



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

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

## **HANSARD**

**Friday, January 29, 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>3807</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3807</b>
45-16(4) – NWT Activities at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games (Roland).....	3807
46-16(4) – National Family Literacy Day (Lafferty) .....	3808
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3808</b>
Joint Review Panel Report Recommendations (Bromley) .....	3808
Canada's Northern House (Ramsay) .....	3809
Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program (Hawkins) .....	3810
Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program (Groenewegen) .....	3810
Income Support Program (Beaulieu) .....	3811
Assessment Process for Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program (Jacobson) .....	3811
Program Review Office (Bisaro) .....	3812
Caribou Conservation Measures (Yakeleya) .....	3812
Condolences to the Family of the Late Julie Punch (Menicoche) .....	3813
Penny Drive in Behchoko to Help Haiti (Lafferty).....	3813
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>3813</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>3814, 3823</b>
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS</b> .....	<b>3830</b>
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE</b> .....	<b>3835</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b> .....	<b>3835</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, January 29, 2010****Members Present**

Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, 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 10:05 a.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. David Krutko):** Good day. Welcome to the House. At this time I would like to recognize a former Speaker of the House and also Premier, Minister, Mr. Richard Nerysoo. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier, Mr. Roland.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 45-16(4):  
NWT ACTIVITIES AT THE  
2010 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks from today the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games will begin and Canada will be front and centre on the world stage. Shortly after that, Vancouver will play host to the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. More than 80 countries will be participating in these games and they will attract over 10,000 journalists and three billion television viewers from around the world. With so many visitors coming to Vancouver and so much attention focussed on Canada, the 2010 Olympic Winter Games represent an ideal opportunity to let the world know about the tremendous potential that exists in the Northwest Territories. An opportunity like this doesn't happen very often. Mr. Speaker, it has been 22 years since Canada last hosted the games and it makes it all the more important that the NWT is represented in Vancouver.

Our priorities as a Legislative Assembly include promoting a strong and diversified economy and increasing awareness of our unique northern identity. NWT residents know that our Territory is rich in resources and economic opportunity. We know that the NWT has some of the finest tourist attractions in the world. We also know that our Territory is home to a diverse mixture of cultures and many talented artists and performers. Our plan is to make sure that the rest of the world knows about it too, and we are taking full advantage of the profile created by the games to promote the NWT as a place to live, visit and invest.

Members may have already heard some of the activities the Government of the Northwest Territories is undertaking to promote the NWT and showcase our art and culture at the Olympic Games. We have already begun a northern marketing campaign in partnership with the governments of the Yukon and Nunavut to attract attention to Canada's North. Members will also probably be aware of Canada's Northern House, another joint initiative of the governments of the NWT, Nunavut and with participation of the Government of Yukon. By working together, the GNWT has been able to leverage its investment in promoting the NWT and will be able to extend the reach of our marketing campaign beyond what each territory could have done on their own.

The Government of the Northwest Territories will also be actively promoting our northern art and culture at the games. We have assembled delegations of traditional and contemporary performers and artists who will be travelling to Vancouver to showcase northern talent. A team of Dene and Inuit games athletes will be on hand to show off our traditional games and activities to southern and international audiences.

From the beginning, the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee, VANOC, has worked hard to make these Canada's games. Part of that effort has been a commitment to showcase each province and territory. NWT Day on February 19<sup>th</sup> will be the highlight of the GNWT's effort to promote the NWT at the games. On that night, performers will take the stage at the B.C. Place stadium to deliver a performance that will showcase the best of NWT culture, including traditional drumming, dancing and fiddling as well as contemporary performances.

We are also taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the games to promote leadership development of our youth of the NWT. We have selected a group of 34 youth ambassadors from across the NWT who will be in Vancouver promoting the NWT to visitors and media as they work at Northern House and venues around the city. Similar programs the GNWT has offered in the past have shown that an experience like this can have a major influence on the lives of our youth and help them develop important leadership skills.

Taking advantage of the high profile of the winter Olympic Games to encourage our children and youth to lead healthy, active lives is another part of our Olympic effort. We are doing this through our Right to Dream Program, which is being delivered on our behalf by the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the NWT. Through the Right to Dream, Olympic-related activities and events held in communities across the NWT will help teach our youth about the benefits of participation in sport.

Mr. Speaker, these are the highlights of some of the activities the Government of the Northwest Territories has undertaken as part of our involvement in the 2010 Winter Games. The departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Municipal and Community Affairs, Education, Culture and Employment and Executive have been working together for more than a year to make sure that we are prepared to take full advantage of the opportunities the games present to us. Over the next few weeks, I'm sure you'll hear more about our plans and activities from the individual Ministers as they highlight the activities of their own departments. We are confident that our efforts will help create investment and economic development in the NWT, encourage tourism and open up new markets for our artists and performers.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Members may have heard yesterday that Hay River athlete Brendan Green was named to Canada's Olympic Biathlon Team.

---Applause

Brendan continues a tradition of representing the NWT that began in the 1972 Olympics in Sapporo, Japan. He is one of several talented NWT athletes poised to make their mark on the international scene. We should be proud of all our NWT athletes and I would like to invite Members to join me in wishing Brendan the best of luck on behalf of all the people in the Northwest Territories as he competes during the Olympics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 46-16(4):  
NATIONAL FAMILY LITERACY DAY

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Literacy skills are the foundation of a happy and successful life. On Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, families from across the Northwest Territories celebrated Family Literacy Day.

Throughout the Territory, there are many people who are dedicated to helping others in all areas of literacy from numeracy to computer skills. I want to thank the NWT Literacy Council and all the literacy coordinators, aboriginal language instructors, teachers, mentors across the Territory for their commitment. These people make every day a

literacy day and I encourage all Northerners to follow their example.

Mr. Speaker, literacy is an essential life skill. People who can read and write are better prepared to live fulfilled lives and contribute to society as a whole. Literacy opens all kinds of doors for a range of opportunities in all aspects of life and connects people with each other. Whatever makes up your family, Family Literacy Day is a perfect opportunity to lead by example and engage the people closest to you in a great activity. You are spending quality time with loves ones and bettering yourself in the process.

Mr. Speaker, one of the best things about literacy is that people do not only have to go to textbooks to improve their skills. There are many simple things everybody can do each day. A parent can read to their kids a bedtime story, which helps both parents and kids improve their skills and develop a love for reading. Sharing traditional stories is another good activity, which not only supports good literacy but also helps us to connect to our culture and heritage. If you are looking for something to do on a weekend, consider taking a trip to the library where books are free if you have a library card.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everybody who participated in National Family Literacy Day activities. We are lucky. There are so many people committed to improving literacy in our Territory and I encourage all Northerners to make family literacy a priority every day. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Bromley.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I will offer general remarks outlining the approach I will take to our debate on the report of the Joint Review Panel. First I want to thank and congratulate the members of the panel for their thorough and dedicated work and thoughtful reflection of the mass of information and views presented.

Mr. Speaker, this huge report and its 176 recommendations reflect the many economic, social, cultural and environmental elements of this massive project. But for all its complexities, the result can really be summarized very simply. The report recommendations are summed up with a straightforward statement that if the project is to proceed on a basis of sustainable development, all of the 176 recommendations must be carried out. Put another way, Mr. Speaker, the panel has said

that unless all the recommendations are met, the project shouldn't be done.

We are now at the point where governments and interveners are reviewing those recommendations and will offer individual views on their merits to the National Energy Board. The regulatory approach of a Joint Review Panel is unique and, at this point in the process, prompts a very major concern for me. Interveners must make their final comments and make them before the major comments of governments are known. Furthermore, the process does not now require that the comments of governments be made public before they are forwarded to the NEB.

In order for the process to proceed in a transparent and public manner, the comments of governments must be made public as soon as they are ready so that all interested people will have an opportunity to comment on the positions of government.

My other major concern is costs. Of the 176 recommendations, 52 involved huge responsibility to fall upon this government. In order to comment on the recommendations, the huge costs of meeting these recommendations must be known. The cost of meeting these responsibilities will be huge and it is certain that this government will not be able to carry out recommendations without major new resources. This puts the issues of increased resource revenues, increased territorial government revenues and a very large increase in territorial government capacity at the forefront. Without the money and capacity, we will never be able to do the work involved. It is essential that our Minister now begin getting confirmed commitments from the federal government for the revenues needed to meet these responsibilities.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. BROMLEY:** As the panel said, if you can't do it all, don't do it. Without the money, we can't do it. I am calling on the government to ensure that if this project is to go ahead, we are able to meet the key recommendations and we must meet all of the responsibilities and get the revenue deal we need to do it. As I have said, we must carry out on the process in an open and transparent manner to involve our public and share in their ideas. I will be asking the Minister of ENR questions as the lead agency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANADA'S NORTHERN HOUSE

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off by thanking Premier Roland and Minister Bob McLeod in particular for all their work on

Canada's Northern House and the work that they have put into that. I had an opportunity to attend the grand opening of Canada's Northern House on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. I would like to advise my colleagues here in the House how impressed I was with this effort. It certainly goes to show how working with our neighbours in the Yukon and Nunavut can lead to many great things. Certainly if medals were handed out for entertainment that day, our own Ms. Leela Gilday certainly would have won the gold medal for her great performance.

Canada's Northern House is located at 602 West Hastings, a prime location in downtown Vancouver. It houses an interactive northern experience that people can come and enjoy. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to steal all of the Minister's of ITI thunder, but the NWT team that is involved in this project should be commended. I was very impressed by the work done by Lynn Feasey from Yellowknife, who is the creative director, curator and gallery retail manager. Whether it is arts and crafts, information about our tourism products, oil, gas or diamonds, or the ability to look at an on-line job bank to find work in the NWT, Canada's Northern House is, quite frankly, spectacular.

One of the other highlights in Canada's Northern House is the interactive video where people can send video postcards of themselves to family and friends from around the world. This was extremely popular with the visitors that I saw when I was there. I believe Canada's Northern House will really attract thousands of tourists, media and athletes that are going to be in Vancouver for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to thank the team working, greeting and educating visitors to Canada's Northern House. I'd like to thank Michelle Smith who is handling the day-to-day operations at Canada's Northern House on behalf of the three territories, and the staff from the NWT who are helping out: Judy Nadon, Abbey Boyd, Marty Brown, Brenda Dragon, Jackie Challis, as well as Joanna Thiemmesen, who worked with Lynn Feasey on the exhibits and their content. Mr. Speaker, if I missed anybody, I'd like to apologize.

Mr. Speaker, It was great to hear the news that officially our own Brendan Green from...

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Once again, I just wanted to say how great it was to hear the news that our own Brendan Green from Hay River was selected to the Olympic team yesterday. Again, I just wanted to share how impressive Canada's Northern House is, and I urge any Member, member of the public or anybody that happens to be in Vancouver, to check out Canada's Northern House, or check it out on

the Facebook page, Twitter or the website at Canadasnorth.ca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today probably as the only voice for common sense to express my concern and opposition for the administration of the public housing where they're going to switch it back from income support to the LHOs.

As we all know, there are challenges with any program, and when the government decided to switch the program over, the administration from Housing to ECE, it caused quite an uproar. Mr. Speaker, it also cost in the range of \$1.5 million at that date to undertake that project. Mr. Speaker, now the government has announced, on page 14 of the budget address, that it will now be switching that back.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Amen.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I can only imagine what that will now cost.

---Applause

As you can see, the confusion continues. Mr. Speaker, we don't have an endless pot of money, and I still think that the program initiative had foresight for the future as to what should really be going on. Mr. Speaker, ultimately our government should be supporting self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and having people go to one centre, a service centre of excellence to help people move forward on the initiatives that they need to get on their own feet was the best idea possible. It's unusual for government to come up with a clear and simple idea that makes sense, and now they're reversing it. That's probably what happens here.

Mr. Speaker, communication, implementation and policy and programs became a confusing factor during this process, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you that happens in any program delivery of our system. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you about how much biasness I had heard at the start when people said that if they go to income support they're getting welfare, but if they go to housing programs, it's just assistance.

Mr. Speaker, a social subsidy program is simply a social subsidy program. It's the label people chose to put on it, so there was a negative stigma at the very start. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the pain that it probably caused a lot of people by filling out one extra form and stopping in the program office to get their help but, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't confusing. A one-stop-shop centre was the right way to go.

Mr. Speaker, as you can tell from the enthusiasm on this side of the House, that I'm the one voice in this regard, but, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a step backward and it's going to cost this government more money wasted by switching it back. It had the right vision and the right direction at the time when they did this back in the last government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I wasn't ready to make a Member's statement before until I heard Mr. Hawkins Member's statement. Now I'm ready to make a Member's statement.

---Laughter

I'm sure he was deafened by the sound of his own applause there, but...

---Laughter

...Mr. Speaker, he was the only one applauding, because I would like to thank the government for responding to the many requests...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oooh!

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** ...that were put forth by the Members on this side of the House in response to our constituents who told us of their concerns and their problems when this new practice came into place of having ECE manage the housing subsidy. There were problems. They were logistical problems, in some instances, where ECE and the housing authorities were not co-located and information needed to pass back and forth. We caused some great stress to seniors who were living in subsidized accommodation who, all of a sudden, got letters saying what the economic rent was going to be for their unit and they didn't understand that they would continue to receive the subsidy. But I think we did the right thing as announced in the budget yesterday by Minister Miltenberger. I applaud the government for that, but we did do the wrong thing in transferring it over and I hope that any of the harm that was caused can be now reversed and mitigated by this decision to go back to the way that things were being done. I think that the LHOs did an excellent job of managing the housing subsidy.

When you have small northern communities where there is no market, people don't have a choice to just go down the street like they would in Yellowknife or Hay River or Fort Smith and rent a place on the private market; it is not available. So, therefore, people are compelled to rent government units and their rent is assessed based on their income, and that is a very useful role that this government plays in those communities where we



still do not have a private housing market. So to take all of those people who had no choice but to rent from the government and put them all, essentially, on income support and have their housing subsidy, which has been a traditional way of finding accommodation for them, putting them in that situation I think was not, I don't want to overplay it, but I do not think it was a good way to approach things.

The realities in the North are different. The housing authorities, the NWT Housing Corporation did a very good job of managing that money. I know that Minister Dent at the time went off to some conference and thought this was a great idea to harmonize subsidies. However, it was not -- sorry, Mr. Dent, still talking about you -- but, anyway, congratulations to the government, a good move. Thank you.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oooh!

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member from Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAM

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the House the Minister of Finance announced a transfer of public housing back to the NWT Housing Corporation and ultimately back to the local housing organizations. I feel this was an excellent move. However, Mr. Speaker, the Income Support Program being administered by ECE still has its challenges.

In one of the two communities I represent, we do not have a community services officer. This makes it difficult for people to get assistance in a timely manner, but timely response is not the only issue, Mr. Speaker. The program is a computer program that has no creativity, no feeling and it's being delivered in communities where employment rates are about 40 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about how clients were assessed, are assessed and how decisions are made with respect to their situation. At one time, many of these decisions were made by social workers and in many of these communities these social workers were well known, well liked and they knew the people and the community knew them and in many cases they knew the circumstances behind why the individual or the family was coming for assistance. The system seemed to work well.

Then things changed. The Income Support Program went through a number of changes. Today the program starts off with a six-page application form and we have a program that many of our constituents in smaller isolated communities, the community service officer only comes in once a month or so and the program is very computer-

based and decisions on people's lives are beside it on the computer screen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member from Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently I've spoken with constituents of mine who are paying over \$1,000 a month per bedroom in their respective communities. Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable. I cannot imagine a family of four, how can they afford a housing unit like that or having to provide healthy foods for their family; another contentious issue on how the NWT Housing Corporation and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment calculate the tenant's income when determining rent.

Even though the settlement allowance and northern living allowance may seem the same, Mr. Speaker, they are not. They are very different. Northern living allowance is exempt on the Public Housing Rental Subsidy from ECE. According to my constituents, Public Housing Rental Subsidy, some people in the same housing unit are assessed differently. In fact, there have even been assessments made on the same person, Mr. Speaker.

Settlement allowances are provided by community governments and northern allowances provided by territorial and federal governments. Constituents are getting penalized for who they work for, Mr. Speaker. Constituents who work for the hamlets should be equal to those that work for the GNWT.

When you work in small communities, there are many challenges such as little or no room for advancement. This is unfair and is another unnecessary challenge to people who are committed to their jobs, but aren't even given equal rights as employees.

As I expressed in previous sessions, I have been receiving a lot of comments in the Nunakput communities regarding this issue. Many people in small, isolated communities live in NWT housing units because there's no other option.

Mr. Speaker, although northern allowances and settlement allowances are non-assessable income, evaluation is a complicated formula. There is an enormous inconsistency in these policies in how the staff in regions are expected to use them.

All tenants under the Public Housing Rental Policy, regardless of employment or circumstances, should be treated with consistency, unless for reasonable circumstances such as our elders.

Northern allowance and settlement allowance is given to people in small, remote communities all over this great Territory.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Northern allowance and settlement allowance is given to people in small, remote communities all over this great Territory because of the high cost of living. Even with those allowances, people in my riding are paying 80 percent more for basic necessities than people living in the major centres.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister in question period. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we've heard the Minister's 2010 budget address and the main estimates have been tabled in the House. As I listened yesterday, I was struck by a particular statement in the Finance Minister's address. He said that we'll have to return to, "a sustainable path," and, "maintain a tight rein on spending in the fiscal year following this new budget."

I support our current level of spending and I support the same level of spending for the 2010-11 year as it's laid out in the budget. But I recognize, as does the Minister, that we will have to reduce or cut back our spending in the fiscal year 2011-12.

It might be a bit premature, but I am already concerned about two things in regards to that 2011-12 budget. First of all, how will we reduce our expenditures and, secondly, what will we do in anticipation of shrinking revenues? The Minister stated yesterday that expenditures will be capped at a 3 percent growth for 2011-12. It's likely to be a difficult target considering that this proposed budget for 2010-11 is 7.5 percent bigger than the current budget year we are in now.

But there is a knight in shining armour, so to speak, to solve our expenditure dilemma. Two years ago, we established, under the Department of Executive, a new entity called the program review office. It exists to evaluate the business of government to find efficiencies within our bureaucracy and presumably savings, but we've heard little about the workings of this office. Granted the program review office did undertake a study of GNWT office space requirements and produced a very comprehensive and useful report, but what else has the office done? Members know about a couple of projects, but are not privy to the results of those projects. It's

quite likely that the results of these projects, undertaken since the office was established, helped to shape the main estimates that we are about to debate. Members have no report to consider and have not been briefed on most of the program review office projects.

I, for one, would like to be able to review the work of this office and be able to know if any savings were realized and I think the public deserves access to these results as well. If we really mean it when we say we are a transparent, accountable government, as we so often hear, then this kind of information must be shared.

Looking ahead a year, what of the 2011-12 budget and the impending cap on our expenditures? What will the program review office be doing over the next fiscal year? Does the Minister of the Executive already know these areas that will be targeted?

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

----Unanimous consent granted.

**MS. BISARO:** Does the Minister of the Executive already know the areas that will be targeted for the 2011 budget? If so, will he let Regular Members and the public know? I say again, for the sake of transparency, this kind of information must be shared and I will have some of these questions for the Minister of the Executive at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I was thinking about the issue of the caribou and how important that issue is going to be in the coming months or days in terms of our relationship, this government's relationship with the aboriginal governments down the Mackenzie Valley. Mr. Speaker, this type of issue has been heard in court, decisions have been made across Canada. There are several cases that can be cited in terms of aboriginal rights to hunt, fish and trap; treaty rights to hunt, fish and trap. Even the Constitution of 1982 has affirmed the aboriginal rights in terms of their way of life.

Mr. Speaker, we even had a court case here about a duck, a famous duck that was shot out of season. We had another issue on hunting caribou in the corridor here in Yellowknife was heard in terms of these type of issues that have a direct impact on an aboriginal nation, people who demonstrate and practice their way of life.

Mr. Speaker, I, for one, wanted to look at this issue. I have not yet concluded my assessment, but I believe that this process here will be a legal

process. I believe that our legal beagles around the Northwest Territories and probably Canada have started doing some research as to what rights have been infringed upon, what rights have been violated. Has there been a process of consultation by this government with the affected parties in terms of this issue of banning specific hunts in specific areas in the Northwest Territories?

I believe that politics has greatly played into it, Mr. Speaker. When we heard it in the communities in terms of the interpretation of consultation and telling a nation of people that that is something they aren't able to do, that doesn't sit right with a lot of people in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that issue will have a great impact on our future relationships with aboriginal governments in terms of going forward as a nation on resource development and devolution. I believe we really need to do our work on how we protect our people, but at the same time work with them. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF  
THE LATE JULIE PUNCH

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to convey my deepest condolences to my elder and my friend, Mr. Joe Punch, who lost his wife, Mrs. Julie Punch, this week. I extend, also, my prayers and my heartfelt sympathies to the whole family for the sudden loss of their mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Her passing is also a loss to the community of Trout Lake and to the communities in my riding. Joe Punch and his late wife were married for 40 years, had 11 children, 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

On behalf of myself, and if I may, Mr. Speaker, express our deepest condolences to Mr. Joe Punch and his family on behalf of the whole of this Assembly. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PENNY DRIVE IN BEHCHOKO TO HELP HAITI

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

With the recent tragedy in Haiti, the country that is in great need of help and assistance, to start developing their country over again, a small community in the Northwest Territories has the intention to help. The community of Behchoko, under the spearhead of Michael Botermans and the

youth, came up with an idea of how to fully utilize a penny to start developing the country of Haiti over again.

The community initiated a penny drive where kids, community members, elders, leaders, and everyone picked pennies up from the ground, dug into their treasure chests, savings, and their homes. The community pitched in and gave pennies to the worthwhile cause. They saved approximately \$2,585 in pennies for Haiti relief and donated it to the Development of Peace, a Canadian non-profit organization.

A penny will certainly go a long way to put food on the table, shelter, put clothes on their backs, rebuild the country, nation, and change the world forever.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to introduce His Worship, Mayor of Tuktoyaktuk, Mr. Mervin Gruben in the gallery today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I would like to recognize His Worship, the newly elected mayor of Inuvik, Mr. Denny Rogers. Welcome to the Assembly, Denny.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** I would like to recognize two individuals in the gallery. First, the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Mr. Richard Nerysoo, as well as the president of the Northwest Territories Métis, Ms. Betty Villebrun.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I would like to recognize my wife and partner of 40-plus years, Melody McLeod.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I as well would like to take this opportunity to recognize some constituents: Mr. Ken Hudson, the president of the Métis Local in Fort Smith; hunter and carpenter, Louise Fraser, as well part of the Métis and a respected elder; and of course Betty Villebrun, President of the Northwest Territories Métis. Welcome.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'd like to welcome everyone to the House.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 205-16(4):

TRANSFER OF PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL  
SUBSIDY PROGRAM BACK TO NWTHC

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My oral questions today will be following my Member's statement: the issue with the fact that income support is now transferring back the administration of the housing to the LHO.

I appreciate my colleague from Hay River South who stood up to speak against it. She clearly announced this morning that she would, so I knew she'd let my statement go before hers. But one thing she didn't talk about is the fact that we've got 14 positions out there that were in this original transfer and the fact that it cost \$1.5 million to carry this on. So she must be in favour of the fact that these 14 positions are now in flux and we don't know, and we're going to get some clarity, hopefully, on this as well as the cost to switch it back.

My question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment would be: in this transfer of administration back to the LHO, how much will it cost and what will happen to those 14 employees that were brought on board to help with this program?

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'd just like to remind Members to keep your oral questions to a particular matter and not to a particular person. With that, the honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, it's not 14 positions that were transferred. When the transfer occurred in 2006 it was \$1.3 million, not \$1.5 million. That consisted within that of 10.75 PYs, not 14 positions. I just want to make that clear. But this is still in the planning stages. We just announced within the budget announcement that these programs would be transferred back to the Housing Corporation. Those logistics, the details of it need to be worked out still. We're in the planning stages. We will be consulting with the standing committees on a going forward basis. We need to identify the detailed information and as we speak we're going through it in a more detailed fashion.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I consider that a very small error that really tries to find holes in the facts. The facts are that it cost a lot of money to create this transfer and it did create a lot of positions to support this

transfer. That's really the moral of the story. What's going to happen with that?

To enable this transfer, some study or direction or consultant was hired and I'd like to know what that cost to do this review as well as what was the question they were considering. Was it to fix the program in its existing state or to find a way to return the program to the way it was before?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** When we first hired the consultants to do a thorough review of the program that we delivered since the transfer of the program in 2006 we just wanted to capture what we've done to date and where we can go from here, what worked, what didn't work, the causes of it. That is the review that has been undertaken. The report is finalized. The actual cost itself I will need to get back to the Member or Members on that. We're still working out the logistics of it and there is an error in the report itself. So we've gone back to the consultant to provide more detailed information in that respect.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'll agree with the Minister that there was an error in the report and that was the decision to transfer it back. I heard from LHO people that this was starting to straighten out. I heard from people on income support who were going through their housing application process that it made sense after a while. I heard from people administering the program that it was really at the end of the day an administration and communication problem was to make sure that the little boxes that got checked at income support fed on through to the folks at LHOs. Was the administration problem and communication problem addressed in this review as one of the things that they could have cleaned up and fixed to streamline the process?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** There were no problems. There were challenges that were before us. We worked with those challenges. We continued to improve the program where we met some challenges and we continued to improve in those areas. Right now we're talking about transferring. I think we're at that stage where we will be providing more information to the standing committee on a going forward basis on the detailed information. But we faced some challenges. We resolved those challenges, and we continue to improve our program. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister agree that one-stop-shopping is more efficient and more cost effective to this government, on its ambition to make people more self-reliant and independent, than two stops? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I think the importance is the service delivery, that we do provide subsidies to all Northwest Territories, whether it be one-stop, two-stop, three-stop shop. It's a core service delivery that we deliver to the communities. So whether the Member is talking about all these shops, we do have a GNWT shop that we have to provide subsidies to the Northwest Territories on core delivery. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 206-16(4):

HOUSING ISSUES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Housing. Given the constituents of mine are now paying over \$1,000 for a bedroom in the respective communities, will the government finally conduct a thorough, comprehensive evaluation of how rent is calculated in our small, remote communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we've already begun the process of reviewing the rent scale and how rents are calculated. We're hoping to have that work... It's always an ongoing process. We're reviewing the policies and the rent scales to see how we can best serve the tenants of the NWT Housing Corp. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Will the government recognize the enormous challenges of living in our small, remote communities and provide the policy and evaluate various programs and services, such as the Public Housing Rental Subsidy, accordingly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the challenge that is faced by tenants is one that's also faced by the LHOs in the cost of delivering some of the programs and the maintenance and that to the communities. As we heard yesterday, some of our responses were we recognize the fact that our money is declining from CMHC, so we're taking steps to try and address a lot of the challenges we face. So we're aware of the ongoing challenges faced by the tenants and the LHOs, and we're doing what we can to try and alleviate some of the challenges so our programs can be delivered a lot smoother and there won't be such a burden on the LHOs and the tenants. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Will the government review all policies when calculating the tenants' income with the monthly rental assessment for the NWT Housing unit, and ensure fairness and consistency regardless of who is the employer or the situation?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, reviewing of the policies is an ongoing process and

it's something that we're always very aware of, some of the changes that need to be made and situations change. So we are always looking at ways that we can improve our policies to best suit the tenants and the local housing organizations. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the government review all northern and settlement allowance implications of tenants living in small, remote communities with the high cost of living? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** That would be part of the review of the policy is to review all of what's calculated into the rent and see if there are ways that we can improve. However, we have to recognize that our LHOs have a job to do and we're trying to do what we can; a good balance for the LHOs and the tenants. But it is an ongoing process and we are reviewing the rent scale and how rent is calculated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 207-16(4):

PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spoke in my Member's statement about the program review office, which sits under the Department of the Executive. That office has been up and running for some 18 months to two years, and I know that office is doing good work. We've seen the results, some of the results. But as I stated in my Member's statement, there is a distinct lack of sharing of the activities of this office. So I'd like to ask the Minister what projects has this office undertaken since it was established approximately two years ago. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of the program review office was established in late 2008-09, to, as the Member had stated, look at the way we expend our dollars and the efficiency and the effectiveness of our programs. The work that's being done is in conjunction with the Refocusing Committee that is led by Minister Miltenberger. My understanding is he has worked on setting up a meeting with the standing committee in early February to go over the information that has been gathered in the area the Member mentioned in her Member's statement, the area of the general office space review. That's an area that Minister Miltenberger highlighted in his budget address. There are other areas that the office has begun to do work on and do an inventory of, and that's looking at some of our fastest growing areas of expenditures across government, and he'll

be prepared to come forward with that in early February as to the work that they have undertaken. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I thank the Minister for that response. Unfortunately, I am aware of the results of the office study and, as I mentioned, I felt it was very well done. It's hard for me to believe that in the last year, if it's only been a year-- it seems like it's a lot longer than that -- but in the last year to 18 months the office hasn't been able to produce some other finite project. So I'd like to ask the Minister, once a project is finished, does the office produce a report on the project that it has undertaken and completed, and who receives that report? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I heard two questions there. Mr. Premier you can answer one question or both of them.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work that the program review office has identified and will feed through our system, and our system being that of our planning and financial work that we do in preparation for budgets, our program review and development as we look at those areas. So that work will be used by us as Members of the Legislative Assembly to look at how we can, and make sure that the dollars we used are being used most efficiently. The areas, the inventory that was being done have been our health care provisions, looking at our education, adult education and training, as well as our K to 12 system has been inventoried; the work that will be presented to committee. So there's been a lot of work done. The reports, in a sense, will be provided first to the Refocusing committee, Cabinet will then review that information, it will go to standing committee and will be incorporated as we go forward in our business planning processes in the years to come. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** The Minister has mentioned the Refocusing Government committee. He also mentioned that the results of the inventory that this office is doing is going to Members. Again, I have to state that very little of that information is getting to Members. I appreciate that a review is coming, that a briefing is coming. I only learned about that this morning. So I'm having a little difficulty that in a year or more we've only had one firm report on what this office has been doing. I'd like to know from the Minister why the information is not available to Members on a regular basis and whether or not... Oh, I guess I better ask one question since you kind of cut me off the first time. But I will change my question and ask the Minister why the results of these reports cannot be made available to the public. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the process we engaged in was more inclusive for sharing information. We contacted committee at their

request to have involvement from the Regular Members on our Strategic Initiative committees, and this Refocusing Government committee did have Members involved in that process. Then subsequent to that, we were informed that they did not want to continue that process. So we have gone back to the more traditional way of doing it. Once we have got enough information to present that will help us in our decision-making process as we go forward. We would share that with standing committee. The available time for that has been set up in early February. We share that information to look at areas that we can then decide on how we go forward, what areas should we review further on and help us as we go forward in the decision making around budget cycles as we go forward. Thank you.

As well, again, our process of keeping it open, those two seats are still open for Members to be a part of. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister mentioned a couple of areas. I can't remember them both but he mentioned education. I would like to know whether or not, particularly in the area of education, whether the work of the program review office had a direct impact on the budget which we heard about yesterday. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the program review office has not had an impact on this budget that the Finance Minister introduced yesterday. The work that the program review office is doing needs to go through the regular system. That is, once Refocusing Government committee has done their work, it will come to Cabinet. It will go to members of the standing committee. We will have some dialogue on that work and pick areas where we think we can get best results and do a finer focus so to say, Mr. Speaker. The one piece of work that has had an effect has been the general office space review and that work has gone far enough along. It has been shared in this committee. The Minister highlighted that in his statement yesterday. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 208-16(4):  
CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES  
AND ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in regard to the caribou issue that is happening right now. I want to ask the Minister in his role as the Affairs Minister, has he had any type of discussion with the Minister of Indian Affairs on the situation that is happening in the Northwest Territories?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Premier.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the specific issue we are dealing with around caribou, we work with the aboriginal leadership across the Northwest Territories, depending on the specific herds and which aboriginal groups directly harvest from those herds and been involved in that. There is much to see in the discussions that have been held on some of the restrictions in place, working with co-management boards. I have not had direct discussions with Minister Strahl in this area. There are times when we will have opportunity to speak on a number of concerns. This, I am sure, will be one of those areas that we will touch base on in the possible meeting that I may have with him on his trip up here. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, in terms of the possibility of future discussions with Minister Strahl, with our aboriginal Minister in terms of the contentious issues and the future of our relationships with the aboriginal governments, would the Minister then commit to having these discussions with Minister Strahl in terms of how we deal with this possibly very volatile issue in terms of future relationships with the aboriginal governments of the North here? Would the Minister commit to reporting to the House if he is going to have some type of discussions with the Minister?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, we have these discussions as we go forward as the Government of the Northwest Territories in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. We have shown, and I can show Members, the amount of times we have gone and met with aboriginal leadership across the Northwest Territories.

On the issue of caribou, we have agreements of co-management boards with the aboriginal leadership across the Territories that have settled areas that have co-management boards in place. The one place we don't have is the area of the Akaitcho. That is an area where the Minister and the department have met with their leadership. In fact, at the last regional leaders' meeting, this issue was discussed to talk about the importance of caribou and what steps needed to be taken. Meetings were upcoming following that as well. Minister Miltenberger and the staff had consequential meetings to that in those areas. There will be a number of items to be discussed that I will have discussions with Minister Strahl on this area, because it is an issue that has arisen. We will touch base on this as well. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago there was a leadership meeting in Fort Simpson convened by the Dene Nation where all the chiefs had some discussions on this issue. From discussion I heard on the radio, it seems like we are still at an impasse in terms of this issue here with

the chief and this government in terms of the ban on caribou and there must be some form of miscommunication somewhere along the line. Would the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs see if there is a possibility of seeing if we could work with the leadership down the Mackenzie Valley in terms of how do we deal with this issue here? I think if this is not resolved in a good way, this will damage our relationship with the aboriginal community for a long, long time.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, let the record show that we have worked with the leadership up and down the valley. In fact, we have from the NWT Metis, we have from the Tlicho, we have co-management boards set up for regime and accepted some harvest allocations. This is the one area that this issue has arisen and was raised at the Dene leadership. We continue to work with the leadership on a whole number of issues. The caribou will be one of them. Ultimately, I think when you talk to all of the leadership up and down the valley, it is the fact that we want to ensure that we have caribou herds for our future generations. So it is the conservation of caribou that must be first and foremost and work towards how we achieve that. That is something that we will continue to work on as the Government of the Northwest Territories with our aboriginal partnership across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, conservation is an issue. It is being cited in the actual resource transfer agreement act but also there are treaty and aboriginal rights also, so there are two sides to a story here, Mr. Speaker. I guess I am trying to find which will prevail for the day after this issue has been heard and discussed. I want to ask the Premier, if he has the chance, will the Premier commit to reporting results of discussions with Minister Strahl immediately to the House and to the Members?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, I am always prepared to update meetings we have had with federal Ministers on a whole number of issues that we have discussions on. As I said, this will be one of the areas. There is not much time to talk about it, but it is informing him of the steps we have taken. When we talk about what we have tried to do as the Government of the Northwest Territories through the Minister of ENR, his staff, it is to, again, put the conservation of the caribou first and foremost that we have caribou for the first generation. Let's not lose sight of that. It is important we set up a process amongst the leadership across the Northwest Territories and understand that caribou don't play politics. They don't get involved in who has the final right, who wants to be known as the last person. We made debate on who had the final

authority, but what is the debate worth about who has final authority if the last caribou gets shot and we talk about what was and not what is. So we are going to continue to work together as a leadership across the Northwest Territories and come out with the best picture possible and the best solution. That is to ensure that our future generations have caribou to harvest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 209-16(4):

GNWT RESPONSE TO JOINT REVIEW PANEL  
REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are intended to try and bring as much transparency as possible to the GNWT's role in responding to the Joint Review Panel report. My first question is to the lead Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Could he describe the process that the GNWT will use to respond to the Joint Review Panel report and recommendations? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process is underway. It was underway prior to the release of the report when we were certain that it was coming. We have staff with ENR in the lead from across departments. We're working with the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline office in Hay River and we're working through committee systems with deputies to pull together the response and the work on the responses for the JRP with a goal to hitting the timelines so we can make sure there's no further delays that we can get our responses in to the National Energy Board.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I think the public certainly would appreciate more details on how the GNWT intends to proceed on this so that they can have their participation and input and at least be aware of what's going on. Does the GNWT intend to invoke the consult to modify process with the Joint Review Panel regarding the modification or rejection of any recommendations? You know, the public would like to know if that's happening. If we intend to modify, will we be using that mechanism? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We will be taking all the appropriate steps using all the appropriate mechanisms that are determined to be necessary to possibly be invoked as we look at the recommendations one by one. I have not seen the work to date. I know that the officials are at it. We know that we have some tight timelines and we know we want it to be clear, comprehensive and be able to stand scrutiny and be shown to have followed due process. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I would appreciate it if the Minister would find out whether we are intending to invoke

the consult to modify process and if we do, will the Minister commit to making such proposed changes public at the time that they may be transmitted to the Joint Review Panel so that our public can participate meaningfully in the review process? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We have committed to work with committee to brief them when we have sufficient work done and we have our communication plan that involves the release of the work going forward and we will be, at the appropriate times, making sure the public is aware of the work that we have done. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not asking about committees here; I'm asking for transparency to the public. There is the potential for this consult to modify process to be completely in confidence and thus remove the ability of the public to participate meaningfully. So I'm asking for a commitment from the Minister to ensure that if they are submitting to the Joint Review Panel in this consult to modify process, that those documents be put on the public registry with all the other documents that have had to be put on the public registry to date so that the public can be informed. Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I have seen nothing, nor am I aware currently of any plan to do any of this work, consult to modify or any other work required in secret. We know that we have to be accountable and we will definitely be keeping the issue of making sure the public are fully informed in mind as we go forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 210-16(4):  
ABORIGINAL STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT INITIATIVE

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to follow up on the CBC special report this morning about the test results that show reading and math levels are still low in the NWT communities. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education some questions on the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative that we have going. I know that it started last year. So if he could tell me just a bit about the program and what initiatives are slated for this coming year, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Member for asking that question. I think it's important to highlight that initiative that we've undertaken, the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. We were given



indication last year sometime that enrolment was down and there were challenges with identifying students, where they're at with their grades and so forth. So, Mr. Speaker, that area has been identified and we have a committee that's in place that had several meetings already and they've made recommendations to our department.

On providing additional funding to the school boards themselves to deal with the enrolment issues, we've conducted that; a laptop for the grade 12 students. So those are the areas that we've improved so far. These are just bits of it and there will be more packages that will be coming out this year and I'm looking forward to it and providing recommendations on what we can move forward on. We will certainly be dealing with the student enrolment and attendance and also their grade levels as well. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Some of the reporting from this morning spoke about low attendance in smaller communities. I have a riding with many small communities, six in fact, and it didn't say in the report, but I've got some factual information that aboriginal students are missing up to 41 days per year. I'm glad that the Minister has the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative.

What processes are currently in place to address this and what are some of the initiatives the department will be undertaking? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. The process itself is working closely with the school boards, the school board council and the district level as well, because we provide funding to the organization to provide the operation and maintenance of the school and to deal with the students. Enrolment issues are becoming an issue, but at the same time we have provided funding just in the last several months, now we're seeing some results, but it's going to take some time, but we are progressing on the enrolment issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's great news. Even though it's just a short period since September, we are seeing positive results and with that there are other initiatives that will be underway. There is a lot of discussion happening at that table, at that level, and there are representatives in all jurisdictions. The five regions are involved and we have representatives from the Member's riding as well and it's valuable to have their input into making a difference for the schools, making a difference in the students' lives, because every one of us would like to have our students succeed in school and in life. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** As I indicated, the aboriginal students in our smaller communities are missing 41 days of school per year with the equivalence up to about two years of schooling by the time they reach grade 9. I know that the Education department and our school boards consider this very seriously and I

think they coupled some of the monitoring stats, like the Alberta Achievement Test, which shows that our use of English is being impacted because they're missing a lot of that. So what kind of projects are being undertaken this fiscal year and planned for the next year, in terms of addressing this concern?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The overall plan will be in these coming months. What I've highlighted is we're currently working closely with the school boards themselves, the literacy councils in the communities. Also just dealing with the enrolment issue. The Member is right; that is one of the top priorities within our Education department. If a student misses one day a week, it adds up to almost a year by the time they reach grade 10. A year of schooling is a lot. So those are the topics of discussion that we're having with the experts around the table, the committee members. They're the ones that are the experts at the community level and we'd like to get their advice and recommendations on a going forward basis. So when the package is available I will be sitting down with the standing committee to provide or highlight the key findings. We will certainly move forward from there.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** As a Regular Member, I certainly would like to see some of the measurable results. I know there's only been one semester this year, but certainly if the Minister can commit to continuing to keep us informed of the progress. If the Minister has any information with regard to my particular riding and with the Dehcho Divisional Board and some of the progress or initiatives they have planned, if he could share that with me.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, I definitely will commit to the Member to provide the information. As we move forward, we're seeing some progress already that I will certainly share with the Members and we're starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel. We've dealt with the enrolment issue and now we're seeing progress. So we'll certainly share more as they become available.

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

QUESTION 211-16(4):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some more questions today for the Minister of Transportation. It gets back to the subject of the Deh Cho Bridge Project. Yesterday I had mentioned the fact that the project was sold to Members of the last government on the basis of a fixed-price contract. It was also sold to Members of the last government on the basis that benefits on

the return on investment to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation would accrue to the community of Fort Providence. At the 11<sup>th</sup> hour the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation didn't have the \$5 million in equity when the concession agreement was signed and in fact had to go to the contractor and another company the contractor owned, Atcon Holdings, to supplement that \$5 million in equity. Now that Atcon is out of the equation, I'm just wondering what the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation is going to do to ensure that they have the \$5 million in equity so that the benefits do accrue to the community of Fort Providence in the future.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is asking a question that should be directed to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. Our involvement and our agreement with that company requires an equity portion be invested in this project. They have so far been able to commit to a portion of it; roughly half of what the agreement was involving. They have now, as the Member has stated, no longer a partner that was covering the rest. I believe, and I would have to check with them, that they are now seeking a new partner and looking at options of how they can come up with the rest of the money, including talking to the federal government about some of the agreements they thought they had with them.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I'd like to ask the Minister who exactly the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation is responsible to and what the working relationship is between the Department of Transportation and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. How are they held accountable in their role in getting this project completed?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I'm not sure which one of the three questions he wanted me to answer in that barrage of questions he just tossed out there. The Deh Cho Corporation, of course it's accountable first and foremost, I guess, to the owners of the company, which are the Dene and Métis in the community of Fort Providence. They have an obligation to us as a government through our agreement to build and construct and design this facility that we're working on, which is the Deh Cho Bridge.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I'm just wondering if the Government of the Northwest Territories, given what's happened -- the project's been delayed for a year, the inability to raise the required equity, the troubles with the designs -- are there any plans by the Government of the Northwest Territories to re-evaluate that relationship with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** This project, without a doubt, has had its share of challenges. We have

continually worked with all the players, all the people involved in this project, and we have reviewed the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and their responsibilities. We've also reviewed and looked at the contractors and sub-contractors. We've also at the end of last season, and we'd like to do this again, sat down and brought all the people involved with a facilitator to look at what we possibly could have done better. We've had some good discussions on how we can change our relationships. The short answer to the Member's question is yes, we do it on an ongoing basis and will continue to do so.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** My fear is that this relationship and partnership that we're involved with, with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, is causing the Government of the Northwest Territories to expend funds that it normally wouldn't; i.e., our involvement in the project management now with the project. I'd like to ask the Minister what would trigger our severing of ties with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. Is it not getting a contractor in place by March 1<sup>st</sup>? What would that trigger be?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** The Member's assigning a lot of blame to the Bridge Corporation. I'm not quite as ready to do so. He's mentioned a lot of extra costs that are being borne by the government so far. I guess there's been a position and a portion of another position that's dedicated to the project and maybe some of the travel. The rest of the costs that are being incurred are being absorbed by the project and the project budget. We have and will continue to see how our partner in this P3 program is working. We have to remember it's probably the largest project we've had for this government and it's one of the first in this whole country that has been involved with a P3 type of layout, and of course we're going to encounter challenges. There is no template for us to follow. However, we still feel we're on track and we still have the target date of November 2011 to have this project done.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 212-16(4):  
SUPPORT FOR AVALON VENTURES  
THOR LAKE PROJECT

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. My questions today are really wanting an update on where this government is at in terms of supporting the activities of a very exciting mining project that has a great potential and could positively impact the South Slave. Communities like Hay River did realize some benefits from the diamond mines, but we were

really geographically kind of on the periphery of that. The Avalon rare earth minerals at Thor Lake is something that potentially has a processing or secondary processing opportunity in the South Slave. I understand that one of the challenges will be power supply. I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI what our government is doing to help our communities south of the lake and the GNWT economy realize maximum benefits from that particular mine.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has had some sessions with Avalon to discuss their project. Certainly, valued added is a priority for our government and also we want to work with them to facilitate that. So our first order of business is to determine what their requirements are.

As you know, the federal government is responsible for mining in the Northwest Territories and as such they collect royalties for all developments. So it makes it a little difficult for us to actually provide financial support. But, nevertheless, we are working very hard to identify areas that we can have value added. We're working with the new Canadian North CanNor facility that has been set up by the federal government. We will be holding, in conjunction with them, a workshop in March to determine value-added opportunities.

With regard to power, we met with the principals of Avalon in Vancouver at the Cordilleran Roundup and they advised us what their requirements are. They need six megawatts of power for operations and an additional six megawatts for heating. They have advised that they are also looking at properties in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and they are looking to see what we can offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I hope that in looking at what we can offer, we do not put too much emphasis on that federal responsibility and the royalties not accruing to the Government of the Northwest Territories, because we have the diamond mines as a very clear example of where this government went to extreme lengths -- and I applaud this, I'm not criticizing this -- with diamond secretariats and training programs through the college and a lot of financial support, loan guarantees for processing diamonds. There was a whole real spectrum of support for the diamond mines and we didn't get any royalties from that either. So now this is something that has the potential of really benefiting the South Slave region. So I would like to ask the Minister who has jurisdiction over the excess power generated at the Taltson Dam at this time and what is the amount of that. How many megawatts of power is the surplus

and who has jurisdiction over that at this time? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** They amount that Avalon is requesting, or has identified as requiring, is available through the current production at Taltson. But the way it works, the current timelines of the different projects would indicate that that power would go to the diamond mines when and if or when the Taltson Hydro expansion is completed and the transmission lines are done. We don't have a process for reserving power. So it's basically on a first-come, first-served basis. If that power is made available on an immediate basis it would be through the regulated side and it would have to go through and obtain PUB approval. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I believe that the power purchase agreements that are contemplated for the diamond mines are outside of the regulated process because it is being sold to business, it's not being distributed to consumers. The purpose of the PUB is really to protect the interests of consumers, usually considered on a broad scale. Why would the power purchase agreement framework or model that is contemplated for the diamond mines not be appropriate in the case of the purchasing power for a processing plant for Avalon Ventures at Pine Point? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The legislation that was passed in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly with regard to the NWT Hydro Act specifically excluded the transmission lines to the diamond mines. The reason for doing that was because the power purchase agreements negotiated with the diamond mines would be negotiated and, obviously, the hydro proponents would be seeking the best rate in terms of making profits. With regard to the regulated side, the whole focus is to keep the rates as low as possible. As such, the legislation provides for preferential rates to be negotiated on the regulated side. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Taltson is being expanded and I understand the potential demand of the diamond mines, if that happens. But, Mr. Speaker, we make the legislation. Sure, the act was put in place in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly, but why could there not be an exclusion made as well to supply power for this sizeable customer in the South Slave? Why couldn't the same principles of business and making a profit apply to some kind of a negotiation for power supply for Avalon Ventures?

I think it's very important that we have an opportunity before us here to keep this secondary processing industry in the Northwest Territories. I think we need to get creative. We made the rules in the first place, we made the laws. That's what we do. What can we do to accommodate a viable offer

to Avalon to try and keep this very important industry, processing aspect of this industry, in the North? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the will of the House I'm sure that anything's possible. I just wanted to point out that on the regulated side, the cost of operating the power facilities has to be recovered. I believe that what Avalon is looking for are rates that are similar to what are being provided in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In the Northwest Territories the commercial rate is 7.4 cents per kilowatt hour plus a one cent rider. That's delivery. So that number is higher than what Saskatchewan Power charges Nico, for example. But certainly if we were to make an exception for Avalon, then we would have to change our legislation to find a way so that that doesn't fall under the regulated power side. And, also, who would pay for the lower costs? I guess those are two main considerations that would have to be done if we're going to change legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 213-16(4):  
INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAM

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today in my Member's statement I spoke about the Income Support Program. I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the Income Support Program.

Mr. Speaker, the Income Support Program should be delivered with the concept of putting people to work. I'd like to ask the Minister what is in the program that encourages people to go to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have people in the regions that deal with clientele. Yes, we deal with a computer system, but that's just one piece of it. We continue to train our staff that they can have PR training into the communities, public relations. I think that's the key. We have client service officers in most of the communities. For those without client service officers, we have dedicated individuals who go to the communities to deal with clientele. So there has been constant training that's happening within our department. We will continue to provide those services, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** In the area of training, would the Minister commit to ensure that all client service officers are trained in the area of employment counselling? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** That is one area that we continue to focus on with our department.

The client service officers take various training to deal with the subsidies, the program delivery, the client face-to-face interaction, public relations. That area can certainly be part of the training package that we continue to provide our services to client service officers as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Would the Minister look at changing the unearned and earned income exemptions so that there is an incentive for individuals to go to work as opposed to what appears to be a bit of a disincentive? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We did make some changes to our program back in 2007. We did a review of our programming. We have made some drastic changes from increasing benefits to Northwest Territories. Also, just adding \$5.1 million into the program itself. Those are substantial changes. We continue to work with the unearned and earned income. We do provide various training programs as well for those individuals that would like to get off income support, a Productive Choices program, but we continue to create these programs so those individuals can work with us. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to provide that valuable information to clientele.

The Member is asking for another review. We just did a review. That might be something we may have to look at down the road. I think it is too soon. We just did one two years ago. With that, that is where we are at, Mr. Speaker. We made some drastic changes to that. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, I think the review of the Income Support Program didn't achieve desired results. I would like to ask the Minister if he could commit to reviewing the program with an emphasis on employment and using the idea of income support person going to work as a key component to the program. I was wondering if the Minister could commit to looking at that again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, that could be part of the key component of discussions that we can have on a going forward basis. I can certainly commit to consider that as part of the discussions that we could have. Like I said, we just did a review and another review could be undertaken down the road, but I can't commit today when that is going to happen. But I will take that into consideration and work with the Members on that. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 214-16(4):  
INCORPORATING COR PROGRAM INTO GNWT  
TENDERING PROCESS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the October session I asked questions regarding the COR program, the Certificate of Recognition to the Minister of Public Works about implementing it into the territorial tendering process which would help raise standards in our tendering process. We would also get better and more proficient tenders that proceed on our government projects. Mr. Speaker, at the time, I had inquired with the Minister if he would look into that process to see if we could move down that road as, for example, the Yukon has, and start with large projects and work our way down to the smaller ones until all our projects reflect in that regard. Of course, at the time I had asked the Minister to be kept up to speed and whatnot. I haven't heard any updates for quite some time. I am just curious as today stands, where is the development of the implementation of this COR recognition program in our government tendering process and does Public Works still support this initiative? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we did commit to providing correspondence to the Member. I apologize if that hasn't happened. My information tells me that we have had some discussions on jurisdictions. We have had some discussion with some of the NGOs. We have to commit to have that information compiled and provided to them. I don't have that all with me today. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I will accept that humble apology from the Minister, although rare but certainly welcomed. I wish more Cabinet Ministers could follow that direction. Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear from a departmental point of view, does the Department of Public Works still support this process, moving along with this initiative by supporting the concept and program the COR into their tendering process? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if that was something that we had indicated in our response to the Member at the time. I believe we had discussed the merits of the program. I had raised that there were some NGOs that were raising concern and that we needed to further investigate. That is where the situation still stands, from my standpoint. I would have to have further discussions. We will provide correspondence to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Time for oral questions has expired. I will allow the Member to conclude his supplementary. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister for making sure that question will be answered as well in the coming correspondence. I just want to make sure that the Minister is well aware that this is a territorial initiative, not a Yellowknife initiative. There are companies, construction, various other types of service type industries getting on board with the Certificate of Recognition through the Territory whether they are in Hay River, Norman Wells, Inuvik. It is quite a broad program involving large and small businesses. Is the Minister aware that it is a territorial program that several businesses are investing in the certificate program and they are doing a large focus to make sure that they could be on board just like every other jurisdiction is? Is the Minister aware of this? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I, unlike others, can see past Yellowknife. We have, of course, recognized that this is an initiative. It has a bearing on companies across the North, outside of Yellowknife. It is an initiative that is receiving a lot of attention. A lot of other jurisdictions are buying into it. We are also looking and reviewing what is being done in other areas. The short answer is yes, we are looking at it from across the board standpoint. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request agreement to go back to item 7 on the orders of the day. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to item 7, oral questions.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**Oral Questions  
(Reversion)**

QUESTION 215-16(4):  
GNWT RESPONSE TO  
JOINT REVIEW PANEL REVIEW

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with a few more questions about the Joint Review Panel process and the government's plans. I am squeezing these in on a Friday because there is a very aggressive table. It is a schedule that is laid out by the Joint Review Panel for the public to participate in the response. My first question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources -- and this is following up my Member's statement -- will the GNWT prepare a financial analysis of the implementation costs of the Joint Review Panel recommendations? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the assessment process and response process is going to be to look at the cost of the recommendations and our response to what that may cost so that we, in fact, know what the bill will be if we are going to recommend a certain course of action. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. Can the Minister commit to making this financial analysis public, especially before a Cabinet decision is made on the Joint Review Panel recommendations so that the public can have some input and response to the government? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, in due course, that information will be public. I can't at this moment commit to making anything public before it has gone through our internal process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Does the GNWT intend to file a submission with the National Energy Board on or before February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010, that responds to the Joint Review Panel report and recommendations and, if so, how will we involve the MLAs and the public in the preparation of this submission? That's February 11<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question as notice.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question is being taken as notice. Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 216-16(4):  
PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask a few more questions of the Minister responsible for the Executive in relation to the program review office. The Minister mentioned in one of his responses that Regular Members did not take advantage of the opportunity to sit on the Refocusing Government committee and I have to say that I'm dismayed to hear that any sharing of information is contingent upon the fact that Members are not part of that committee, but that shouldn't be the case, Mr. Speaker. Whether or not there are Regular Members on that committee should not inhibit any sharing of information.

I'd like to ask the Minister in relation to the program review office, he stated that it was established late in 2008-09 fiscal year. So it's been in operation approximately a year, if I take that as an actual fact. So in that time, I believe contingent on this budget was some investigation that was done relative to a reduction in the provision of funds for inclusive schooling to education boards. I'd like to know whether or not the program review office did any investigation in regards to inclusive schooling and

funds that are allocated for boards in the '10-11 year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to be clear, the Members were involved in the refocusing initiative, but then decided that they did not want to take part in that process. So we've gone back to our traditional way of doing things. As we collect the information we will present to standing committee, with a dialogue in committee to look at what initiatives go forward.

Specifically in the area of inclusive schooling, the program review office has been involved with that area, but none of the information has affected the development of this budget that's in front of the Assembly today. The work that is going forward will need to go through the process, as I said earlier, where the Minister leading the Refocusing Government initiative will be before standing committee and present the information and the work that has been done to date. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. We could argue about the participation on the Strategic Infrastructure committees all day and I'll leave that one for now, thank you very much. Perhaps the Minister and I could have a conversation later.

I'd like to ask, relative to the work of the program review office in the past year, if the work they've been doing in terms of education has not had an impact on the budget, I also understand there's been some work in terms of medical travel and so on. I'd like to know whether or not that has had an impact on the budget. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you. The ongoing budget program initiatives of the Government of the Northwest Territories are something that we continue to do. The program review office has taken the initiative to look at those areas that we see the highest growth in as a Government of the Northwest Territories, it is reviewing that information. So the initial work had to be pooling the information together, then looking at it to see what those initiatives had accomplished and from there going forward. The initiatives underway, aside from the one that has been mentioned on the office review, is the work that is going to lead into the next year's process. So, again, Minister Miltenberger will be able to come forward with the work that's been done to date.

There are quite a number of areas, a large volume of work that has had to be undertaken to do this work and I'm sure when Members see that they will be able to get right into much discussion about where it should go from there. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I thank the Minister for his response. He's mentioned that there are a number of projects underway and I guess as an aside I have to say that I find it difficult to believe. I know there's a lot of

work that's required when you investigate a particular program area and I appreciate that the background work is being done, but it's hard for me to believe that there's only been one project in the last 12 to 13 months which has come to fruition. But I'd like to know, the Minister has mentioned that there are a number of things in the works and he's suggested that they're going to have an impact on the 2011-12 budget. Can he tell me what those areas are that are being looked at?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you. Instead of getting into, it's a large volume of work and trying to respond in answer here, the Minister has got time with committee, will present the work that's being done and start the dialogue in that fashion as we go forward. So I would say that that is the avenue that we should continue to honour and work with, otherwise I'll give a little snippet here and cause concern to people out there without full information. So again, I would say let's defer it to the meetings that have been set up and the full information will be provided to Members at that time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I would like to change course just a tad. I've expressed a concern that we are probably going to see a reduction in our revenues over the next year to two years and I think the federal government, with a \$60 billion deficit, is likely to take our grants and reduce them and I anticipate that's probably going to start happening next year. So I would like to know from the Minister whether or not the program review office is taking that kind of an approach to reducing our expenditures. Are they considering that our revenues will probably be down and what are they doing in regard to that kind of a mentality?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you. The work that we do on an annual basis around business planning and budget development takes into consideration our revenue sources, the fluctuation in those revenue sources, whether it's own source or transfers from the federal government. We've had a commitment by the Prime Minister and Minister Flaherty from the federal government that the transfer agreements that have been signed will be honoured. That does not mean that dollars outside of those transfer agreements that are funds that are identified to be sunsetted will be reinvested in and those are the areas that we're all across the country paying attention to see what impacts may flow down the line across our Territory. But the revenues, the planning all takes into consideration the flow and I'm sure Minister Miltenberger can give much detail on that as we prepare to go into the budget process itself. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 217-16(4):  
IMPACTS OF DIAMOND MINES ON  
CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask some questions to the Minister of ENR, Mr. Miltenberger, in regard to the study on the Bathurst caribou herd. I want to ask the Minister has his department, along with other independent consultants, done an in-depth study on the impacts of the diamond mines that were opened up in the North part of this region in terms of seeing if that had any impacts on the migration of or the breeding or anything that has to do with the caribou?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Work has been done to get the most accurate survey results we can for the Bathurst. Each diamond mine is required, by their operating licensing work that they commit to, to look at the impact that they have and sort of try to minimize any disruption to the wildlife in the area, including the caribou. That would take into play BHP, Diavik, as well as Snap Lake. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. Does the department have a before and after report as to the impacts of the caribou? There are thousands of vehicles that go up to the diamond mines each year. They are doing a lot of blasting in those areas and there's certainly lots of disruption in terms of the natural lifestyle of the caribou. Has the Minister shared that with this House? I haven't seen a report in terms of the possible impacts of this diamond mine on the caribou.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** What we know with considerable certainty is from 2006 to 2009 the Bathurst herd numbers diminished from 120,000 to the neighbourhood of 30,000. We know, as well, with some considerable certainty that there's a considerable number of variables, climate change, resource development, hunting, ease of access...(inaudible)...species, changes to climate, permafrost, those type of things that have all combined to have an impact on the herds, not only the Bathurst but herds across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Miltenberger listed a number of factors to the decline of the caribou. I would like to know about the impact on the caribou. Does the Minister have any information in terms of the calving of the caribou? Has this had an impact on the calving of caribou?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We've accumulated since 2005 a considerable amount of information on nearly every herd now, with the possible exemption of the Ahiak, that looks on cow/calf ratio, bull/cow ratio, general health of the herd, calf survival, all those types of things. We

gave an overview to committee earlier this week. If there is a wish for more detailed survey information, we'd be willing to provide that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly did receive a briefing from the Minister and I hope the Minister would make that briefing public so we could have the public look at it. Does he have a record of all the outfitters in this area that will be impacted or have been impacted in regards to this caribou herd and the impact of the outfitters taking the prize bulls in terms of doing part of their business? Can the Minister share that also with the Members?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** All the information that we shared with committee has been shared across the North, around all the involved and affected aboriginal governments, stakeholders, when it comes to the Bathurst herd. But the work done, the work that was overviewed, by the ENR staff, that's all information that we make the point of sharing because it's such important valuable information for making decisions.

We also have, between ourselves and ITI, a very good idea of all the outfitters and the tags that they've used and that information as well, I believe, has been shared. But if the Member would like us to provide that again, we would do that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 218-16(4):  
SUPPORT FOR AVALON VENTURES  
THOR LAKE PROJECT

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't know that question period was going to be extended today, but I had so many questions after my question to the Minister of ITI after I sat down that I have to ask more questions. His answers actually gave me more questions. I am still shaking my head, because when you look at the royalties issue and the federal jurisdiction on oil, gas and minerals, if that was an argument not to help find power supplied to keep secondary processing over the rare earth minerals in the Northwest Territories, then we wouldn't put any money into the pipeline, we wouldn't put any money into the diamond mines. I mean, I don't even know how much, if you had to add up how much money this government has spent to try and get benefits from the diamond mines, the efforts that they made, because it still benefits, it's still employment, it's still industry, economy. It's still all those things in our communities. So that thing about federal jurisdiction and royalties is still stuck in my mind here.

This is not a good answer. We've got an opportunity here. Of course, we can't compete with

what Saskatchewan might offer in terms of power, but if the processing is done in the Northwest Territories versus Saskatchewan, there's the whole savings of hauling all that product, hauling all that ore, someplace else for processing. I mean, that has to come into the play of the discussions and the negotiations.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is a mine that has a potential life. I mean the diamond mines. I have no issues with this government supporting industry of any kind; the non-renewable resource sector, please don't misunderstand. I have no issue with this government supporting industry of any kind, the non-renewable resource sector. Please don't misunderstand; I have no problem with money being spent in it. But now here's an opportunity for some of the communities that have been on the periphery of some of these big... The pipeline's not going to flow through Hay River. The diamond mines are not going to be in Hay River and Fort Resolution. We need something; I'm sorry. Part of the country. I need to hurry up here. Given the projected life of the rare earth minerals, the opportunity there, I hope that the Government of the Northwest Territories can have a say in whether or not we can provide economic power to that processing plant. Would the Minister agree with me?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I agree with most of what the Member said, but I would like to point out that the comparisons with the diamond mines, the reason we focus on value added is the fact that that's the only way we can get benefits from development. The royalties go to the federal government, so if we want any benefits, we focus on the value added. With the diamond mines, through the environmental assessment process, we got the regulators to agree with what we were doing to provide for value added. I expect we would do the same thing with the Avalon project once it goes for regulatory review.

Now, what has been talked about with Avalon is they are looking, in addition to the mine, that they would have a hydromet facility in the Pine Point area. That would provide for something in the neighbourhood of 50 jobs plus a whole bunch of investments. My understanding is the communities of Fort Resolution, Hay River, and Fort Smith have already given their support to this project. What we need is a business case. We need to know what the benefits are and with that we can come forward and get the necessary approvals so that we can support it.

In order to diversify our economy I think it would be great if we could have a project where we could sell



rare earth minerals and lithium and all of these kinds of minerals. Certainly I'm very pleased that the Member is supportive of our government investing in those kinds of things. When it comes time to identify resources, that would be very helpful.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Avalon Ventures' Thor Lake Project environmental assessments, a lot of that work has already been done. It happened very quietly, but much of that work has already been done. I think it's up to our government to invest the resources. When we see an opportunity, we have to be proactive. We have to create that business case for why we should be supporting this.

Going back to the previous set of questions, the Minister answered that in terms of the excess power generated at the Taltson now, the Minister said something. I want to know who has jurisdiction over it. Is it NTPC? Has it been turned over to some other entity? I want to know who has jurisdiction over that excess power.

And here's another thing. The Minister said something about we can't hold power or reserve power for something that might come to fruition. Well, if we're holding that six megawatts for the diamond mines, isn't that exactly what we're doing? I didn't really understand that and I'd like clarity on that.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The NWT Power Corporation owns and generates the power. What I was talking about was, based on the current schedules, it's basically who comes first.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** What is being done currently today, as we speak, to be proactive as a government to look at the potential economic benefits of the Avalon Ventures play at Thor Lake to have this Territory recognize the maximum benefits from that project? What is this government doing right now to put together an assessment of those benefits?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We've been involved in a number of meetings with Avalon. We have sent a representative to a conference in Washington on the benefits of rare earth minerals. We are looking at their energy requirements. We will be co-hosting a conference with CanNor to discuss the value-added opportunities.

So rare earth minerals are something that's fairly new. We don't know a lot about all the different value added, but we will be working with the federal government to identify value-added opportunities and, of course, we'll be working with Avalon as well.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that we need to take a very similar look at the rare earth minerals as we did with the

diamonds. They weren't mining diamonds in Alberta or Saskatchewan at the time that we got into it here. I don't think that they will find a deposit such as has been identified here in the Northwest Territories in any other jurisdiction any time soon that I'm aware of. So we have a unique opportunity of something that is located in the Northwest Territories that I would like this Minister to commit to the House that we will place the same emphasis and priority on maximizing benefits to Northerners from that resource as we have on diamonds and other natural resources in the Northwest Territories.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I'm quite prepared to commit to that because we do that as a matter of course. Certainly this is an area where we want to see development proceed and certainly we'll work very hard to make this happen.

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

QUESTION 219-16(4):  
MEDICAL SPECIALIST VISITS  
TO YELLOWKNIFE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I was speaking to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding some services and medical travel services that we send people to Edmonton. Of course I'm going to stay away from specifics because I know there is a small group of people. That said, I don't want to try to identify them for privacy reasons, obviously. But there seems to be a bit of a number building that people go out for the specialized medical service. I'm wondering what the process is for the Department of Health and Social Services to start saying we should be bringing these specialists up and holding clinics here in Yellowknife and start tracking that process.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Generally speaking, there is constant review and monitoring of services that we need in the Northwest Territories, especially in specialist services. Often they are sent out if the services are not available. If there's a possibility that benefits could be had by having the specialists come up, then that is also done. So that's an ongoing, day-to-day business that the Stanton Territorial Hospital and the medical professionals and the administrators engage in.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate the Minister trying to stay away from specifics as well, only to avoid identifying the individual constituents, because there are only a few. She says there's an ongoing day-to-day process. What type of strategy does the Department of Health and Social Services have, say, for example, if we're always sending people to

Edmonton to get an ear checked, a specialized service? Or for example, if we're always sending people to get an eye specialization. Those type of things. What type of monitoring process do we have set up and organized that someone tracks this and says, well, we've sent 23 people out to 23 different individual medical travel processes and all to one doctor. Does the department make recommendations up through the system and say maybe it's time we start bringing this doctor here to the Northwest Territories and providing that service? Do they have that type of process? If they do, would she provide me with some information as to the layout of that?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I'd be happy to make that commitment to provide the Member with what process is followed in reviewing special services.

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

QUESTION 220-16(4):  
GNWT RESPONSE TO  
JOINT REVIEW PANEL REVIEW

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to conclude my questions on the Joint Review Panel report to the Minister. We've heard some of the questions that my colleague Ms. Bisaro has raised and so on; the 3 percent cap in the future. Many of the items in the recommendations are costly to the government: establish landscape thresholds and limits of change, arrange management plans and monitoring for Barren Land caribou, grizzly bear, polar bear and so on, land use plans, timber feasibility studies, training programs, drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs and facilities, et cetera. Often very tight time frames to respond and get these things in place. Very costly. So I'm wondering if this government has initiated discussions with the federal government to start nailing down some of those extra resources. The 3 percent cap we've got for next year and on into the future, how does that relate? Related to all this is, will this be part of the discussions with Minister Strahl this weekend?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are all good questions that need to be answered and that we're going to be considering. No, we're not anywhere near ready to have talks outside of government. The work is barely a couple weeks old and we have a lot more to do.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I understand that. They have a very aggressive time schedule and I'm hoping we're able to meet that. These are big questions and

we're going to have to be light on our feet here. Thank you for that information.

Does our government intend to participate in the National Energy Board final argument public hearing on the Mackenzie Gas Project scheduled for April 2010 in Yellowknife and Inuvik? If so, again I'm wondering how we will be involved.

The reason I'm asking these questions beyond the time frame is the order of events that happen is critical through transparency. I think the final deadline for government response is something like June, whereas the public has final arguments in April. So it's essential that we give the public the opportunity to participate in our response or perhaps request that the public have another opportunity to participate and respond after government responses have been submitted. For now, though, do we anticipate participating in those public hearings in April?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The government was involved in the process up to this point and will continue to be involved fully in the process as we bring it forward to conclude the regulatory process.

**MR. BROMLEY:** So I will anticipate that the government is planning to present their positions in the final arguments at the April public hearings. I'd just like confirmation on that. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, the Member can anticipate that.

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

QUESTION 221-16(4):  
LAND TENURE ON COMMISSIONER'S LAND

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple questions for the Minister of MACA regarding the freezing of the issuing of leases out in the area of Banting and Walsh lakes. This is an issue that the Minister is quite familiar with. He had met with several members of Yellowknife to hear the concerns of our constituents about squatters out there causing problems with people with legitimate leases who have applied for them properly, waited for the approval process, and then built their recreational properties. The freezing of any potential lease applications I think is a good step. I know several Members had brought that concern to the Minister and at the time the department wasn't interested. I'm certainly glad to see that they are following that certain request to help develop a plan out there for recreation saturation, et cetera. At the time several people, there were a few incidents of squatters out there and I thought the government's policy was that if you had a squatter out there who was not an approved lease, I think is the proper term, they had to remove their cabin or establishment and then

apply. But as I understood it, they were either waived or told to just apply and don't worry about removing your temporary recreational property. In the freezing process of issuing leases, has the Minister caused the squatters to go back, remove their recreational camp or cabin, and have them apply for the process fairly like everyone else did and then build after that?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was an opportunity for those who were out there squatting to legitimize their leases. That was the Interim Trespass Enforcement Strategy. But we've withdrawn that now and we are taking measures to deal with the squatters out on Commissioner's land.

**MR. HAWKINS:** If I heard the Minister correctly, he's suggesting that the government is enforcing that the squatters now remove their recreational facility, if I may define it -- I don't know what they put out there -- and had them go through the normal channels like everyone else. Is that the case? Because that is the concern from constituents in Yellowknife Centre who have cabins out there.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** They were given an opportunity to legitimize their leases. We had a lot of people come forward and do that. The ones that didn't, we are taking action now to deal with them. These are folks that don't have the land tenure and were just putting their buildings anywhere out there. We are taking steps to deal with that. This is part of the new recreation policy framework that we're working on that should take steps to address all these issues.

**MR. HAWKINS:** It sounds like good news. I just wanted to be clear on the squatter problem. Does the department have a zero tolerance policy on the squatter problem? So in other words, if someone builds a cabin out there, the stance from the department is consistent and clear, which is that person or family has to remove that cabin then apply and then see where the application goes at that time. Or do they just let it sit there and say, apply, we'll figure it out and if your application approves, we'll leave you alone?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Our primary goal here is to have all the folks who are considering putting buildings out there to have land tenure and then that would not be an issue. Those that do not have land tenure we are taking steps to address that and deal with the situation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate the answer not to my question, but it was an interesting answer which

speaks to the long-term problem. I'm glad we heard that that's the long-term focus. But the question really comes down to is there a zero tolerance policy that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs adheres to, which is if someone's a squatter, they have to remove their cabin or whatever it may be and then they must apply in that process.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We do deal with those out there that do not have the proper land tenure for occupation on Commissioner's land and we'll take the steps necessary. If it means having them remove their buildings, then I think that's been done before. We are taking steps now to deal with those without proper land tenure.

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

QUESTION 222-16(4):  
CONSTRUCTION OF  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for Mr. McLeod, the Minister of Transportation, in regard to the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I want to ask the Minister in terms of any of the latest updates on seeing this highway being constructed and progress on seeing some work being done in regard to starting the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we've been putting a lot of attention to this initiative that has been supported by our government. We've done some very good work in terms of developing the project description reports that are required for the road all the way from Wrigley to Tuk. The federal government has, through the CanNor program, funded the portion from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk. My discussions with the mayors from Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk indicate that has now been concluded. It is being packaged as a report and that is coming forward. There has also been a submission for some dollars and a request for partnership arrangements with the federal government to complete the rest of the road from Wrigley to the Dempster.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Would the process in terms of this Mackenzie Valley Highway, I know there are discussions now between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik in terms of their ongoing process to see an all-season road made there. Would this process come down into the Mackenzie Valley in terms of connecting from the Dempster down to the community of Wrigley, or Wrigley up the highway in terms of project description funding and environmental assessment? I know the Minister has done an

economic analysis of the Mackenzie Valley Highway in terms of the federal government coming forward and stepping up to the plate to support this House. He has asked for a motion in terms of a priority for this government here to construct the road.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** We had intended to do two things in the life of this government. The first portion for the Mackenzie Valley Highway initiative is to have an economic analysis done on this whole portion of highway that we're looking at. The second thing that we wanted to achieve was to have a project description report for the whole portion right from Wrigley to Tuk. We're well on our way on the Tuk-Inuvik portion. We're still working on the funding for the rest of it. Once we do have the resources, then we'll be able to embark on that work. That includes surveying, the alignment, some of the economic scoping, and a little bit of the design that would lay out what the road would look like. The Minister of Indian Affairs will be here today and will be making some announcements. We're anticipating those will be positive.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** In terms of the resources, can the Minister tell me roughly the estimates of the resources and when possibly they could hope for some resources in terms of working on the highway from Dempster to Inuvik or Inuvik to Dempster, somewhere where we'll start seeing some work in the Sahtu or even in the Gwich'in region?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Without taking the thunder away from the federal Minister's visit, I can assure the Member that we have been working on completing the PDR for all of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We had anticipated it would take roughly two years and cost approximately \$8 million. The work that has been completed from the Inuvik-Tuk portion is proving to be a little more expedient than we had expected. They did the work on that stretch in roughly a six or seven month period. We expect that we'll move a little faster than we had originally provided time for. But we'll be having a get-together and some announcements made by the federal Minister this afternoon. So without having to provide too much more detail, I'll just leave it at that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address (day 2 of 7). Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motions. Item 17, notice of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the

Summary Conviction Procedures Act; Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. I'll call the committee to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The committee today would like to proceed with general comments on the budget legislation.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. We'll proceed with general comments. First we will call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I'd like to call committee back to order and note that we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011, with a start by having general comments. I'd like to have a call for any general comments at this time. We'll start with Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of comments and they are general. I am generally pleased with the budget as it has been presented.

I think, as I stated earlier in my Member's statement today, I approve of the fiscal strategy that we're following. I think that we did need to maintain our spending in the fiscal year that we're currently in and I think that we need to maintain that spending over the next fiscal year to try and counteract the effects of the downturn in our economy nationally. I believe that we need to maintain the spending levels over this next fiscal year in order to do that.

This budget does project a certain amount of debt. It is not something which I would agree to as a general way to go. I acknowledge, again, because of the current downturn in the economy that we are encountering, that debt is something which is necessary. My only concern, and I think the Finance Minister has already said that he has stated and I agree with him, that debt should not become the norm. I think he has acknowledged in the budget of 2011-12 that we need to not incur any further debt and start working to reduce the debt that we do have.

I am somewhat concerned with the year-over-year increase in expenditures in this budget. I acknowledge that a lot of the increase is due to negotiated contracts with our employees and that has created an increase in our expenditures, but we have gone to approximately 7.5 percent increase in our total expenditures in this budget. I don't think it is acceptable. I think we ought to be aiming for a lot

less than that. My understanding was that, in May of 2009, we had a discussion. At that time, I thought we had agreed to keep our expenditures down around 4 or 5 percent. It does concern me that we are constantly going up in terms of expenditures. I know that we are getting revenue in terms of our grant. We are getting revenue in terms of our taxes and some increases in our taxes and fees, but from what I understand of the numbers in the budget, the extra revenue we are getting in this budget year of 2010-11 is less than what our expenditures are. We cannot continue to do that.

I am extremely pleased to hear that we are going to work to establish a heritage fund. I believe the Minister said that will happen before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. I would love to see it happen before the end of this next fiscal year. I encourage the Minister to get it established as soon as possible.

I am also extremely supportive to the change to the Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program. I stated earlier that it is long overdue and it was a necessary change. I think that it will be a program change which is only going to benefit our constituents. As long as we examine the policies surrounding that program and the policies surrounding Education, Culture and Employment's subsidy programs, as long as we do that when we do this change, then I think it is going to be for the better.

I am somewhat disappointed that the budget doesn't include any new revenues, although I don't know if I missed it in our discussions or if it was sprung on us, but I do appreciate that we are having a cost of living increase to our sin taxes and to our fees. I think that we have tied increases on an annual basis to the cost of living increases is a good thing. I do want to say, in terms of revenues, that the Minister has held two roundtables. I think they have been quite valuable. I get the impression that we will see an initiative in terms of revenue in the budget for 2011-12. I would encourage the Minister in very strong terms that that is something we need. We have to start increasing our own-source revenues. We cannot continue to plan on grants from the federal government maintaining the levels that we have now.

One of the things that I am disappointed, a couple of specific things in terms of the budget, is that I don't believe we have planning money in this budget to refurbish our one and only territorial hospital. It is a very old building and some 20-plus years old. The biggest problem with the building is it is an outdated design and has become very inefficient. It creates difficulties for the staff working and administering that hospital for them to do the job to the best of their ability. They certainly do a good job, but it could be a lot easier if they had a building that was better designed. The refurbishing of that building is something that is extremely

important, in my estimation. The planning dollars for that refurbishment needs to be there.

Maybe it is picky, but I am really concerned that the budget does not consider operation and maintenance costs for new buildings when we put a new building into the capital budget. We don't automatically then say we have to add these funds to the operations and maintenance budget for the same year. We seem to treat them as an initiative. To me it is hardly an initiative when you have a building that you have to run and the cost to run it, it is not an initiative. It is an operational expense. It is just a matter of how we look at it.

One of the other things that is, again, picky and I have expressed this before in the previous budget but the mains seem to have some items which are identified as other expenses with no explanation for what those "other" are. Just today I have received an explanation of what the "others" are. Unfortunately, to my dismay, I found that there are others under others under others. So we still have a few others which are unexplained, but I will bring more detail to that when we discuss the mains in some detail.

The last sort of detail is that I want to say that in terms of an item in the Education budget which talks about spending some funds on a nutritious food study. In my estimation, it is not necessary. I would far rather see that funding put into a milk subsidy program, a pilot program even, but I don't think we need to do another study to determine nutritious foods. There are organizations within the Territory that have done that work or that are doing that work. I think that we could quite easily take data that is already there and apply it to get to the end point that this study seems to want to go. Again, in general, I am pleased with this budget. I look forward to discussing some of the details as we go through the various departments over the next couple of weeks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We are moving now to Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to provide a few comments on the budget. I think in balance it is fairly good. There are a lot of good things that are coming forward. I will get a chance as we go through the various departments to talk a little bit more in detail about some of the concerns that I have.

One of the issues that I have with the budget is if I was a consultant or a former bureaucrat sitting out there listening to the budget address yesterday, I would be going like this with my hands saying there is a lot of work out there for consultants. There is a lot of work out there for former bureaucrats. I think we have a propensity as a government -- and I mentioned this many times in the past -- to rush out as soon as there is a strategy or plan or a study, rush out and hire a consultant to do the work. Mr.

Chairman, we do that far too often. The issue that I have -- and my colleagues will hear me speak more about this next week -- is the fact that we sole source far too often. We sole source to former bureaucrats. We sole source to former employees. I will get into that a little bit more in detail next week. I don't want to let the cat out of the bag, but there is a lot of stuff in this Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 report from last year that somebody could spend a lifetime looking into. I plan on getting into that next week.

As far as the budget goes, I think the government has to be applauded, especially in the area of the environment and the money we are spending in that area. I think that is good. The Minister responsible for ENR has had a lot to do with that. I would like to thank him. I know he is also the Finance Minister, so I guess that helps in that regard.

Also, I think the other thing I would like to see the government looking at a little bit more closely is efficiencies. I know in the budget address we talked about moving the social housing back to the Housing Corporation, that responsibility back to the Housing Corporation from ECE. I know we need to have some sensitivity when it comes to the employees that are involved in that. That has to happen, but if we are spending over a million dollars more to deliver on that program than we were prior to it being transferred over to ECE, that is something the government has to take a serious look at. We have been spending a million dollars over the past four years that we didn't really need to be spending. The sensitivity has to be there for our employees, but we have to be serious about efficiencies.

In the budget address also, we talked about merging administrative support functions. We talked about consolidating responsibilities for building maintenance and utility costs. We talked about this but I don't see a plan on the human resource side of things, how that is going to equate into savings for government. We keep doing these mergers and consolidations, but really, at the end of the day, we are not freeing up any money to be spending on other areas of our operations. If we don't do that in a comprehensive way, I think we are making a mistake. That is the way I see that.

I listened quite closely to Ms. Bisaro's Member's statement from earlier today. I share all of the concerns that she has with the program review office. It has been up and running for far too long to have not delivered some more information so Members and those of us who are interested in making decisions have some information to base their decisions on. I would like to see some more work come out of that office. I know they are working on a few other things, but get it in front of committee so that we can start making some

decisions. I was very happy, by the way, with the comprehensive review on the general purpose office, the work that the program review office did in looking at Yellowknife in particular and government-owned versus lease-based in Yellowknife. That was some good work. I think we need to see more of that work so that we can make better decisions as we go forward.

The other thing, too, is we are starting this national marketing campaign. I am fully supportive of the initiative that the government is taking with Minister Bob McLeod and ITI and trying to attract people to move to the Northwest Territories. We have to get some kind of a grip on this \$250 million that we are losing annually to migrant workers. That is a step in the right direction that the initiative to government is taking there. I think what is lost in all of this is the government's inability to address the high cost of living here in the Northwest Territories.

The Strategic Initiatives Cabinet committee on the cost of living has been eerily quiet. We haven't heard anything from that committee, nothing in two years. Given the fact that we are looking at this electricity rate review, the fact that the Deh Cho Bridge is under construction and in my mind the government has never proven to me that the cost of the living in the North Slave region is not going to increase as a result of that bridge being there, not just in the North Slave region but in every community that is serviced by air out of Yellowknife. The cost of living is going to go up because everything that goes across that bridge is going to be charged a toll. The trucking companies are going to pass that on to the retailers who are going to pass it on to the consumer. That is basic economics. That is going to happen. The government has yet to prove it. They couldn't prove it. The last government couldn't prove it. I know the Minister is saying one of the benefits of the project is going to be it is going to lower the cost of living. Well, if you are going to say that, prove it to us. Show us how that is going to happen, because I firmly do not believe that is the case. I would like to be proven wrong on that front.

Also, I really would like to see the Stanton master plan get into a budget sometime in the near future. It is not in this one. I think it is very unfortunate. I guess that is the nicest way I can say it. It has to be there. I think that building is aging. This base heated utilization in there needs to be addressed. The services need to be addressed. I think the Minister has her hands full on that front.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I think those are some of the highlights that I saw. I think in general I can be supportive of the budget this year. There are some things, like I said, that I take issue with, but I have issues with every budget since I have been here, in one way or another. So there are little battles to fight but I think, like I said at the onset, in balance,

the budget is a good piece of work. I appreciate the work the Minister has put into getting it before the House. I look forward to the debate that is going to play itself out over the next five weeks. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this point in time that appears to be all the... Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm going to make two sets of comments. The first ones today will just be sort of a brief overview of some of the things. I'd like to offer some long-term views and I'll offer that at our next chance on Monday, which will be the next sitting date of our House.

For starters, I'm just going to work my way through the budget. I was very pleased with the balanced approach the Minister of Finance has taken on our long-term view. I appreciate his hands at the wheel on this particular file. I know it's tough being the Finance Minister because everybody wants something. It's a funny thing to have to be able to have to sometimes say no to people and yes to others and to figure out how do we make sure everybody gets something either in their constituency or which particular organization. When we look at things like the economy and where he notes about our 8 percent drop in 2008 and 17 percent drop. You know, one of the issues I keep raising is a stabilization fund for our revenues. When our corporate taxes or payroll taxes all seem to drop, I mean, it seems to put this government in a tailspin and in a panic trying to figure out how to deal with that.

Now, I know one of the discussions that keeps coming up in the background is this heritage fund, and I certainly welcome the development of that over the long term. But I still think a revenue stabilization fund could be created today with quite simple legislation that gives us the ability to respond to these types of things. We don't have to go back too far in history when the issue of a corporate tax filer, you know, a prominent business decided that they were going to file somewhere else. And what did that do to this government? Well, the windfall taxes it had received years before all of a sudden now were being recovered. Of course, the strategy over the next number of years at that point was to figure out how are we going to pay that debt back owed to Revenue Canada, or I should say the federal government. Sorry.

Now, in this particular case, the economy had done a quick twist on us that... We're in a difficult position to be able to prepare and be ready for the throes of how the economy can change so quickly. I mean, we're quite fortunate to be, in some cases, the ward of the state when it comes to control by Ottawa because our revenues are relatively stabilized. I mean, they provide us, in approximate terms, three-quarters of our funding and we're

forced to come up with the other quarter. Ultimately, though, it has to do with a lot of creativity and some strategic thinking in order to balance year to year off. Of course, nobody really likes the concept of new taxes except those people who love taxes and certainly love other people paying them, that is. But the reality is that the cost of living here can only continue to handle so much. I mean, that seems to be the number one driving force of why people are leaving the Northwest Territories. It's always about the economy. It's always about what does it cost for a jug of milk. It's always about what does it cost to heat your house. You know, it's always those types of things. I mean, if we could sell the Northwest Territories just on the basis of opportunity, family relationship, quality of people, I mean, pristine wilderness, I mean, everyone would be marching to the Northwest Territories. But, I mean, even people who are able to find ways to get through the cold and say, well, but it's the warm hearts that tie us all together and these wonderful relationships. So cold used to be the complaint, but it's certainly not now. I think most Northerners just treat it as not just a fact of life, it is life here.

What it comes down to is the fact that the economy and the cost of living here continues to be the number one factor that our government is having trouble dealing with. I don't necessarily expect them to pull out a magic wand and say, you know, well, we'll make sure we can lower property taxes throughout the Northwest Territories, we'll lower consumer taxes here, we'll subsidize heating fuel. I know it's not as simple as that. But I can tell you that when we do projects such as environmental investment, I mean, a lot of things that are going to help: our carbon emission, it's going to help our contribution of lowering our GHGs. I think those are fantastic things. I like the way that the Hydro Strategy is going, and I think Northerners support that with full excitement, but a lot of these projects, when you're cutting down to the nitty-gritty, don't change the cost of living right now. I mean, I haven't seen, at least I haven't seen myself at least, one project where we've said that we've established a new way of doing business. What we've done is we've found a new way to make someone else pay and the cost has either been stabilized or has continued to rise. I mean, that keeps going back to our trouble, which is the cost of living. I mean, I think it's at least the second year in a row, if not longer, that our population continues to decrease, and it doesn't take a specialized consultant to tell us these types of things. I mean, all you have to do is talk to any industry out there to say why can't you get more people working here. I mean, they'll tell you on the street, whether you go to their offices, whether you meet them in the coffee shop, you don't have to have a specialized announcement for a really great discussion. I mean,

anybody will offer it, whether you're at the Co-op or Canadian Tire; it's the cost of living.

Mr. Chairman, other areas of concern that continue to be on the horizon that I'm not sure how we're going to deal with are highlighted in the budget and it reminds me about the diamond crisis. But the diamond processing, the secondary processing is going to continue to emerge as a problem. In the rest of Canada it is showing itself as they're trying to be more competitive than the Northwest Territories government can be, whether they can help set them up. I mean, when we're competing against areas like Quebec who are willing to cover wages, help them with their transfer, I know it's completely impossible for us to compete against that market. But yet it would be such a sad day for the Northwest Territories for our diamond cutting facilities to move out of the Northwest Territories when it was really here that opened it up to Canada. That's such a profound thought that the Northwest Territories brought the diamond business to the world through Canada in a new way. I mean, the diamonds certainly surpass any other quality than I'm aware of that are found, mined, cut and produced, but I think that the territorial government still misses the opportunity of the valuation process and I think there's a bourse process, I can't remember the exact phrase to that. But, I mean, there are still a lot of developments that I think we need to remind ourselves what's important. I've referred to it a number of times, but Israel doesn't have diamonds, Antwerp doesn't have diamonds; diamonds go there. The Northwest Territories is that sleeping giant in this network that why aren't we taking control of this. I know it would take a significant amount of investment, but I think investors are out there.

Speaking to the issue of investors, I mean, the climate for investment here is very, very difficult. When you talk to the Chamber of Mines and they tell you in quite clear terms that it takes at least a good 10 years to go through a process to open up a new mine. You know, that tells me that our government should make that a priority, not just for them but it's an economic priority to keep people working. I mean, it's the same concern as Mrs. Groenewegen had today about how we're not willing to bend over as far as we can and reasonably for Avalon. I mean, that will put people to work. People working are happy families. Happy families can afford to pay their mortgages, buy their kids the bicycle, put bread, milk, eggs, you know, you name it on those tables. I mean, they can take holidays, they buy cars, they watch TV, they heat their houses. I mean, people working are happy people. I guess it's all about the strategy of how we wish to draw out and invest in a business in the Northwest Territories.

In my view, the power that's flowing over the Taltson Hydro is not doing any good to anybody. As

much as I support, and I certainly do support the extension of the power line off the Taltson to the diamond mines, because if we can make them more competitive, that means they will have more people working longer, and that darn right does support our economy. I think those are good things.

Again, back to people being self-sufficient. Working people are relatively happy people. It causes people to know where their focus is. So, Mr. Chairman, my time is running down and I have a lot of other issues that I'd like to discuss, but this go around I'm going to leave it quite short. As I mentioned, I'd like to think of my opening comments to the Minister's address in two parts and I'll certainly follow it up on Monday with some long-term concerns and issues that I'd like to see.

If I may leave on certainly a positive note, I think he has done a good job to meet many of our concerns. I know that Minister Miltenberger tries very hard to find wins for everybody in every sector, and there is that effort given there. As far as specifics that I want to leave off that I'm very happy about is the investment of the downtown health clinic. I think that is a clear if not an amazing foundation of a government saying we can do things better and we will do things better. That clinic in downtown Yellowknife will provide all the great services between testing to X-ray, will show efficient use of doctors and administration, and that's the type of government I really believe in is finding new ways to do business smarter. In these times, that's what's expected.

So, Mr. Chairman, as I said, two parts to my statement and I'd like to leave that as the first part. I look forward to my conclusion to the second part on Monday at my next chance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, committee.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to share a few comments as well. The media said that was an all-encompassing budget. We all worked hard on it and we are to be commended to try to capture all the goals and wants and needs of all the regions and all the different interest groups, as well as bearing in mind, of course, the climate change and the green initiatives that in the long term should save us money.

Those are the same needs that I share for my constituency. We have grassroots organizations that are interested in green alternatives from geothermal to biomass initiatives, and I'm glad to see that in the budget. I will be working with the communities and groups, once the budget is approved, on trying to get some of these initiatives, some of the work done to get these projects up and running.



At the same time, government is to be commended for the capital items that are happening in the Nahendeh region. As well, I'd like to thank committee members for their support in moving forward on some really, really big initiatives like the Trout Lake Airport and the highway improvements that will be coming in the new fiscal year. I continue to be concerned about getting the contracts out early. I know that last year we had some really good capital projects, but because of capacity issues, we weren't able to deliver them. My commitment to my residents and my constituents is that these contracts will get out of the gate early, like the chipsealing from the Providence junction and about 80 kilometres towards Fort Simpson, the completion of the highway from the B.C. border to Fort Liard, getting that reconstruction completed.

I just wanted to bring up another issue that had little mention in our budget, which is of course aboriginal language initiatives. It had little attention in the budget. As chair of the Government Operations committee, we spent considerable time in reviewing the Aboriginal Languages Act, and we delivered an all-encompassing report. I do see, of course, the need for government to completely and accurately assess all the recommendations that were in the report. However, Mr. Chair, it was my hope to see, at a minimum, a return to our interpreter translator or aboriginal language teachers be given support in the 2010-11 budget year.

At the appropriate time I will ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment perhaps, if there is attention in the specific line items. But at the same time, waiting for government's response means that some of the recommendations, and very important recommendations about aboriginal language recovery, will have to wait until the 2011-2012 budget year and that is kind of disconcerting to me. Anyway, I'm hopeful that there is resources in this fiscal year and I'm hopeful that there is planning. Actually, I did hear there was some ongoing internal committee work in the department looking at how to best introduce and revitalize aboriginal languages. I'll be paying attention to that this coming budget and I hope to see the strengthening and some resources in this fiscal year as we move towards strengthening our aboriginal language resources, our aboriginal teaching programs, that we can strengthen our languages and hopefully build towards that.

I'm pleased to see that I'll be co-chairing with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment at our language symposium that will be held in March. It's going to be a huge event. There will be national and even international participation in this and how we best address our 11 official languages and support those languages. I know that our front-line workers are doing their best and they're to be commended, but we do have to dedicate more resources. Hopefully we can do it in this fiscal year

and not wait until 2011-2012 for the bulk of the restructuring of our delivery of our language services.

Those are just a couple of brief overview comments that I'd like to share at this time. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you very much, Mr. Menicoche. Seeing no other general comments on the slate, perhaps I'll call on Mr. Ramsay for any motions he might be considering.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I will now rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 62-16(4) and would like to report progress. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for...(inaudible)...

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Orders of the day, Madam Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett):** There will be a meeting of the Economic Development and Infrastructure committee at the rise of the House today.

Orders of the day for Monday, February 1, 2010, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 3 of 7)
12. Petitions

13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010
  - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act
  - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act
  - Tabled Document 62-16(4), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2010-2011
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. With that, I'd like to thank the Pages for serving us here this week. This was a formal introduction to the Legislative Assembly. I wish you well and thank you again.

---Applause

This House stands adjourned until Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:40 p.m.