, Aklavik has a great history. Becoming a trading post, a commerce for people in regards to the fur trade back in the early 1900s and then working its way to becoming a major regional centre for commerce from governments, programs and services by way of regional hospitals, education facilities for schools, and also the military played a major role in regards to the early centre, which was established in Aklavik.

Mr. Speaker, it was the main centre of government for the people in the Beaufort-Delta and also played a major role as a regional centre.

Mr. Speaker, Aklavik has a rich history of families that live there, and continue to live there today, and a place where the Mad Trapper remains.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, the community has had a slogan for 50 years, when a decision was made by some bureaucrat in Ottawa to move the community of Aklavik to East Three, which is known today as Inuvik and celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary a year ago. Again, they're missing out on the big celebration, which is 100 years, which is Aklavik's celebration and takes place this year.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Aklavik invite all residents of the Northwest Territories and elsewhere to celebrate with them. Over this year they are having carnivals, dances, bonspiels, the famous Pokiak Music Festival, consideration of the Northern Games taking place in Aklavik this year, the Gwich'in Assembly and also hosting canoe races, dog races and many special events over the year.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to send an invitation to all the residents of the Northwest Territories to mark on their calendar that they will make an attempt to celebrate with the people of Aklavik.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to send an invitation to all the residents of the Northwest Territories to mark on their calendar that they will make an attempt to visit the community of Aklavik and celebrate with them on their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary; more importantly, to take the time to realize a part of the Northwest Territories which most people have never been to or have never had the opportunity. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity is now. Celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the people of Aklavik. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

### Recognitions of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Lena Pedersen, a former Member of the Legislature and a constituent of the Great Slave riding.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize our two interns who are here in the gallery from the Department of Justice. Mr. Blake Buckle and Emily Ingarfield are here with us. Welcome. Mahsi.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to recognize the parents, or at least the mother, of my esteemed colleague Mr. Abernethy, the wonderful Loretta Abernethy, a constituent of Weledeh. Welcome.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** ...the Gameti Land Corporation president, Mr. Peter Menacho from Deline.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Larry Elkin and his wife, Cappy. Mr. Elkin is a very long-time deputy minister with the Government of the Northwest Territories. He commented to me the other day that he had a letter of thanks from 40 years ago for intervening at the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline hearing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize the Elkin family, Cappy and Larry. I know they watch our Assembly quite regularly on television, as well as follow our proceedings quite closely through the community. I suspect that they are not here just to watch us. Their granddaughter, who also is a Yellowknife Centre constituent, Paige Elkin is here to help us today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to have an audience

here, especially when we are starting out in a new session.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 186-16(4): CLAWBACK OF INCOME EARNED BY GWICH'IN ELDERS

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Gwich'in Assembly passed a motion last year directing the Gwich'in Tribal Council to make an elders payout for elders over the age of 70 and then also they made a second payment to elders 60 and over to age 69. Mr. Speaker, under the Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement it is pretty clear in regards to these payments not being clawed back by governments, regardless if it is the federal government or the Government of the Northwest Territories. But it is pretty apparent, Mr. Speaker, that those elders, especially the ones 60 and over who depend on income support have had their payments clawed back.

Mr. Speaker, there is a letter written to the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services and also a letter to the Department of Education on this matter. I would like to ask the Minister exactly why is it that this government clawed back the elders' payment to the Gwich'in elders in regards to their portion of income, which was somewhere around \$2,600, but again those people weren't allowed any income support payments or support for the whole month of December because of these payments which they were left without. I would just like to ask: why is the government doing that, knowing that it is an exemption in the agreement?

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The clawback has been addressed the last several years now, so we made some changes to our existing programming, the policy that we have in place. After numerous discussions that we had in the Legislative Assembly, the standing committee and the general public, we decided that there was an exemption that was put on the table, a \$1,200 exemption on individuals that can qualify. The \$3,500 that the Member is referring to, there have been payouts by the organization in the Beaufort-Delta, but we are currently looking into that specific area through the initial justice system to find out what is in the agreement. They are tax exempt as if from land claims money as if from a

business arm, so those are the discussions that we are having currently ongoing. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Under the Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement under Chapter 11, which is the taxation chapter, it clearly states that the Gwich'in Settlement Corporation is exempt from any federal, territorial or local government taxes and similar charges are exempt from the settlement corporation and such. Any capital distribution to elders over the age of 60 years are, therefore, exempt from taxes and other charges, including clawbacks of their income support. So I'd just like to ask the Minister, knowing that that provision falls under the land claim agreement under section 11, which legislation is the government considering in light of this land claim provision, which clearly stipulates that no exemptions would be taken on those type of payments.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. Those are the detailed information that we need to address within our Department of ECE, the Department of Justice and the organization itself. When we talk about chapters, there are different chapters where the funding has been allocated. So, certainly, those are areas that we need to look at. The detail of are they tax exempt and if they are what can we do as a department on a going forward basis, we've been having this discussion just since the issuance of the \$3,500 has been dispersed. So we are in the process of going forward and talking to organizations. Mahsi.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you. I hope that the department and the Minister's department can try to bring a quick resolution to this, because the seniors, the reason that they did this is because we are losing a lot of seniors and we're hoping that we can get this money into their hands so that they can at least have an opportunity to spend it and use it to their expense and not have it clawed back. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he can give me some assurance that they will try to remedy this situation as soon as possible. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. That is what we are currently discussing to look further into the actual agreement itself and our policy. We need to resolve this issue, because it doesn't only impact in that area but also other land claim settlement areas as well. So we're being cautious of moving forward. So, certainly, that information will certainly be shared with the standing committee as we move forward. Mahsi.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully we are able to compensate those individuals who were basically affected by this by way of not allowing them. So I'd just like to ask the Minister if he could somehow work with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and those elders that are affected by the



clawback and see if we can work with them to notify them that there is a possibility of being reimbursed for those losses by way of the clawback. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. We all depend on the agreement that we have in place, whether it be with the Gwich'in, the Beaufort-Delta, within our GNWT system. So, yes, we are going to continue having those types of discussions and we want to expedite the process so we can come out with a solution. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 187-16(4):  
MINISTERS' ABSENCE AT  
DENE LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement. The Dene Nation Leadership Meeting was held last week in Fort Simpson and government was informed. It was easy to guess and see that the temporary ban on hunting of the Bathurst caribou herd would be discussed. In any event, our government has always committed itself to give value to our aboriginal organizations and government. There was attendance by senior staff of ENR, which was some comfort, but none from Cabinet. If anything, the Premier, who is also the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Speaker, and there were no officials from that department either. The Dene National Assembly, they said...[English not provided]...they want to see the boss, Mr. Speaker, or else...[English not provided]...the big boss, which is the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell this House why wasn't he or the Minister of ENR or any other Ministers in attendance at the Dene Nation Leadership Meeting? Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The situation that has occurred there, one is it's unfortunate in the sense that we were not able to have Ministers in attendance, but we need to set some of the facts straight in what led up to this.

Mr. Speaker, number one, not all Ministers attended the Gwich'in leaders and the Beaufort-Delta leaders meetings. Both Minister Bob McLeod and Minister Michael Miltenberger were not at those meetings. Two, the request for attendance at those meetings and the request to make presentations on departmental responsibilities were made months in advance so that we could set the time aside for those meetings. For the notice to the Cabinet Ministers of the Dene Assembly, the meetings that were occurring, we can provide Members notice that a notice was received by a number of the Ministers on January 13<sup>th</sup> and responded to in the

case of, for example, Minister Michael McLeod responded two days after the fact to the organization. Minister Lafferty, the same thing, within a few days responded to the Dene leadership about the invitation. Upon receiving the agenda it was clearly noted that the issues and the requests for ministerial presentations were not on the agenda, and by that time Ministers were well committed to quite a number of meetings beforehand.

In speaking to the Dene national chief, Mr. Bill Erasmus, I confirmed with him that we were prepared to sit down with him and the folks that he would want to on the issues arising from that meeting. As the Members know in this House, we as the Government of the Northwest Territories have stepped up our involvement and meetings with the regional aboriginal leaders and governments to build on a solid relationship. We're prepared to sit down, given enough advance notice, to set time aside to make the appropriate presentations to aboriginal governments as well. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. But the fact remains that no Ministers were in attendance, and for me personally it kind of gauges the importance that our Cabinet gives the Dene National Assembly. So I'm just not clear. I know that we make time for other aboriginal organizations, even cancelling meetings and having an excuse that they need months of planning, it's just not appropriate there, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, given the importance of the matters being discussed at the Dene National Leadership in Fort Simpson, I don't know why there was only one department that sent officials. We've got to pay more attention to the Dene National Assembly and that's the frustration that I felt, that's a frustration the people felt in Fort Simpson. Once again I'd like to ask the Minister why wasn't more attention by this Cabinet given to the Dene National Leadership Meeting in Fort Simpson.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you. In preparing for whether it's meetings with aboriginal governments, with provincial governments, with the federal government, there is much advanced time in trying to allocate time and resources and meeting times of Ministers with the appropriate parties. So we are always prepared to sit down and set that time aside, with enough advance notice and that's the concern here. The notice, the invitations that were given to Ministers, came in in mid-January, a week before the meetings. The commitment was already made by Ministers at other meetings and events, whether it was in this Territory or within the capital or in other parts of the country as well. When you do look at the agenda that was provided to Ministers at that time, the issue of having

Ministers make presentations was not on the agenda as well.

As I said before, we're committed to working with our aboriginal partners across the Territory, and with advance timing and notice we are glad to make the time available so that we can sit down together and hear what's being raised, as well as make the presentations from the department responsibilities as well. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. I still don't believe that timing is the issue, but I think the issue for myself and the people at the Dene National Leadership Meeting in Fort Simpson was government's inattention to the needs and the issues that were on the floor. The other thing, too, is how much time does government spend paying attention to other aboriginal organizations, which is an issue as well. I believe that we're a consensus style government and that we must pay attention to all aboriginal organizations and governments, and that's the question I'd like to ask the Premier. How much time do they spend with all our aboriginal organizations? I'd like to see it equally balanced.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The fact that we meet regularly, we've had seven regional leaders meetings with the grand chiefs and presidents of the aboriginal governments across this Territory. We just held our seventh meeting in November, in Dettah. In fact, the executive reports that were given at the Dene Leadership Meeting by these grand chiefs and presidents, they were in attendance at our regional leaders meeting. In fact, at our regional leaders' meeting we also had some discussion about the issue of caribou conservation. In fact, I believe our press release may even have touched on that topic. The fact that before this meeting there were numerous meetings held with aboriginal governments and organizations about the issue of conservation of caribou across the Northwest Territories, working with co-management boards.

So the simple fact is we continue to meet with the regional leadership, with aboriginal governments and organizations, and we'll continue to do that. We'll work jointly on initiatives, given that we're provided enough time so that we could make sure that we marshal up the resources to be in attendance.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'd just like to reiterate the point one more time is that when aboriginal groups meet, they want to see the...[English not provided]...they want to see the boss, the Ministers, and I'd like to get the Premier's commitment that they will evaluate the next Dene Nation Leadership Meeting or any aboriginal leadership meeting and give them that importance and that value and that respect.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** We are prepared, as I said, and continue to work with our aboriginal partners across the Northwest Territories and will set the time aside to sit down with them. In fact, we're working on the next Regional Leaders Meeting to be at the end of March. We'll continue to work with them. For example, those that made the presentations from the executive reports at that Dene Leadership Meeting, we're hoping to have all of them in attendance, including Mr. Bill Erasmus, national chief of the Dene Nation.

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

QUESTION 188-16(3):  
MINISTERS' ABSENCE AT  
DENE LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to just follow up with Mr. Menicoché's questions in terms of the leadership meeting in Fort Simpson with the Dene Nation national chiefs. Listening from the communities, the reception, what I'm hearing is that it wasn't very good to have our government Ministers not there at a very important meeting with the leadership. It didn't seem that this government here cared to sit down with the chiefs, to listen to them, especially on the issue of caribou. It was quite volatile. I want to ask the Premier, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in terms of leadership meetings such as the Dene Nation Leadership Meeting, is there a policy that at these type of meetings that you'll have several Ministers at these meetings to listen to the chiefs on some of these important issues.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process we have in place for meetings with aboriginal governments and leaders is, one, first and foremost, that is really formally structured now. The regional aboriginal leadership meetings are attended by the seven regions and the grand chiefs and presidents of those aboriginal governments. As well, when advance time is given and we're requested to be on the agenda, we would have the appropriate Minister -- if they can't be in attendance, the appropriate deputy minister -- to present what has been requested. In the case, for example, of the Beaufort-Delta regional leaders, the practice has been months in advance they make the request that we be in attendance. They actually request the Ministers and put them on the agenda to make presentations at the meeting. We do that with the Gwich'in leaders. At the regional leaders table we, as well, have a joint initiative where the regional leaders can put items on the agenda, along with ourselves, and we have the appropriate Ministers show up at those. We continue to work with those. Along the side the regional leaders'

meetings, we've made a commitment as the Government of the Northwest Territories that we will have a bilateral with the grand chief and the chiefs of a region on an annual basis as well. So when they make that request, we set up to do that.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** When you have over 30 chiefs sitting there, these are the level of aboriginal governments that are going to be established in the Northwest Territories. We're asking another government to participate. I'm asking the Minister or the Premier in terms of is it something that is going to be a policy where when you have 30 chiefs sitting down, that the Premier or the Cabinet would send one or two Ministers to be there out of courtesy to sit with another level of government.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** We have a process in place now that we meet with the regional leadership and have a bilateral process. In fact, as I just said earlier, we just finished a meeting with regional leaders in November and we're already into planning preparations for the end of March with the regional leaders. So it takes a long time to get the agendas together, to get the necessary information together, so that we can have these meetings. We will do the same in advance notice of the Dene Leadership Meetings. There are many examples where we have Ministers and myself who have been to the leadership meetings to make presentations as well. It's just unfortunate that the notice came late and we already had commitments by the Ministers that had invitations. When you look at the agenda, there was no request, we were not on the agenda as Ministers making presentations.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** When you have 30 leaders, 30 chiefs sitting down, it's just obvious that this government should send one or two Ministers to a meeting out of courtesy to listen to the chiefs. Sometimes we don't go by an agenda. Sometimes the issues come outside the agenda. It's just obvious that this government, as leaders, attend a national territorial leadership meeting. Again, I want to ask the Premier in terms of not a process, but is there some type of policy that in the future that Ministers would be attending the Dene national chiefs meeting.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** We make every effort to attend the aboriginal leadership meetings across the Northwest Territories. We can provide the information of how many meetings we have attended. It is important that we work together on that basis. That is why, for example, we're trying to solidify an ongoing relationship that is put in place and recognized at the regional leaders' table. For example, the last meeting we tabled -- the example is the Council of the Federation -- that with the regional leaders. We hope to build on that going forward.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Sometimes when important meetings are called about such issues as the caribou, it's very important to people in my region here. It would seem that it would be a given that the Minister of at least ENR or another Minister attend this meeting with some heavy discussions here. Again, it's called meeting some of the needs of our people here. I would ask again if it's a policy of this government or Cabinet can be looked at and see if future meetings can be attended by some of the Ministers as a standard policy.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** First and foremost we are putting in place the relationship that we have with regional leaders. Mr. Bill Erasmus is involved in that by notification of our meetings, the agendas and so on. We have been, for example in Lutselk'e at that Dene Assembly there, attended with a number of our Ministers, including myself. When we're given enough notice, we try to be as flexible as possible and we'll continue to do that. I'll sit down with the Dene national chief, Bill Erasmus, to talk about a process we can set in place and that hopefully he can provide us enough lead time so we can work on making sure we have appropriate representation. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Colleagues, I'm going to request that you consider keeping your questions and answers maybe a little bit shorter. We'll be lucky to get eight Members to ask questions at the rate we're going today so... The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 189-16(4):  
PROTOCOLS FOR DELIVERY OF SENIORS  
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I gave a Member's statement on Mr. Maurice Lockhart. It was interesting that at the time of his passing Maurice Lockhart was doing repairs and painting his house. I have questions for the Minister responsible for Seniors.

Mr. Speaker, in many of our aboriginal communities it's very common for elders living in their homes. However, when it comes to assistance, sometimes the assistance comes very slowly. Can the Minister responsible for Seniors tell me if there are any discussions with other Ministers to ensure our government provides the seniors with expedient and quality service? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the questions. Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be the Minister responsible for Seniors and I do deal with issues that deal with seniors that goes across the government. But when

it comes to administering programs and delivering services to our people, whether it be in income security or in housing or in health and social services and other areas, each department is responsible for delivering those programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to developing a protocol where there is regular dialogue with other Ministers on seniors' services and seniors' issues? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Yes, I would be happy to look into that. We do, as social service Ministers, or social envelope Ministers have met and we do meet, but with the Strategic Initiatives committees under Building Our Future, a lot of our work falls under that, so we've been doing that work under that committee. But I will be happy to undertake this task and work with the Member as the chair of the committee to see how we can refine this process. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** It's not a health question. Mr. Speaker, another major concern, however, is health. Can the Minister tell me if she has developed some sort of strategy to ensure that the seniors in our small, isolated communities are given the best possible and timely care? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Seniors issues and the provision of services in Health and Social Services for seniors is not just a small issue in a small community, but it's emerging as one of the biggest challenges that our government faces and will continue to face. It is a big area of work and task and challenge that the department is working on. So I think in coming days we will be discussing more on that. So I want to put that out there and specifically to small communities, yes, we continually work with the communities, regional health authorities and every partner to deliver and improve our services to seniors. Thank you.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to working with the other Ministers on creating a centre for seniors programs to create sort of a consolidated approach to assisting the seniors to decrease any delays for services to seniors? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I believe an issue similar to this was looked at before, and I'd be happy to share with the Member and the committee on that front. Mr. Speaker, I think in making sure that our seniors get the services they need, whether it's housing, transportation, health and social services, income security, whether it's the tax provision or income deduction, I think the fastest service is delivered when an issue comes up. It's dealt with at the department level right away, and it's something that we do. All the Ministers do that on a daily basis

and, obviously, we could continue to work on improving that, but, yes, we do that. That's our core business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 190-16(4):  
CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and it's on caribou. I want to follow up and get some more details on what's transpired to date. But I'd like to start by asking how could this have happened. Obviously, dropping from 400,000-plus down to 32,000 is a tremendous decline, and I understand that happened over a period of time, that we clearly have responsibility here for that management. How could this have happened and are we capturing that to ensure that we learn and do better from now on? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be briefing committee at the rise of the House and we have a lot of detail to share with the Members. But I think the big key point is I don't think there is one particular reason you can point to. There is the human impact, there is the climate change, resource development, increased roads, accessibility, permafrost, insects, changing rain in the middle of winter. There's any number of issues. I think one of the big points is that the human impact is probably going to be more significant than ever before in the past where there's been the cycles and this time it looks very serious, but we are working to understand this and capture all those variables as best we can. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I think it's clearly important that we do that. I didn't really hear harvest mentioned as a factor, but many of us that were hunting in the '90s clearly remember the big two-ton trucks of caribou, 150 animals in a truck, heading down the highway, and expressed a lot of concern without any action being taken. I hope that's included in the thinking on what caused this.

But moving on, what support was received during consultations prior to establishing the hunting ban through consultation with aboriginal governments and co-management boards? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Member is correct; the harvesting, the more the numbers dropped, the greater the impact of the harvesting, especially if harvesting levels stay the same as when the herd was healthy. In a state of decline, if we don't affect those numbers, the impact is significant.

This whole process, Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind your caution about short answers, initially it was going to be worked through the Wekeezhii process, with our report to them with our recommendations, ourselves and the Tlicho Government. The dates that the Wekeezhii Board were able to do things moved, and as we got into December we recognized the need for measures, because there wasn't going to be a report in time to get a response out in a timely manner, and we started the compressed process to consult with all the aboriginal groups to be ready to have some recommendations in place by the end of December.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate that response. Given that Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah are right in the middle of this quite large geographic area that is now closed to hunting, what opportunities do the Yellowknives and other people have to harvest caribou or other alternatives so that they can replace the caribou meat that they're missing? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** There are two key things that are available. We've made the offer in the Tlicho and with the Akaitcho and the Yellowknives to work with them to go to access some of the caribou in a controlled way, the Ahiak and the Bluenose-East, that we would work with them and assist them to do that, recognizing that these herds are under stress themselves, but we think we're able to be able to manage that kind of harvest. We've also adjusted the bison tags so that both the Tlicho and the Akaitcho have access to a greater number of bison tags over the interim period. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question really is recognizing the important intents and emotional issues that are being raised about aboriginal rights in response to the hunting ban. How will the Minister ensure that the conservation of the caribou is front and centre through all of this, recognizing that those are important issues as well? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Our whole initiative is predicated and has been initiated by the recognition that we have a wildlife emergency and it's a conservation issue that has to be addressed over this hunting period. That recognition and acknowledgement are keeping in mind the respect and can lead to respect the aboriginal rights and treaty rights and rights to hunt. But our fundamental obligation is to look after the wildlife; in this case, the Bathurst herd. Those two are linked and our rationale is that there was a gap here. There is an emergency. The hunting season had to be addressed. We took these very measured and carefully considered steps. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 191-16(4):  
DISCRETIONARY DECISION MAKING IN  
THE APPLICATION OF HOUSING POLICIES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the local housing authority.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that we need policies. We have to set policies so that the good folks who work in our local housing authorities have guidelines by which to go, and the boards who also serve as volunteers in our communities. They have guidelines by which to deliver the housing programs. But, Mr. Speaker, sometimes the situation arises which calls for some kind of discretionary decision making, which I encourage. I think we should put that kind of decision making into the hands of our people. The problem being that we must have policies, as well, because once you open that door of discretionary decision making, it can go far afield and afar awry if it is not handled properly, that kind of authority. But, Mr. Speaker, too many times I hear on certain policies that there does need to be some common sense applied. I would like to ask the Minister responsible, is there a policy in place now that would allow people at the local authority level to apply for a waiver, for a variation of a policy to accommodate a certain housing need in a community. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as I know there is not an actual policy in place, but the Member is right, there are times when some common sense decisions need to be made. As a corporation, we are going to have to take steps to ensure that the LHOs have the authority to make decisions like this when the need arises and not make it as widespread as the Member mentioned. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** What happens sometimes is the LHO makes a decision within the policy guidelines, the constituent is unhappy, they go to their MLA, their MLA goes to the Minister, and then from the Minister's office goes a decree of some kind to address the situation one way or the other. It can be demoralizing or demeaning to the authority who has been given the decision-making mandate to then have the Minister dictate down to them. I would rather see a policy in place where the people of the LHO can appeal either to the Minister or president or somebody so that request comes from them when they see an opportunity to vary a policy in order to accommodate a constituent. It is a

subtle difference but I think it is important to the people on the front line. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, that is something that we will have to try to put together so the authorities... And I hear the Member's point, because we do get a lot of calls in our office, folks across the Territories that aren't happy sometimes with some of the decisions that are made. You can't fault the LHOs, because they are following policy that is set out by us. If there are opportunities to make small changes to policy that will give them that ability to have some flexibility in some of the decisions they make, then maybe appeal to headquarters or appeal to the Minister too, in certain cases, then that is something that we should have a serious look at. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Some of the areas that I know, from having been an MLA for a long time, which come up are issues around residency, emergency shelter issues, issues of rental arrears and perhaps very, very old outstanding arrears for damages, situations where a senior may be in a home, in a subsidized housing unit and they temporarily need someone to stay with them who may be working but they need their support and care in the home for some reason. Those are the kinds of things that are real life kind of human issues, and yet I don't want people to feel that they have to go through a big appeals process, that they have to go straight to the Minister's office. If they could have that established working relationship with the LHOs and the local boards and they could reason with them and then have the opportunity for the boards to advocate for them, I think it is much better if the policy could incorporate those kinds of issues. Could the Minister respond? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we are always looking for ways to improve policies and update them to meet the needs of residents. Some of the feedback we get from the Member goes a long way to bring some of these policies forward. That is something that we can do to improve the service to the clients, is to incorporate some of the changes mentioned by the Member, then we will take that into consideration. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I just want to be absolutely clear that as Members we are all about accountability, policy and process. I just want to make it absolutely clear that my comments or questions today in no way are meant to be disparaging toward the good work of the front-line workers and the LHOs and also to the people at the headquarters in the Housing Corporation and the hard work that they do. I just want to be very clear that this is just something about just making it work a little better. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 192-16(4):  
MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. It gets back to my Member's statement where I was talking about the Mackenzie Gas Project.

I have been a Member now for over six years. I know the government has put a tremendous amount of resources into this project from a staff perspective and also monetarily. I think the government is on the right track. The Minister is on the right track. I know he is doing some good things. I agree with him. I don't think we can allow anyone to underestimate the importance that this project has to our economic well-being going forward.

Mr. Speaker, there has been much discussion lately about the importance of the federal government to provide the necessary financial commitments to see the Mackenzie Gas Project become a reality. I am wondering if the Minister is aware of the status of those negotiations between the proponents and the federal government.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the honourable Member for travelling with me to Calgary.

---Laughter

MLA Ramsay for travelling to Calgary with me. I reinforced to the oil and gas industry executives the importance that this government places on the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline project. I think this is a very important question, because I am getting concerned that too many people think that this pipeline is a sure thing now that the Joint Review Panel report has been released. It is an important step, but there is another important step which is the fiscal arrangements. I often refer to what the United States government is doing. The United States government has given unequivocal support to the Alaska Pipeline. They have passed bills providing loan guarantees up to \$40 billion for the Alaska Pipeline. It is supported right up to the White House. President Barack Obama has indicated that he likes the jobs, he likes the benefits from the Alaska Pipeline and also the safe, secure supply of Arctic natural gas. So our government has provided qualified support. Our Canadian government has indicated that it supports the project subject to an environmental review, subject to the regulatory

review and subject to fiscal arrangements yet to be negotiated.

Minister Prentice before, early in 2009, said he would have a fiscal arrangement in place before the Joint Review Panel report was released. In December he said he didn't have a deal and that he didn't know when he would have the deal and that he would be continuing to work with the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proponents.

So I still firmly believe that this project is very important to Canada and I believe that Canada will see it in the same way. I think that the Mackenzie Pipeline project can be a legacy to this federal government and that the negotiations are continuing. There is a Throne speech that will be coming out in March and we're still very optimistic that the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline will receive approval.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I thank the Minister for that and it's interesting that he cites the American experience, because there has been a reluctance here in Canada for the federal government to state that it will create a fiscal environment that would allow the project to be built. I'd like to ask the Minister how is our government lobbying the federal Cabinet to get the Mackenzie Gas Project directly on the front page of their briefing binders on the first thing they look at when they go to Cabinet meetings, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. Our government has been very active in promoting a Mackenzie Pipeline. We have done a large amount of work outlining the significant benefits, not only to the Northwest Territories but to Canada. We pointed out to different provinces that the largest beneficiaries would be the provinces of Alberta and Ontario. Our Premier has met with the Prime Minister on a number of occasions. I know a number of our Ministers, every time we go out to Ottawa we take the occasion to talk about the pipeline. The pipeline is our biggest priority and this is something that we want the rest of Canada to realize, that the Mackenzie Pipeline has very significant benefits to all of Canada and we see it as a way to kick-start the economy, and I think that some positive messaging in the very near future would be very beneficial to the Northwest Territories and the rest of Canada.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you. I'm wondering if the Minister has any indication on when the federal Cabinet may be making a decision on the fiscal arrangements with the Mackenzie Gas Project and between now and then what effort is our government going to do to get to Ottawa to reinforce the fact that we cannot go on without this project. I mean, it's the future of our Territory economically and socially, opportunities for our people. There's so much here at stake, Mr. Speaker, and what are we going to do between

now and then to get that message out there? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. We have been meeting with the federal Ministers. We've also been meeting with the oil and gas industry executives and we've been discussing how we can work more closely together.

One of the messages we get from the federal government is that we need to speak with one voice. Also, we're hearing: where is the chorus of support from the Northwest Territories? They say, "what are you hearing from certain individuals or organizations that they support the pipeline," but we don't have the whole Northwest Territories indicating their support for the pipeline. So I think that we recognized that the next two months are probably very critical to a decision on the fiscal arrangements. So I think that's something that we are concentrating on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister, I know he talked about not having the support here and I talked earlier in my Member's statement about a motion that I'd like to bring forward at some point in time, but what does the Minister feel that we can do as a government, as a people here in the Northwest Territories, to get that message through to the federal government that we need this project here in the NWT? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. I think that if we can somehow get the federal government to recognize that all of the people in the Northwest Territories support the pipeline and feel it's an important project and priority for this government and Territory, that that would go a long ways. Also, I know the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly had passed a motion in support -- I think it was unanimous support -- for the Mackenzie Pipeline and I think that probably would only help to reinforce it if this 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly did the same. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 193-16(4):

IMPACT OF NEW GNWT FINANCIAL SYSTEM  
ON INCOME SUPPORT CLIENTS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in his capacity as the Minister responsible for income support programs.

I think everybody in this room is aware that we've recently implemented a new financial system and I think we're probably all aware that implementation of software generally causes problems, as does any programming change; there are bugs to be

worked out and so on. My constituents have, unfortunately, experienced the effect of some of those bugs from the system. So I'd like to ask the Minister what has been the impact of SAM, the new financial information system, on the provision of income support payments to their clients. Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This particular area has been a real true challenge since the SAM system has been implemented dealing with income support clientele. At the same time, we try to expedite the process itself on to the communities. We deal with 33 communities, so it's quite challenging. But at the same time I think we are improving our system as we go along.

There have been some certain circumstances where there's been some delays that the Member is alluding to; we've remedied the situation, but there are others out there as well. But we'll do what we can as a department, whether we issue manual cheques in the meantime. But it is a system that has created some challenges at our doorstep and we must overcome those challenges and we are working with it. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that answer and I appreciate that the department is working their way through the problems. But when a problem does occur, when an income support payment to a client is delayed, I'd like to know whether or not the department has protocols or policies in place to help the staff work their way through a particular delayed payment. To me the most important thing is to ensure that the clients get their monthly income support payment as soon as possible. So does there exist something within the department protocols or policies that the staff can use to ensure that clients get their payments within a reasonable time frame when a system problem is encountered or some other delay? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. This particular issue is very complex. With our caseloads, they've almost doubled, dealing with the income support clientele. At the same time we have our resources, experts in these areas that deal with individual clients in the communities and there are certain areas where they need more information. That kind of delays the process itself. We stress to the clients and we stress to the communities in the Northwest Territories that we require all the documentation before we issue, whether it be subsidies or cheques or SFA and so forth. So it's all depending on the documentation. At the same time we deal with the system itself, but there are processes in place where individuals assist each other, the clientele in the communities, the

superintendents, the client service officers, and our first priority is the clientele so they can have food and shelter in their communities.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. I accept that answer from the Minister, but my concern is not with a problem where the client has not provided all the information that's required for the officer to make a decision or to approve the payment. My concern is when it's a system problem or when it happens to be a staff error, which, heaven knows, unfortunately occurs. At no fault of the client, some of them have had to wait until well past the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month in order to get their monthly income support payment. In my mind, that's not acceptable. So I'd like to ask the Minister what date, when during a month should a client expect to receive their income support payment. What is an accepted amount of time that they must wait?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The timing would vary in the communities. At the same time we certainly don't want clients to wait as long as they could. We try to issue, whether it be manual cheques if the system is down. In small communities we certainly deal with issues pertaining to the technology or the Internet system. We have to keep those in mind as well. If those happen, then we go with the manual cheque run. We do what we can to deliver service into the communities. There are some glitches. There are some challenges before us, but we continue to work with it.

**MS. BISARO:** Twice now I've heard the Minister say that we issue cheques. I understand that cheques are mailed out, that people can't go and pick up their cheques. I have a bit of a difficulty with two things: one, that somebody has to wait for a cheque to be mailed -- goodness knows Canada Post is not the most efficient organization in the world -- and the other is that we have to issue cheques. So one way to speed up payments to clients, in my estimate, is to allow for electronic direct deposit to a client's bank account. I know that doesn't work in all communities, but is this something, can the Minister advise, that ECE will put in place to speed up payments to clients?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I'm glad the Member raised that issue. Those are the key factors that we'll take into consideration on a going forward basis. Like I said, there's always room for improvement and those are areas we will continue to make progress.

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



QUESTION 194-16(4):  
PAN-TERRITORIAL APPROACH TO  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about possibly our Territory breaking out, embarking onto a new vision of opportunity. I talked about perhaps the opportunity of our WSCC working more closely together with the Yukon WCB. We've heard many times over, from our constituents, about the cost of rates and the services provided, and one of the troubling factors that keeps rising always is the fact that we have a small base of population to do these types of calculations.

The WCB in the Yukon, I can't tell you if they're in favour of this idea or not, but one thing I can tell you is that when I was in Whitehorse recently I know the discussion of joining perhaps the multi-jurisdiction idea has never been discussed. My questions will be directed to the Minister of WCB specific to this embarkment of uncharted territory, I'd like to define it as.

Would the Minister for WCB let this House know if this concept has ever been discussed about working together in a more close-knit environment of a pan-territorial WCB?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of any discussions that have ever happened before about combining WSCC with the Yukon. We have a good arrangement with Nunavut and, obviously, this is going to have to be a venture that works well for us and Nunavut before we even think about entering into any kind of discussion.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I think the opportunity really lies before us as breaking out of our normal way of doing business. I mean, the demands on public government to find new ways to be more efficient, to be smarter with the money we're given, and certainly to be more responsive to our constituent needs. Here lies an opportunity before us that we could do this. I'd ask the Minister of WSCC if he would consider engaging this type of dialogue with not just his Nunavut counterpart but also extending out to the Yukon Legislature to their WCB Minister and perhaps maybe opening up a dialogue for this type of venture.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We can always open up a dialogue, but if it's not a deal that makes sense for the ratepayers of the Northwest Territories and employers of the Northwest Territories and Yukon, then this is something we won't even consider. It has to make sense for us.

There would be a whole lot more to it than just asking them to partner up. There would be a reorganization of staff and everything. It would be quite a complicated process. Bottom line is that it has to make good business sense for us to even consider partnering up with the Yukon.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I think the Minister misunderstands my point. I'm not talking about subsidizing the WCB of the Yukon Territory. I'm talking about finding a joint partnership where perhaps we can create a pan-territorial WCB that could work for the three of us. If it means that we could streamline our legislation that works cooperatively, if it means that we could streamline our administration, perhaps that's the route, or perhaps it means our investment of our money that we collect through the WCB rates. That's the type of thinking that I'm suggesting that we take that approach as opposed to subsidizing in a way that doesn't make sense to the bottom line of our present system. I know that it's uncharted territory and it certainly couldn't be done at the will of one MLA or even the will of one Minister, but I'm asking the Minister if he would be willing to engage in this type of discussion and certainly keep all Members informed and apprised to any potential developments of if this idea could become a real initiative.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I'll commit to the Member that I'll have a discussion with my counterpart in the Yukon and see if there's any interest on their part. Maybe they think it's not a very good idea, otherwise I'm sure the discussions would have happened a long time ago. I will commit to the Member that I will at least raise it with the Minister and see if there's any appetite for it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

### Returns to Written Questions

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have returns to the following written questions: Written Question 2-16(4) asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 19, 2009, to the Hon. Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, regarding on-the-land alcohol and drug treatments; Written Question 3-16(4) asked by Mr. Bromley on October 26, 2009, to the Hon. Floyd Roland, Premier, regarding details on contracts awarded to former Ministers; Written Question 4-16(4) asked by Mr. Bromley on October 26, 2009, to the Hon. Floyd Roland, Premier, regarding contracts to former Members of the Legislative Assembly and senior staff; Written Question 6-16(4) asked by Mr. Ramsay on October 26, 2009, to the Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding the total cost of Ecole Allain

St-Cyr expansion; Written Question 7-16(4) asked by Mr. Krutko on October 28, 2009, to the Hon. Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, regarding the breakdown of health professional visits to Tsiigehtchic; Written Question 8-16(4) asked by Mr. Bromley on October 29, 2009, to the Hon. Robert C. McLeod, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, regarding vacancy of public housing units; Written Question 9-16(4) asked by Mr. Yakeleya on November 2, 2009, to the Hon. Robert R. McLeod, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, regarding renewable energy and cost of living initiatives in the Sahtu region; Written Question 10-16(4) asked by Mr. Yakeleya on November 4, 2009, to the Hon. Michael McLeod, Minister of Transportation, regarding infrastructure in the Sahtu region; Written Question 11-16(4) asked by Mr. Krutko on November 5, 2009, to the Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding income security services in Tsiigehtchic; Written Question 12-16(4) asked by Mr. Yakeleya on November 5, 2009, to the Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, regarding the GNWT Science Agenda; and Written Question 13-16(4) asked by Mr. Yakeleya on November 5, 2009, to the Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding Sahtu students' academic achievement levels.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 2-16(4):  
ON-THE-LAND ALCOHOL AND DRUG  
TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 19, 2009, regarding on-the-land alcohol and drug treatment programs.

1. Can the Minister outline a referral process for clients that want to attend alcohol and drug treatment programs on the land?

The general referral process for treatment begins with the individual seeking help with addiction issues. They can approach a community wellness worker, a mental health and addictions counsellor, a social worker, probation officer, the nurse or a physician, who can work with the client to determine which available programs meet the client's needs. Existing services available within the community are considered as part of this assessment.

Treatment options can include: community-based counseling, education programs, referrals to community support groups, referrals to residential treatment centres, or detoxification. Treatment planning is specific to the client's needs. Therefore, the readiness and willingness to participate in the treatment process. Once it is determined that a

referral for treatment is appropriate, the referral source then completes an application for treatment.

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is committed to offering quality mental health and addictions services to all residents of the Northwest Territories. Programming based on cultural practices and values are vital to the ability to meet wellness goals.

2. Can the Minister outline the steps that are required to establish an on-the-land program for alcohol and drug treatment programs in the Sahtu region?

Currently, community-based initiatives are supported by the DHSS by partnering with community groups to meet unique community and regional needs. Regional authorities, such as Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority, in the past have provided funding for on-the-land healing programs in Sahtu communities. The authorities will continue to consider proposals from communities and assess them on a case-by-case basis.

As well, it is expected that the review of the mental health and addictions programs currently underway will provide options in this regard.

3. Will the Minister provide the amount of funding that the federal government allocates to aboriginal alcohol and drug treatment programs in the NWT?

Annually, the DHSS receives \$375,000 in National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program funding. Approximately \$280,000 of this amount is allocated to southern addictions treatment options for aboriginal clients. The remainder is used for addictions-focused programming in the communities and regions. These specific projects vary each year and are based on proposals which are received from interested organizations.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 3-16(4):  
DETAILS ON CONTRACTS AWARDED  
TO FORMER MINISTERS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Bromley on October 26, 2009, regarding details on contracts awarded to former Ministers.

It is worth noting the contractors' roles were not restricted to singular or discrete issues but, rather, were focused on maintaining and advancing the GNWT's relations with Canada on a variety of issues vital to the interest of NWT residents and critical to the GNWT's role in the federation.

The contractors helped build relationships and offered advice so the GNWT could build on existing progress and advance key priorities with other governments.

Since the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly the GNWT has advanced four key

political priorities with the federal government: the Mackenzie Gas Project, infrastructure investment, devolution and resource revenue sharing, and hydro development.

We have secured real benefit for the NWT from Canada's Economic Action Plan and stimulus programs. We were one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to receive approval for Building Canada projects, which we have leveraged to record capital spending to help blunt the effect of the economic downturn.

The receipt and payment of invoices from the contractors indicated the acceptance of their work, based on the terms of their contracts.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 4-16(4):  
CONTRACTS TO FORMER MEMBERS OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND SENIOR STAFF

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Bromley on October 26, 2009, regarding sole-source contracts; specifically sole-source consulting contracts given by departments during the life of this Assembly to former Members of the Legislative Assembly and former GNWT public servants at or above the director level.

Since the question was asked, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment has released the Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 Report for the Year Ending March 31, 2009. This report, together with the contracts report for the year ending March 31, 2008, will provide specific information on the contracts Mr. Bromley asked about; however, I would draw the Members' particular attention to the following sole-source contracts with former Ministers or former senior managers of either the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> Assemblies:

- A contract with Stephen Iveson, a former director with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, concerning the Dehcho Process negotiations and Acho Dene Koe First Nation negotiations, awarded in 2008-09.
- A contract with Terry Pierce, a former director with the Financial Management Board Secretariat (FMBS), for a review of the Financial Administration Act, awarded in 2008-09.
- A contract with Greg Robertson, a former director with FMBS, for consulting services, awarded in 2008-09.
- A contract with BDK Applied Management Services for consultation and communication services, awarded in 2008-09. Former deputy minister Lynn Elkin is a principal with BDK.
- Two contracts with Cleveland Consulting, one concerning board reform and income security reform, and one concerning a review of electricity rates. Cleveland Consulting was

founded by former deputy minister Mark Cleveland. Both contracts were awarded in 2008-09.

- Two contracts awarded to NWT 5750 Ltd. for services related to the Deh Cho Bridge Project. Former deputy minister Lew Voytilla is a principal with NWT 5750 Ltd. Both contracts were awarded in 2008-09.
- A contract with Jim Winsor, Winsor Financial Services, for consultation service. Mr. Winsor was a former director with the Department of Transportation (DOT), awarded in 2007-08.
- A contract with Allen and Allen to undertake consultations with aboriginal groups regarding land claims and impact benefit agreements. Leslie Allen, a former director with Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), is a principal with Allen and Allen, awarded in 2008-09.
- A contract with Peter Bannon, a former director with the Department of Executive, for analysis and advice related to devolution and resource revenue sharing, awarded in 2007-08.
- Two contracts with Langford Consulting, one for facilitating a workshop related to the development of a social policy framework, and one for developing wilderness activities guidelines. Mr. Langford is a former director with Health and Social Services (HSS). Both contracts were awarded in 2008-09.
- A contract with Matthews Energy Consulting concerning the development of a northern energy resources communications strategy. Doug Matthews, a former director with Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), leads Matthews Energy Consulting, awarded in 2007-08.
- A contract with Northern Strategy Group for advice and assistance to the Premier's office. Former Minister Brendan Bell and former Principal Secretary Richard Bargery are both principals with the Northern Strategy Group, awarded in 2007-08.
- A contract with Al Woods, former chief executive officer at Stanton Territorial Hospital, for his services as public administrator at Stanton, awarded in 2008-09.

I would also bring to Members' attention the following contracts that have been entered into during the current year, which will be reported in the next edition of the contracts report:

- A contract between the Department of Finance (DOF) and Cleveland Consulting, in connection with the Revenue Roundtable.
- A contract between HSS and Langford Consulting concerning a review of supplementary health benefits review.
- Two contracts between Public Works and Services and TJ Consultants Ltd. for project management consultation services. Joe Auger,

a former director with PWS, is a principal with TJ Consultants.

- A contract with BDK Applied Management Services for consultation and communication services provided to DOF.
- A contract ITI awarded to Doug Matthews of Matthews Consulting for service related to electricity rates and regulations.

Though they fall outside the scope of the Contracts Over \$5,000 Report, Members might also be interested to know that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources entered in a \$3,300 contract with BDK Applied Management Services, and that ECE entered into a \$1,300 contract with former ECE director Charles Tolley.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 6-16(4):  
TOTAL COST OF ECOLE ALLAIN ST-CYR  
EXPANSION

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Ramsay on October 26, 2009, regarding the total cost of Ecole Allain St-Cyr expansion.

1. How much money has the GNWT spent on the court action as it relates to Ecole Allain St-Cyr and the expansion of that school?
  - a) Total costs incurred by the GNWT for legal fees pertaining to the Ecole Allain St-Cyr court action were in the amount of \$76,605 as at December 10, 2009.
  - b) The total budget for the Ecole Allain St-Cyr phase 1 expansion from fiscal year 2005-06 to fiscal year 2008-09 was \$4.622 million.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 7-16(4):  
BREAKDOWN OF HEALTH PROFESSIONAL  
VISITS TO TSIIGEHTCHIC

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Krutko on October 28, 2009, regarding breakdown of health professional visits to Tsiigehtchic.

From October 2008 until September 2009 there were 12 visits by doctors, totaling 120 hours in the Tsiigehtchic clinic. There were 19 one-day visits by a registered nurse (RN) of seven and a half to 10 hours each, and 14 weeks where the RN was stationed permanently in Tsiigehtchic for the freeze-up and spring thaw. There are two visits annually by a dentist, totaling 10 days. Tsiigehtchic has a resident community wellness worker, who provides mental health services.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document with the dates of the physician and RN visits.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 8-16(4):  
VACANCY OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Bob Bromley on October 29, 2009, regarding vacancy rates in public housing. Specifically, questions were asked about the vacancy of public housing units and whether they are heated or winterized.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation collects comprehensive information on public housing vacancies at the end of each calendar year. As of February 15, 2009, 146 public housing units were vacant in communities across the Northwest Territories. Of these units, 84 were vacant due to repairs, leaving 62 units available to be rented, or approximately 3 percent of the public housing stock. The number of vacant units fluctuates for a number of reasons and may include:

- no suitable households on a waiting list;
- units undergoing renovations; and
- units determined to be beyond economic repair and scheduled for replacement.

I will table a listing of vacancies as of February 15, 2009, at the appropriate time. Updated numbers for 2010 will be available before the end of this session.

Many vacant units remain heated; specifically, units within multi-unit configured buildings and where renovation work might require heat. Any vacant, single detached unit or a unit not undergoing renovations would be winterized and unheated.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 9-16(4):  
RENEWABLE ENERGY AND COST OF LIVING  
INITIATIVES IN THE SAHTU REGION

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Norman Yakeleya on November 2, 2009, regarding renewable energy and the cost of living in the Sahtu region.

1. Can the Minister provide to me in detail what renewable energy initiatives are planned for the Sahtu region in the next two years?

Communities in the Sahtu region are at this time completing their community energy plans. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is promoting renewable energy initiatives that support those community plans. Initiatives within the Sahtu region include wiser use of firewood and other sources of biomass energy, wind power, solar heating, and solar power as well as hydroelectricity.

Over the next two years there is considerable potential for Sahtu communities to increase their use of renewable energy. The GNWT will continue to provide support for initiatives that have been identified by communities as something that they would want to pursue.

2. Will the Minister provide to me a comprehensive alternate energy plan that will reduce the cost of living in the Sahtu in the next two years?

Energy planning in the Sahtu is supported through the community energy planning initiatives underway in all Sahtu communities.

A comprehensive regional alternative energy plan will need to build upon these community plans and will require working closely with all the affected communities to ensure that their interests and values are respected and considered.

ENR has programs that can support alternative energy projects identified by communities. While these projects can provide long-term benefits, often the best opportunities for residents, businesses and community organizations to reduce their energy costs are through energy efficiency. ENR also has programs to support energy efficiency initiatives.

3. Will the Minister of ITI outline how the department will work with the Arctic Energy Alliance to reduce the cost of living in the Sahtu; for example, training residents of the Sahtu to be certified energy advisors?

The Arctic Energy Alliance works very hard to ensure that their programs are available in all communities of the NWT, including Sahtu communities. Information about when they are travelling to communities is regularly posted on their website and in community newspapers.

The next scheduled training course for certified energy advisors will be offered by the alliance from November 23 to 27. If there are enough Sahtu residents interested in taking this training, we could work with the alliance to schedule a training opportunity in one of the Sahtu communities.

4. Can the Minister provide to me a final report on the upcoming Hydro Symposium report and an action plan to their recommendation?

Work is currently underway in organizing the Sahtu Hydro Symposium, which is tentatively scheduled to be held sometime in January 2010 in Deline. As I understand, you will be invited to this symposium and you will be able to provide valuable input into the future vision of hydro in the Sahtu.

At this time a Sahtu hydro assessment will be conducted in the region that will be guided by community input. Provision will be made to include examination of all viable hydro energy options for communities and potential industrial customers in the region. Once a report has been compiled and completed, I would be pleased to provide you with a copy.

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 10-16(4): INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE SAHTU REGION

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, regarding infrastructure in the Sahtu region.

1. Can the Minister provide me the status of the proposed Bear River bridge?

The proposed Bear River bridge is currently on hold while the department seeks funding for the bridge. The bridge is beyond the means of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government does not currently have a funding program for the bridge.

2. Can the Minister provide me with the GNWT options that can be examined to financially back step the construction of the Bear River bridge?

The department is continuously examining federal funding programs that could provide the financial support for the construction of the Bear River bridge; however, there are not any current programs for which the bridge would be eligible.

3. Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the cost of construction on the Bear River bridge?

The Department of Transportation has already completed the design and engineering work for this bridge at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million. A proposed timeline and estimate of costs for the outstanding work required, including site preparation, earthworks, and the actual bridge construction are detailed below.

Proposed scope of work for future year 1 (\$5 million)

- engineering services
- produce aggregates
- site preparation
- start earthworks

Proposed scope of work for future year 2 (\$30 million)

- engineering services
- fabricate bridge components
- piling and pier construction
- continue with earthworks

Proposed scope of work for future year 3 (\$25 million)

- engineering services
- install girders and precast concrete deck panels
- complete earthworks.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 11-16(4):  
INCOME SUPPORT SERVICES  
IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Krutko on November 5, 2009, regarding income security services in Tsiigehtchic.

1. In the calendar year 2009, how often have income support workers travelled to Tsiigehtchic to provide income support services?

A client services officer (CSO) travels to Tsiigehtchic one day each month to conduct face-to-face appointments with income security clients, specifically on income assistance and the Public Housing Rental Subsidy (PHRS). This service is delivered out of the local housing association office and usually takes place within the first 10 days of each month. Since April 2009 the service is delivered by the Fort McPherson-based CSO. In 2009 there were two months in which the CSO travelled to Tsiigehtchic twice: on April 7<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> to provide services for April and May, and on July 6<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> to provide services for July and August. Ferry/ice crossing closures impact service delivery for approximately four to six weeks twice a year. For instance, in November 2009 services had to be provided via telephone and fax due to road closures.

2. How many clients did they see on these visits?

On each visit to Tsiigehtchic, the CSO assesses an average of three to four income assistance clients, and an average of 10 PHRS clients.

3. How much time, in hours, did they spend in the community on each visit?

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has a transportation agreement with Medical Services out of Fort McPherson. The CSO travels from Fort McPherson to Tsiigehtchic on the Medical Services bus and arrives in the community between 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. -- after the first ferry in the summer -- and leaves the community between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to catch the Medical Services bus on its return trip to Fort McPherson. On each visit the CSO thus spends an average of four to five hours in the community. It is important to note that Tsiigehtchic does not have any available overnight accommodation.

Approximately one week prior to the CSO's visit to the community a public bulletin is posted in the band office in Tsiigehtchic. The local housing organization also puts a public announcement on the local radio station informing residents of the date and time of the CSO's visit to the community. As visits usually occur during the first 10 days of the month, clients are aware of the schedule and services. Clients are not required to make

appointments, as the CSO has an open door policy when she travels to the community.

If a client is not able to see the CSO during the one-day visit, they can contact the Fort McPherson CSO by telephone at any time during the month. The CSO accepts collect telephone calls pertaining to income security programs from Tsiigehtchic residents. Thus, there is no need to wait until the following month to access services. On average, the CSO receives two to three collect calls per month from clients whom she met with during her visits to the community. These calls are primarily follow-up queries with respect to income assistance assessments.

Recently, the regional manager, income security programs, accompanied the Fort McPherson CSO on a monthly visit to Tsiigehtchic. At that time, the regional manager observed that current services appeared to be meeting the needs of the clients.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 12-16(4):  
GNWT SCIENCE AGENDA

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on November 5, 2009, regarding the Government of the Northwest Territories Science Agenda.

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes the importance of traditional knowledge and the role that traditional knowledge holders play in supplying a critical source of information. The Science Agenda recognizes the importance of knowledge acquired from research, baseline studies, effects monitoring, traditional knowledge studies and community-based monitoring in a range of fields, including social sciences, physical and natural sciences, archaeology, engineering and health sciences. Environment and Natural Resources is currently leading a Traditional Knowledge Policy Implementation Initiative.

The purpose of the Science Agenda is to promote the Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment to science and the importance of science in policy, program and service development. One of the keys to successful implementation of the agenda is to work with Northwest Territories community groups, and aboriginal governments and organizations to develop a comprehensive Northwest Territories policy using this Science Agenda as a starting point. It is intended that this approach ensure that northern aboriginal peoples are not only participants in the research but also play a key role in identifying what research needs to be conducted and how and when traditional knowledge is accessed and used in the research.

There are numerous organizations involved in and committed to conducting research in the Northwest Territories. Detailed information on projects that are

currently being conducted is available through the research licences administered by GNWT departments. Typically, over 200 licences or permits are issued annually to researchers from both within and external to the Northwest Territories. The system does not, however, provide detailed information on planned or proposed research projects. Details on past research are compiled in the Arctic Science and Technology Information System (ASTIS) database at the Arctic Institute of North America at the University of Calgary.

Even with new Government of the Northwest Territories investments in science, external sources will remain the largest contributors to science activities in the Northwest Territories. The major funding sources for research include federal departments, including the Geological Survey of Canada, Environment Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Health Canada; the three Canadian research councils, which include the National Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, and Canadian Institutes of Health Research; and universities. Industry also conducts research related to the ecological and social/economic impacts of their proposed development activities. Large multi-year programs such as International Polar Year have resulted in expanded short-term funding and in funding flowing from sources outside of Canada.

Through Government of the Northwest Territories investments in implementing the Science Agenda, we will be better able to direct these funding sources towards research that will address Northwest Territories science priorities and will enable the Government of the Northwest Territories to partner in the research.

The science activities of the Government of the Northwest Territories are not currently identified by research project, but rather are identified and funded by activity; for example, wildlife management or mineral resource assessments.

Through implementation of the Science Agenda, the Government of the Northwest Territories will have a clearer picture of the research projects being planned or conducted, ensure these projects are addressing Government of the Northwest Territories' science priorities and ensure there is appropriate coordination between projects.

**RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 13-16(4):  
SAHTU STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
LEVELS**

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on November 5, 2009, regarding Sahtu students' academic achievement levels.

1. What are the true academic levels of students graduating from Sahtu schools?

High school programs are relatively new to Sahtu schools. Prior to 1994 any Sahtu student wishing to complete high school had to leave home to do so. High school programs were introduced to the Sahtu in 1995 and now every Sahtu student is able to complete high school in their home community. Over 100 Sahtu students have received their Northwest Territories High School Diploma in the past six years.

A high school diploma represents a basic standard of achievement. However, as in any jurisdiction in Canada, due to the range of courses that a student may take during high school and the range of effort that they may put in, graduates will exhibit a range of skills and knowledge. In the NWT a high school diploma is awarded to students who complete 100 course credits, including required courses. A credit is achieved through mastering specific curricular objectives associated with a part of a course that can be taught through roughly 25 hours of instruction. Most high school courses are organized around objectives worth three or five credits. Graduates must complete 15 credits in English, 10 credits in mathematics, 10 credits in social studies and 10 credits in science.

Within these requires, a student has choices around courses taken. Students can opt for courses that lay a foundation for further learning at university/college at a higher academic level, or for courses that prepare the learner for trades or arts apprenticeships, or courses that give the learner a basic level of skills to move directly into the workforce after high school.

2. What is being done to monitor Sahtu students' levels of academic achievement, particularly in grades 9 through 12, so that there are no unfortunate surprises when a high school graduate attempts to access postsecondary education?

Monitoring of student achievement, often referred to as student assessment, is a key responsibility of teachers under Section 45(1)(c) of the Education Act. For each course taught, a curriculum document identifies what a student is expected to learn; the curriculum outcomes. The teacher is expected to use a variety of strategies including observation, tests, assignments, checklists, student conferences and more, to identify what has been learned. As part of the process, the teacher is expected to keep accurate records and samples of a student's work showing the student's progress. An important piece of the final assessment for grade 12 students is the Alberta diploma exam. These exams are required for grade 12 core courses. They represent a standard assessment as the same test is written by all Alberta and NWT students. The test result

makes up 50 percent of the final mark for the course.

The reporting of achievement is also a teacher's responsibility. The Sahtu Divisional Education Council requires teachers to have three formal report sessions every school year, where report cards are prepared and parents are invited to come in to the school with their child to discuss the child's achievement. Teachers are also expected to regularly discuss assessment and provide comments to students about their progress. Teachers and school principals also inform parents that they should find time to discuss their child's progress throughout the school year, as questions or concerns arise.

Responsibility for ensuring that there are no surprises at the end of a high school program is shared. The school and teaching staff have a responsibility to provide information and to support and encourage students in taking courses that will help them reach their goals. Parents and students also have a responsibility to keep themselves informed about what is required to be a successful high school student. In this way, students and their parents can ensure they are able to make correct decisions in planning a specific career path.

3. What is being done to communicate students' levels of academic achievement to students, parents, teachers and the Sahtu Board of Education?

All schools in the Sahtu provide career and program planning as a course in grade 9. The main objective of the course is to inform students and parents about career possibilities and the learning path or course requirements to reach career goals. These courses provide an opportunity to fully explain high school options to students.

Each year courses involve at least one parent/student/teacher session where aspirations and possible career paths are discussed. Sahtu schools also provide other opportunities for students and parents to learn about high school programs and possible careers. Most schools schedule a career fair as part of their yearly calendar of events. Schools are also visited by departmental career development officers, and required senior high courses such as Career and Life Management are designed to give students skills to plan for their future.

Despite these efforts, it is possible for a student to complete high school and then realize that he or she does not have either the required courses, or the marks required, to get into a specific training program or postsecondary institution. In such cases, the student may choose to go back to high school to upgrade. The need for some students to return to high school to upgrade occurs in all Canadian jurisdictions.

The department recognizes student upgrading as an important issue, especially in smaller communities where high school programs are relatively new and where it is often a challenge to offer the range of high school courses that students need or desire. The department is working with regional and community education bodies to better inform students and parents about the need to plan a high school program as well as the importance of regular attendance and the persistent learning effort required to achieve students' goals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Colleagues, before I go on I'd like to draw your attention to the visitor's gallery and the presence of former Member Mr. Leon Lafferty, who is in the gallery.

Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

#### BILL 2:

#### FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2009-2010

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010, and the committee wishes to report that Bill 2 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

#### BILL 4:

#### AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

#### BILL 7:

#### AN ACT TO AMEND THE SUMMARY CONVICTIONS ACT

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has completed the review of Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, and Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act, and wishes to report that Bills 4 and 7 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.



### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 56-16(4):  
BREAKDOWN OF HEALTH PROFESSIONAL  
VISITS TO TSIIGHTCHIC 2008-2009

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 7-16(4), I wish to table the following document titled Breakdown of Health Professional Visits to Tsiightchic 2008-2009. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 57-16(4):  
NWT HOUSING CORPORATION –  
PUBLIC HOUSING VACANCY STATUS

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 8-16(4), I wish to table the following document titled NWT Housing Corporation Public Housing Vacancy Status. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 58-16(4):  
NWT LAW FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2009

TABLED DOCUMENT 59-16(4):  
AURORA COLLEGE 2008-2009  
ANNUAL REPORT

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the following documents. I wish to table the following document titled NWT Law Foundation Annual Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

Also, Mr. Speaker, a document entitled Aurora College 2008-2009 Annual Report. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 60-16(4):  
PENSION ADMINISTRATION REPORT –  
RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT  
AND SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING  
ALLOWANCES ACT  
MARCH 31, 2009

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. In accordance with Section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act and Section 1.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I hereby table the Pension Administration Report - Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act at March 31, 2009.

Mr. Clerk.

TABLED DOCUMENT 61-16(4):  
RESPONSE TO PETITION 1-16(4):  
PRIVATIZATION OR MERGER OF THE  
NWT POWER CORPORATION

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a response to a petition provided to the Hon. Floyd Roland, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Glen Abernethy on October 27, 2009. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte):** Orders of the day for Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
6. Returns to Oral Questions
7. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Opening Address
13. Replies to the Budget Address (Day 1 of 7)
14. Petitions
15. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
16. Tabling of Documents
17. Notices of Motion
18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
19. Motions
20. First Reading of Bills
21. Second Reading of Bills
22. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
23. Report of Committee of the Whole
24. Third Reading of Bills

25. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.  
Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until  
Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:39 p.m.