



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

4th Session

Day 21

16th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Pages 3911 - 3944

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker
Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Mr. Glen Abernethy
(Great Slave)

Mr. Tom Beaulieu
(Tu Nedhe)

Ms. Wendy Bisaro
(Frame Lake)

Mr. Bob Bromley
(Weledeh)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Jackie Jacobson
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Krutko
(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Hon. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Hon. Bob McLeod
(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Human Resources
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board
Minister responsible for Energy Initiatives

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Transportation
Minister of Public Works and Services

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

Mr. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)

Hon. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)
Deputy Premier
Government House Leader
Minister of Finance
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

Mr. Dave Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations
Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Principal Clerk of Committees

Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

Principal Clerk, Operations

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Ms. Sarah Kay

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	3911
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	3911
52-16(4) – eRecruit (B. McLeod)	3911
53-16(4) – Recognition of Education Leaders (Lafferty)	3911
54-16(4) – Drop the Pop Month (Lee).....	3912
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	3913
Consultation on Caribou Conservation Measures (Yakeleya).....	3913
Acknowledgement of Executive Council and Legislative Assembly Accomplishments (Bisaro)	3913
Disruption of Phone Service in Nunakput (Jacobson).....	3914
Ban on Cell Phone Use While Driving (Hawkins).....	3914
Absenteeism in NWT Schools (Beaulieu)	3915
Best Wishes to Mr. Tom Makepeace on His Retirement (Groenewegen).....	3915
Consultation on Caribou Conservation Measures (Ramsay)	3916
Aboriginal Languages Funding (Menicoche).....	3916
Clarification of Energy Issues (Bromley).....	3917
Consultation on Caribou Conservation Measures (Krutko).....	3917
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	3929
ORAL QUESTIONS	3918
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	3929
FIRST READING OF BILLS	3929
Bill 10 – Exemption Act.....	3929
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	3929
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	3944
ORDERS OF THE DAY	3944

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 3, 2010****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 52-16(4):
ERECRUIT**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Human Resources launched eRecruit on January 4, 2010. Implementation of eRecruit is being managed in a three-phase process. The first phase of eRecruit allows individuals who are interested in employment opportunities with the Government of the Northwest Territories to view job postings and apply for jobs on-line from anywhere in the world.

In the initial two weeks of eRecruit being launched, we had approximately 8,000 visitors to the site. These visitors came from across the Northwest Territories, Canada and a total of 76 countries across the world. From these visits, almost 800 people have registered on-line which led to 587 applications for the 112 Government of the Northwest Territories' job openings that had been posted to date.

As Members, we identified an effective and efficient government as one of our goals and priorities for action during the 16th Legislative Assembly. Efficiencies are achieved through use of automated and technologically current business practices.

Making use of existing government technology, eRecruit provides access to browse employment opportunities as well as apply and manage applications on-line. Other immediate benefits for the government and the Department of Human Resources are reductions in paper-based processes and competition processing time.

Mr. Speaker, key features for applicants are immediate confirmation through e-mail that their

application has been received, the ability to declare their status under the Affirmative Action Policy and the ability to track the status of competitions they have applied on through the entire recruitment process.

The Department of Human Resources is encouraging all applicants to apply via eRecruit but has maintained flexibility for applicants so that applicants are still able to fax, e-mail, mail or drop off their applications to the applicable Human Resource Service Centre. Applicants who choose to submit their applications through fax, e-mail or mail can still check their application status with the Human Resource Service Centre.

Phases two and three of eRecruit will provide a comprehensive job candidate application platform for managers and the Department of Human Resources to allow more work and interaction with applicants be done electronically are scheduled for implementation during the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, when fully implemented, eRecruit will transition the Government of the Northwest Territories from a paper-based recruiting system to an on-line electronic recruitment system, allowing for a more streamlined, efficient process of recruiting.

Our investment in strengthening and improving the efficiency of the recruitment process is an investment in the government's ability to provide services and programs to Northerners through a qualified public service. An efficient recruitment process enables the Government of the Northwest Territories to have the right people in the right jobs at the right time.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all Members and the public to empower your future by visiting eRecruit on the Government of the Northwest Territories' website at www.gov.nt.ca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 53-16(4):
RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION LEADERS**

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, February marks an important time to recognize education in the Northwest Territories.

Later in this session I plan to update Members about Education Week that is being celebrated from February 22 through February 26. Across the Territory, there are many people who are passionate about education and training at all levels of our system. Their efforts don't go unnoticed as their contributions are important for building success. On the front lines, teachers and college instructors continue finding innovative ways to teach course material,; support staff in our schools are helping students reach their full potential, and department staff are working with education authorities, developing programs that help students achieve their goals. In addition, Mr. Speaker, parents volunteer in our schools and we have industry and community partners who make valuable contributions to our education system.

I am pleased to advise Members that this year we will be introducing a new way of recognizing people who make a difference in Northwest Territories education. I'm excited to announce the creation of an education Hall of Fame to stand as a lasting symbol of our gratitude.

This spring we will honour 12 leaders in education, as they are inducted into the Hall of Fame at a ceremony held here at the Legislative Assembly. Many people deserve this honour, from teachers and literacy coordinators, to volunteers and elders and administrators. While the final list of nominees is not confirmed, this year's recipients are people who go above and beyond in their support of education. Mr. Speaker, I will be consulting with Members of this House as well as with education authorities, Aurora College and others in identifying people who are making a valuable contribution to education so we can recognize their efforts.

I would like to take this chance to thank our partners in education at the aboriginal governments, at Aurora College, in the communities and everybody who is dedicated to improving education for our people. I believe if we continue fostering partnerships like these, we can look forward to even more success in 2010. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 54-16(4):
DROP THE POP MONTH

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, the health of our Northerners begins with each individual choosing to live a healthy lifestyle. An essential part of one's lifestyle is deciding to make healthy food and beverages a part of everyday life.

The Drop the Pop challenge, now in its fifth year, is a positive way for the Department of Health and Social Services to encourage healthy choices and

to raise awareness about the negative effects of too much sugar in one's diet. Since the inception of the campaign in 2004, we have increased school participation from 13 schools to 40 schools registered this year. I would encourage the remaining schools to visit www.dropthepop.ca and register for this year's campaign.

February is Drop the Pop month in the Northwest Territories. This year we are partnering with Nunavut and Yukon in a pan-territorial initiative to help people make the choice to "Drop the Pop." This year's theme is Strong Bones 2010.

We are strongly encouraging schools across the North to participate in this year's challenge to promote foods high in calcium and practice healthy eating. This can be achieved by consuming/harvesting traditional foods.

Health and Social Services is also pleased to be working with Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and grocery stores across the NWT to provide education about drinking too many sugar sweetened beverages. Sugar sweetened beverages are not only linked to weight gain in children, but they are also being linked to weak bones in adults. Too much sugar also results in poor oral health and tooth decay.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative helps maintain a very important goal in the Foundation for Change action plan to ensure health promotion is delivered effectively across the NWT through resources that help Northerners make healthy choices. This initiative has also resulted in the Legislative Assembly "dropping the pop" and that is a move in the right direction.

Recently studies have shown that obesity is emerging as a major threat to public health. In 2008, Statistics Canada reported that 51 percent of adults were overweight or obese. The addition of excess sugar to one's diet greatly contributes to this health problem. More children than ever are struggling with obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, Mr. Speaker, and we fear that if these trends continue, it is entirely possible that we will see parents outliving their children, as many people are predicting.

The Department of Health and Social Services will continue to raise widespread awareness about the detrimental effects of consuming sugary beverages through our Drop the Pop campaign. We encourage all parents, schools, communities and others to join us in promoting healthy lifestyles by "dropping the pop." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION ON CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning about 5:00, I was reading a book...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oooh.

MR. YAKELEYA: ...Mr. Speaker, and the book is on the Sahtu. I was thinking about the discussions we've had the last couple of days about the caribou. In this section, page 46 or so, there's a discussion about the caribou from the Sahtu perspective. In one of the stories the elders have told, there is a story about near Aklavik there was a discussion, the elders say, about some animals. It was a story about the wolf and the caribou that came together and they were discussing how they were going to live together, Mr. Speaker, and they came to an agreement that the wolf would allow the caribou to live, not wipe out the caribou. That process, I looked at from the caribou and the wolves' perspective and the elder's story was a process of consultation where they come to discuss certain things and they come to an agreement. That's the process of consultation in the old days, Mr. Speaker.

Today we have different versions, different definitions we use in terms of consultation. The aboriginal leaders have their definition, the federal government certainly has their definition of consultation, the territorial government has their view of consultation and the aboriginal elders have their view of consultation. Mr. Speaker, even the courts have weighed in regarding consultation. There is the Sparrow test in terms of certain rights that aboriginal people have.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to say in terms of consultation and going forward with this type of issue that is before us in the House here, it has brought forward many passionate views, different views on how we look at things on the land. It's good because this important issue is being discussed during the House and gives the people an opportunity down the Mackenzie Valley how we need to work together amongst ourselves, what things need to come together for the survival of this herd, also survival of the aboriginal culture and people of the Northwest Territories.

Northerners are known for working out very important issues, issues that are very important, and the principle of the caribou and the people of the Northwest Territories. I wanted to ask the Minister some questions at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I considered a subject for my Member's statement today, I realized I have been taking the government to task for the past week, some might say too harshly. So I thought I would take a look around and see if I could find a few good things happening within the GNWT and the Legislative Assembly. It shouldn't surprise anyone that I found lots of good results.

For instance, during last year's budget debate I was very vocal about the millions earmarked for the Olympics, but the money was approved and now the work has been done and the value of the money spent is becoming evident. NWT performers and artists in Vancouver will have the eyes and the ears of people from across Canada and the world. Our Northern House will educate them about the NWT; who, what, and where we are. The NWT will be very visible in Vancouver and the planned activities will do a great deal to promote our Territory. Northern House especially has received rave reviews from visitors and the Vancouver media already.

Again, a few short days before Christmas I was contacted by a constituent with a human resource problem. My thanks go out to the Department of Human Resources for their quick action in solving the problem. I can't argue with the 24-hour turnaround time.

Thirdly, the announcement in the budget address of a commitment to establish a heritage fund is good news.

The announcement by Education, Culture and Employment of the transfer of responsibilities for public housing subsidies back to the NWT Housing Corporation is also good news; long-awaited, but good news.

Minister Lafferty's announcement yesterday that the minimum wage will increase April 1st is music to my ears. After two years of lobbying and pleading, I'm overjoyed that the GNWT finally saw the light.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations produced a comprehensive and valuable report on NWT official languages. I commend them for their excellent hard work.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is in the middle of a comprehensive and thorough review of the Child and Family Services Act. Our staff are doing great work and the meetings held to date have been informative and exciting.

Lastly, as added proof that we live in a great place, the northern lights stretched across the sky over my

head two nights ago as I trudged home from work after a long day.

I'm told by my colleagues that the teacher in me comes out now and then. I guess you can take the teacher out of the classroom but can't take the teacher out of the MLA. So using my teacher voice I say thanks to those responsible for creating these good things and may we all keep up the good work.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DISRUPTION OF PHONE SERVICE
IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to speak about telephone service in the North and the problems with the phone services in Tuktoyaktuk this week. Since early last week telephone service has been down. NorthwesTel has experienced problems with one of its frame relays. Technicians couldn't get to the site until today due to high winds and extreme cold. They found the problem at the Parsons Microwave Site halfway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. The next day long distance completely failed.

On Friday tower crews were able to fly in with helicopters to repair the structural problem on the microwave tower. Local cell services are in operation, but long distance services are still out.

On Monday NorthwesTel sent in three cell phones to the hamlet office, the health centre, and the power station. More cell phones were sent in for the school, the college, and Aklak Air, but long distance services are still not working for the people of Tuk.

Today we find out that the technician has to wait for the weather. The blizzard warning has ended. I hope phones will be working soon.

Also, not everybody in Tuk has a cell phone, so you know families are not being able to phone in to see how their families are doing due to the weather. Not having operational long distance phone systems in the communities is unacceptable. What if there's a major accident? Given the few cell phones available could make it difficult to calling Inuvik or Yellowknife for help. Would any other community accept this lack of service?

We need more reliable telephone services in Tuk and throughout the NWT. If telephone service is down, we need to be kept informed from NorthwesTel, the service provider, of what's going on and what they're trying to do to fix the problem. The community of Tuk has an FM station now, so they should be keeping the community informed via the radio station.

All this week people were not even able to use their debit card or credit cards to purchase food. These days everybody uses debit cards in the

communities and don't carry money. So the lack of service and the lack of people able to go purchase food and stuff, the necessities for the family, there should be something...

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. JACOBSON: With NorthwesTel having the people bear the brunt of this weak service or lack of service in the community for the telephone system, I hope NorthwesTel and our telecommunications rep, our Minister should get a letter into NorthwesTel requesting a full investigation on how they can make better this problem.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BAN ON CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today there's still no cell phone ban legislation before this Assembly. There's not even a legislative proposal coming forward that I'm aware of or anyone's aware of, that I know. Mr. Speaker, the Minister still refuses to make the call on this issue. I'm not sure why; perhaps maybe just being stubborn. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's leadership on this issue is so far behind I couldn't even call him Johnny-come-lately. He just doesn't care.

Mr. Speaker, I was watching TV the other day and Oprah Winfrey has even weighed in on this issue and she's set up a blog and a website to show people she cares about this issue. She's asked people to make pledges to show that they care about this issue, that they will not drive while using a cell phone.

Mr. Speaker, just this week Ontario and B.C. came forward with enforcement on their cell phone ban, which they had passed legislation some time ago. Mr. Speaker, we're still behind Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Saskatchewan on this particular issue. The Yukon itself has had two people, one on each side of its house, recognize the importance of this issue, one from its government side and one from its opposition side. Mr. Speaker, the trend should be clear. Mr. Speaker, Alberta itself is starting to recognize that this is an important issue that they need to examine thoroughly and find a way and an approach that works for their province.

Mr. Speaker, I talked to the SADD rep the other day and talked about pledge forms. I think something is coming forward where we can start engaging the youth. Maybe the youth need to show the leadership on this particular issue if the Minister refuses to do it himself. I question why do the youth understand this and the Minister does not. Is it one

reason that he feels it's a Yellowknife issue? Hopefully, he's certainly come around to that by now. But the fact is it's a safety issue, Mr. Speaker; a safety issue that at least 90 percent of the population of this country are protected by good legislation that speaks loud and clear. I only wish that Minister would answer that call too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABSENTEEISM IN NWT SCHOOLS

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, the students between grades 1 and 9 in the Northwest Territories, in small, aboriginal communities are missing a lot of school. Right now, about 20 percent, or 900 students across the Territory, aboriginal students, are missing 20 percent of the classes and 500 of those 900 are operating below grade level. Forty percent of those aboriginal students are missing... I'm sorry. Two hundred and eighty students, or 40 percent are missing more than 40 percent of their class and 80 percent of them are functioning below grade level. Over 50 percent of the non-aboriginal students that miss between 20 and 50 percent are functioning below grade level. Some of them are functioning two or three grade levels behind. Some of them are even higher.

If you look at all of the stats across the Territories you'll see that 66 percent of the non-aboriginal students that miss more than 50 percent are also functioning below the grade level. So the difference, Mr. Speaker, is that there are only six non-aboriginal students in the whole Territories that are missing more than 50 percent of their classes and less than 70 percent of the non-aboriginal students are missing 20 percent or more. So 50 percent of them are also functioning below grade level. So you can see, Mr. Speaker, that grade level is not associated with non-aboriginal or aboriginal students, but directly associated whether or not the student is attending class.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT should be hiring people in the small, aboriginal communities to get students to go to school, I guess a little bit like some of the truant officers that they used to have but something a bit different. Mr. Speaker, these employees should be working directly for the Department of Education. We all know the benefits of at least having a grade 12 diploma. Without this diploma there would be very little or no chance of employment. We need employment to cure the social ills of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BEST WISHES TO MR. TOM MAKEPEACE
ON HIS RETIREMENT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to recognize the career and dedication of a Hay River resident who has recently retired from the NWT Housing Corporation. Tom Makepeace devoted his career to working for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

For 26 years he provided excellent service and expertise in everything he worked at, from carpentry to administrative duties and the management of the NWT Housing Corporation district office in Hay River.

Tom completed the NWT Carpentry Apprenticeship Program in 1981. After being self-employed at his company called Makepeace Carpentry, Tom began working for the GNWT. From 1983 to 1988 Tom worked for the NWT Housing Corporation as a carpentry foreman in Fort Simpson in the Nahendeh region. He built public housing units and supervised a number of jobs where he was responsible for the completion of significant housing projects including training and supervising of staff.

From 1988 to 1993 Tom performed his duties as a project officer technical coordinator for the NWT Housing Corporation for the South Slave district. During this time he was responsible for inspecting HAP housing projects, public housing construction and home repair programs for homeowners.

From 1994 to 1996 Tom was the manager of technical services in the South Slave district. Communities he served included Lutselk'e, Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Fort Providence, Enterprise, Kakisa Lake and Hay River. He provided maintenance management to five community-based housing authorities who maintained an inventory of 423 units.

In 1997 Mr. Makepeace advanced to the position of director of the NWT Housing Corporation for the South Slave district office located in Hay River. In his years of working for the NWT Housing Corporation, Tom acted in a professional and compassionate manner providing good judgment and management as well as having an insightful understanding of the people he was serving and their needs.

On a personal level, Tom Makepeace is a well known and respected member of the community who has spent countless hours volunteering. He was appointed to the position on the NWT Trade Qualification Board for carpentry and has served as president of the Hay River Lion's Club being voted Lion of the Year in Hay River. He has played a

significant role in community, organizing and coaching minor ball and minor hockey as well as participating in these sports himself on a men's team.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Besides these endeavours that I have mentioned, Mr. Makepeace was also a dog team racer for a number of years and enjoys gardening and reading, especially books and articles on northern history and energy-efficient housing.

Mr. Speaker, Tom Makepeace is a book of knowledge when it comes to housing and home construction in the South Slave. He is a dedicated and loving husband, father and grandfather. I wish him well in his retirement and hope he will now have lots of time to enjoy his hobbies and his family. I would like to thank Mr. Tom Makepeace for his service to the GNWT and wish him all the best in his retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION ON CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak today on the Bathurst caribou issue. Yellowknife has the largest aboriginal population in our Territory. It is home to over 8,000 aboriginal people. I, therefore, have many constituents that are of aboriginal descent and, given the proximity of the communities of Dettah and Ndilo to the City of Yellowknife, the decision to ban hunting in the North Slave region is having a tremendous impact on some of my constituents.

It is very clear the science on the freefall of the Bathurst herd is compelling, but how do over 100,000 caribou disappear in just over five years? One theory is that many have gone east and joined the Ahiak and Qamanirjuaq herds. For most of us, what happened to the 100,000 caribou is certainly a mystery.

The fact is the Bathurst herd, as defined by ENR, is in serious decline. Decisions are required to conserve and protect the herd. However, the Minister of ENR has made a decision which directly impacts the Treaty rights of aboriginal people. My fear, Mr. Speaker, is that we are setting ourselves up for a protracted and costly court battle that will only benefit the lawyers that are involved. We need to stay out of court, Mr. Speaker. We need to have a meaningful consultation process with aboriginal governments and leaders. If the consultation

process was done the right way, a solution negotiated between the GNWT and aboriginal governments could have been found. My belief is that it's not too late to do this.

The Minister has to absolutely take every possible step to ensure consultation contains proper representation from all potentially affected groups. Given the way that aboriginal leaders and people have reacted to the government's decision, this would indicate, quite clearly, that we have not done the job necessary to both conserve the herd or respect treaty rights.

England's Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognized the vast area of this continent as aboriginal hunting grounds. One enduring effect of that proclamation has been settler governments' acceptance that harvesting fish and game is an integral feature of the aboriginal way of life. For aboriginal people, the implication is much stronger. For them the proclamation and treaties it inspired not only recognized but also protected their hunting and fishing privileges.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. RAMSAY: We do need to protect the caribou, but how can the Minister of ENR simply ignore the rights of aboriginal people? The failure to negotiate a solution is going to cost this government dearly. Our credibility is clearly in question.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES FUNDING

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

I would like to speak about aboriginal language funding. Last year, as chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and with my fellow Members, I was involved in the review of the Official Languages Act. Our research showed that many aboriginal languages are getting near to or at risk of disappearing.

When we visited communities, people expressed concern. One of the recommendations we made to the Legislative Assembly was to confirm government's responsibility to support language communities in using, maintaining, revitalizing, protecting, and modernizing the respective languages.

Recently, one of my constituents raised the concern that government has not expended all the funding that is available for aboriginal languages. It turns out that last year 6 percent of ECE's aboriginal languages budget was not used. That amounted to \$645,000 and could have contributed to the

important work. We certainly don't want to see funds for aboriginal languages go unspent. The previous year before this, \$800,000 was unspent.

In November I supported a request on behalf of the Deh Cho Friendship Centre in Fort Simpson for funds to prepare a Slavey CD-Rom. I received a letter back in December from the Minister of ECE indicating there was no funding in the budget to provide for assistance. I was advised that all funding was allocated. I wonder if all these projects and programs are on track to be completed. I have heard that it is sometimes difficult to get contractors to complete these types of projects. I would be happy to hear that this year's project will be fully expended, but it is a bit hard to believe, given the track record over the past couple of years.

I would like to ensure aboriginal language funding is flexible enough so that budgeted dollars can be used to good advantage towards protecting and revitalizing our aboriginal languages. I would also like to ask the Minister of ECE not to dismiss a unique proposal like this if they are going to lapse hundreds and thousands of dollars.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLARIFICATION OF ENERGY ISSUES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to clarify some discussion points on energy issues in a way that will help us move forward on the opportunities we have for developing these should we choose to do so.

At a recent opportunity I had to speak with consultants about energy issues I asked them whether northern utilities provided programs to help residents purchase appliances that would help reduce their energy cost. To my astonishment they responded that alternative energy was something that wasn't feasible and went on about alternative energy. The response did not have anything to do with the question I asked. I'm concerned that might be a filter amongst others in the House preventing us from moving forward in a progressive way to take advantage of the opportunities we have; opportunities which offer job creation, environmental benefits and, of course, financial savings.

I rarely speak about alternative energy. The government may have a role in research and testing technologies. I speak about renewable energy; energy, forms of technology that are well proven, demonstrated in thousands to millions of homes and businesses around the world and, in fact, applicable here. In almost every case there is an instance or more in the Northwest Territories where these are in place.

When I talk about renewable energy I talk about hydroelectricity. This is off-the-shelf technology, especially run-of-the-river. The Yukon has had these in place for over four decades. We have opportunities and we have spent millions of dollars studying our opportunities, but not once have we put it in place yet.

I talk about solar water heating. We have solar water heaters in the Northwest Territories. They are saving us dollars and have reasonable payback time. This is not something to be tested and so on. These are demonstrated technologies.

I talk about biomass. We know there are millions of homes and tens of thousands of businesses that use this technology. In the Northwest Territories we are using it and in every case we have made big savings, created jobs, and been better off for the environment.

I ask that when we speak about these issues we don't let these opaque filters slide over our faces, we actually must listen to the words that are spoken and realize that we're talking here about real opportunities.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. BROMLEY: I started mentioning the consultants that I had talked to about energy issues. They mentioned that they had read my statement to the House on Monday and again went off on why the alternative technologies were not possible and feasible and so on, no role for research and that. Again that underlines to me the need to be clear when we are speaking about these issues, that we hear the words that are being spoken, realize that I am not speaking in the House... I don't speak much, if at all, about alternative technologies. I speak about what is actually viable and proven. These are real opportunities again that can provide us financial savings, provide us jobs, cleaner energy, and represent the responsible action that the world is expecting of everybody. There are individuals, businesses, communities, and entire jurisdictions that are taking this approach around the world and enjoying those benefits. I think we need to lead in that direction.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION ON CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I at this time would like to rein in regarding the caribou issue. I believe for one involved in the land claims negotiations going back 15 or 20 years, I think this

was the fundamental element of the Dene-Métis claim; realizing that they wanted more than just hunting rights. They wanted to have the ability to manage the wildlife, manage the forest, manage the resources through an instrument like a land claim to ensure that they do have the tools to be included, be able to consult with their members and, more importantly, to be involved in the decision-making of policies before government makes the final decision. Allow them to work themselves into systems that allow for the renewable resources board, working with the community renewable resource councils, working with the harvesters, and working with the organizations that are out there. At the end of the day aboriginal people have been maintaining their lifestyle for 10,000 years because of caribou. The importance of caribou that there is on aboriginal culture in the Northwest Territories is important and critical to who they are.

I think it's essential that this government looks at those instruments and those land claim agreements that have worked in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, that have worked in the Gwich'in Settlement Region, that have worked in the Sahtu region, and now in regard to the Tlicho communities to ensure that those instruments, and those instruments that aren't in those other regions, work with those harvesters, work with those aboriginal leaders to clearly demonstrate that we are a consensus government in the Northwest Territories.

We try to work things out, we talk things through, we find solutions to these problems, and not impose restrictive measures on people that get their dander up because they're upset. If you're going to take someone's rights away, at least allow them to be consulted, be involved in that decision, so when the decision's made we have unanimity, we have people onside, we have people knowing what are the options, what are the alternatives. We've done that in other areas. We have the Bluenose situation in the Beaufort Sea area in regard to working out with the Bluenose Caribou Management Board from the Sahtu, the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit, to come up with a regime where we have allowed for tags to be issued to communities in regard to that herd so you know how many tags are being used, making sure they have the ability to use those tags. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, is to find a solution to this problem through dialogue, not enforcement of the powers of a Minister...

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

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, as I stated, we cannot use the...(inaudible)...law of the land by way of having a ministerial decision made that is

imposed on the people that have depended on subsistence for years. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister some questions around this matter in regard to the legal authority that he made this decision on, what legislative tool was used and exactly what instrument of law, of authority, of powers, where did it come from? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 243-16(4): IMPLEMENTATION OF GNWT CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I want to ask the Minister: does the Minister have a government-wide consultation guideline policy when it comes to aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations has worked on a consultation framework and worked with departments on our processes and how we interact on business as it involves the aboriginal governments across the Territory. So, yes. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the framework that the Minister has made reference and about working with the other departments in terms of a government-wide consultation process, I want to ask the Minister, in terms of this consultation guideline, has this guideline been used in terms of dealing with this issue here that we're talking about in terms of the caribou and the issues surrounding the banning of the caribou in this particular area?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the consultation framework that we have been working on and continue to work on implementation plans with departments, it's up to each department to go through that process and determine the responsibility and the level of responsibility based on the claims that are out there, existing claims. So that's in place. We provide that and we have some reference material and a consultation resource guide and some training modules that we're starting to roll out there. But it's the responsibility of each department, and that goes around the existing frameworks we have in place. As we heard earlier

during the Member's statements around some of our existing claims and the resource councils and the hunters and trappers councils, for example, those are part of our practice. There is a set difference, though, when it comes to some of the responsibilities that we have when it comes to emergency measures as well. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the consultation framework and the various departments that interpret, I'm trying to think if this is what the Minister is saying, that each department interprets their own process of consultation. Can the Minister then provide to this House in terms of how does the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs monitor and evaluate if this is the process that we're going to use in terms of lessons to be learned through this exercise.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the process we have established to clearly define our processes is one where we're working on an implementation plan. What we do have in place right now, each department is responsible for determining whether a duty exists depending on the claims that are in place, self-government agreements that are in place, the decisions made across Canada that have affected aboriginal rights and responsibilities and responsibilities of governments that have jurisdiction. So that's in place and each department then, within their authority, has that information available to them. But we are working on an implementation to make it clear. We've been working with the Department of Justice on this and we are working on the implementation plan and prepared to come to Members once we have that plan ready to go. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the legal court cases, I think it's the Delgamuukw court case that puts the issue of government-wide consultation guidelines in terms of affected parties such as the aboriginal peoples and their rights. The Minister has indicated the implementation plan and possibly this side of the House will see some discussion paper on policy in terms of the consultation. I'm very surprised that we have not yet seen, to date, the implementation plan or just how they're going to be used by this department. I would ask if the Minister would share that with the House as soon as possible in terms of having some good discussions as to how we can go forward on this issue such as the one with the caribou.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We have presented to committee the initial work that we are going to do on consultation. The framework, we're working on an implementation plan. But that does not mean we have not been in a consultative framework. We, across the government, have a process watching

our claims and trying to ensure departments pay attention to that as we make any decisions around government programs, services, delivery and so on and so forth. But we realize we need to have a clearer framework and that's what we're doing. As soon as we have our implementation plan ready, we'll be scheduling time with committees. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 244-16(4):
CONSULTATION ON CARIBOU
MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I led off last week talking about a caribou issue and I'd like to continue with my support for the aboriginal communities and leadership with regard to that. I just wanted to ask the Minister of ENR about how he came to exert his authority over aboriginal treaty rights.

I've got in front of me here, Mr. Speaker, a portion of our Northwest Territories Act, which is actually federal legislation under subsection 18. The Commissioner in Council -- which references our Executive Council -- can make ordinances with respect to preservation of game, and as well as the same thing under 18(2), preservation of game in the Northwest Territories. However, under 18(3), Mr. Speaker, hunting for food: nothing shall be construed as authorizing the Executive Council to make ordinances restricting or prohibiting Indians and Inuit from hunting for food. So how can the Minister exert that kind of authority to restrict Indians and Inuit from hunting food under his powers? Can the Minister tell me that, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you look at the act in its entirety, and I think section 16, as well, informs this particular issue. As well, there was an amendment made by an Order-in-Council change made in 1960, which added four species -- the barren land caribou, the muskox, polar bear and the bison -- to a list of being in danger of extinction, which was further translated to become operationalized through the Wildlife Act giving us that authority. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is acting on an Order-in-Council in 1960, Mr. Speaker. That is archaic. That is the middle of the last century, Mr. Speaker. How can he do that? The whole issue is that aboriginal court cases today in the current day here, Mr. Speaker, do recognize subsistence harvesting even if there are low

populations in terms of the cod fishing in the east and the west coast. Once again, I would like to ask the Minister, I'm not questioning his ability to ban caribou, but I am questioning his authority to ban aboriginal people from subsistence harvesting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the reality for us as a territorial government, as Members opposite well know, many of our pieces of legislation, including the Wildlife Act, are very old and need an updating. Our Forestry Act is another act as a case in point. We are not prohibiting subsistence hunting. We are saying yes, the North Slave is a vast area where subsistence hunting is available. In this particular area in the middle, because of the particular herd that winters there, we want to protect that herd because the numbers are low, but there are other opportunities to hunt. We are fully prepared and willing to work and are, in fact, working with the aboriginal governments to take advantage of the other opportunities that are there recognizing the full right to subsistence hunting, not just Treaty rights but aboriginal right to harvest, because we also have many Metis as well that make use of that right as well. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I am still not clear on the powers that he does have to limit aboriginal subsistence hunting. He references an Order-in-Council from 1960 which also references muskox, polar bear and woodland bison which we do hunt, Mr. Speaker, so how can he pick one over the other? I think the case has to be made that the process in his decision-making is about protecting extinct animals, threatened species or endangered species, but he has never given the case to this House or anybody that that is what he is doing. He is only saying low numbers, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister on what legal basis is he making this decision. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, flowing from the Northwest Territories Act, of course, is the Wildlife Act, which another piece of antiquated legislation is being redone but still the tool that we have. It gives us the authority when you put all the pieces together to make those decisions when it comes to responding to conservation issues. Every land claim recognizes that fact. There is a clause in there that entitles the Minister, under very clear, unique circumstances related to conservation emergencies and safety issues, to be able to act in the best interest of conservation. In this case, we have taken that authority, looked at the numbers. We have extensive science to back it up. In the issue of preservation and conservation, we have made that decision. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, like my colleague Mr. Ramsay said in his Member's statement, we

are going to end up going to court if this continues. We have the national chief of the Northwest Territories AFN as well probably looking at this legally. At the same time, we've got precedence setting court cases. We've got protection in our Charter rights, and even in our own NWT Act, Mr. Speaker, it says we cannot prevent aboriginal people from hunting anywhere, any herds. It is not about lifting a ban, it is about allowing aboriginal people to continue to do what they've been doing for hundreds and thousands of years, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, of course, we agreed we are not limiting or restricting or taking away any aboriginal right to harvest. We are just indicating there is a conservation issue and we have to adjust where we hunt to protect the herd. We believe we have the full authority when there are conservation issues that are emergency in nature, which we consider the Bathurst herd to be where the precipitous drop in numbers indicate to us that, if something isn't done, that herd will in all probability cease to exist. That is the rationale. We have the legislation and we believe we have made the right decision. I would also point out that we have very strong support from the Northwest Territories Metis Nation and the North Slave Metis. The Tlicho Government has been in support of the intent to conserve and protect the herd. We have some unresolved issues with the Yellowknives. We are, I believe, in the process of and still talking towards sorting those out. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 245-16(4):
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES
AND LAND CLAIM AGREEMENTS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my statement earlier, the main estimate in regards to managing wildlife in the Northwest Territories is no longer the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is the Wildlife Boards which have been established under land claim agreements. For those areas where there are no land claim agreements, they still have the right under National Resources Agreements with Ottawa to ensure their fundamental rights are there.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to follow up on questions from my colleague Mr. Menicoché. He mentioned certain sections. Is there a specific section that you can provide to this House on exactly how the decisions were made and under one section, made reference to an amendment or basically Order-in-Council which was passed in 1960. It does talk about certain species in that act in regards to the barren-ground caribou, muskox, polar bear, wood

buffalo, but yet, Mr. Speaker, the question has to be asked. If that is the Order-in-Council you are following, why is it that this government has been licensing outfitters and allowing major mining development to take place in this herd's habitat and do nothing about it? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me restate once again that we do have the authority and we acted on it with very great care and, in our belief, a very measured way. The issue that the Member talks about, resource developments have gone through full environmental assessments, permitting and the regulatory process and have received their approval to operate. While there is some broader issue coming to light as people look at the affects of cumulative impacts that is yet to be dealt with. But all those projects went through a process that fully engaged all Northerners, all the aboriginal governments and we followed that every step of the way. The outfitters and the time when the numbers were higher were in business but, at this point, there is no harvest but aboriginal harvest in the North Slave. With the Tlicho that covers the area of the Bluenose-East, the Bathurst and with the Ahiak as well are present.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, in the land claim agreement, it is pretty clear that prior to any government actions, they have to allow the management authorities to look at those requirements or look at the proposal that the Minister wants to put forward and allow them an opportunity to oversee that proposal, look at the proposal, have public hearings and meetings, have workshops or whatever they have to do to consult with their members. I would like to ask the Minister exactly under the land claim agreements where it clearly stipulates that the review of proposal of wildlife management actions have to be passed through the management authorities. Did the Minister follow that authority knowing the Wekeezhii board has not had an opportunity to take a full consultation on this matter, is not going to make a decision any time soon, but yet that process has not been enacted? I would like to ask the Minister, have you used that land claims process to come up with a workable solution before you made that decision?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the normal course of events where co-management boards are in a place, that is fully functioning, that is the practice. Every agreement has a caveat or clause in there that, in case of emergency or situations related to conservation and safety, the Minister has the authority to act, to be used very carefully and judiciously but it is there. In the Tlicho, the Wekeezhii process is starting up. In the

Akaitcho, there is no land claim, so we have a complex situation here. The Northwest Territories Metis don't have a settled claim either.

So we have a very complex process here, a complex political arrangement. The Wekeezhii process was to be completed prior to the hunting season. It wasn't. We have a gap where we have numbers telling us the herd is in great decline and in serious need of protection. That if something wasn't done and we had another hunting season of 7,000 to 10,000 animals being taken out of this herd, that it would be putting it very close to the brink of extinction. Therefore, we were of the opinion that we had to act with the band for this very short period. We had the support of the Métis, the Tlicho, and the Northwest Territories Métis, and we're working with Yellowknives to resolve the outstanding issues.

MR. KRUTKO: One of the main components of the land claim agreements is that we knew at some point we were going to come to this situation. In the future, going forward, under the land claim agreements there's a section that talks about the total allowable harvest that has to be considered before you make a decision to take anyone's harvesting rights away. There is a certain process of who gets excluded first, second, third, fourth, but the last person that you exclude is the aboriginal harvester in those authority areas. Has this government done an evaluation regarding the allowable harvest levels in this region that is being affected?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have followed that process, that priority list. The only hunting and harvesting that is left in the North Slave at all is the aboriginal harvest. We have indicated that the numbers tell us that the one herd, the Bathurst herd, is in great serious danger of almost extinction if we don't do anything. We've made the decision to help protect the herd to give it a chance to recover. We've indicated there are two other herds in the region that have greater capacity to sustain some more harvest, those being the Bluenose-East and the Ahiak. We're working with the aboriginal governments to in fact take advantage of that harvest opportunity and to ensure that we still honour the aboriginal right to harvest, and we do once again have the support of the Métis, the Tlicho, and we're working with the Yellowknives, as we speak, to try to resolve the outstanding issues with them.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Again I'd like to ask the Minister if he can give us documentation before this House on exactly what decision was made. Finally, was the Cabinet directive given to make that decision?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Cabinet was apprised. The discussion was had. As Minister with

the authority to make that decision after that, I proceeded to in fact carry out with the actions that have happened since then.

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

QUESTION 246-16(4):
ABSENTEEISM IN NWT SCHOOLS

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke of absentee rates of aboriginal students and how that was directly linked to the functional grade level. I'm going to ask questions of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Can the Minister tell me what he intends to do to deal with this huge problem?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. There is a challenge that is before us on the enrolment issue. It impacts most of the schools in the Northwest Territories. Clearly we are making substantial changes in that area. There have been numerous meetings undertaken. On the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative that's been undertaken since last April there has been discussion on how we can improve in those areas. We have an initiative whereby we've given funding to school boards, education councils, so they can focus on specific areas of initiatives such as, if I can share the South Slave region where the Member's school is part of, it will be a Get Real Program: Return, Earn, and Learn. It is an alternative high school program to keep or attract high-risk students, earning industry recognized certificates. Students will work on high school courses at their own pace, evening courses. Those are just some of the examples that have been provided to the regional education boards.

MR. BEAULIEU: The absenteeism rates may be coming down a bit across the Territories, but absenteeism rates in Tu Nedhe are still fairly high; higher than the average. Will the Minister agree to look at the possibility of hiring parent support workers in some of these smaller communities where absenteeism rates are the highest? Perhaps part of the Building Our Future since this problem impacts the social programs departments.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I agree this could be part of the discussion that the education council could have within their mandate. We have given them additional funding to what we provide on an annual basis, so that could offset the costs of dealing with absenteeism and the enrolment issues that we're faced with as a challenge. We are making progress. As we started since September to today, we are making slight progress and positive steps. The enrolments are starting to climb again.

Those are discussions that can easily be undertaken at the education council level.

MR. BEAULIEU: The Minister sits on the Building Our Future strategic committee along with the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Premier. These are two important positions dealing with our social issues across the Territories. Would the Minister ensure that this item is a standing item on the agenda for this committee? The item I am referring to again is the absenteeism rates in small aboriginal communities.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Truly I am part of the committee that has been established. This is certainly one of the highest priorities that we have within our education department, working along with the education council and the Dehcho education authority to improve the enrolment, the absenteeism that's before us, and to make that a successful project in the communities. We are making progress and will continue to discuss that as a priority item.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through this Building Our Future committee can the Minister commit resources or have the committee commit resources to the district education authorities in communities where absentee rates are the highest? I'm talking about resources so these people can maybe hire someone to help the parents get their kids to school.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This could be one venue that we can certainly stress to identify funding, but at the same time there has been huge success in the South Slave region, of which the Member's schools are part of. We want to use that as a pilot project where they are almost meeting Canadian standards. So certainly those are the areas that we will continue to focus on and would like to use as a pilot project for the Northwest Territories. We'll continue to make those a success.

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

QUESTION 247-16(4):
DISRUPTION OF PHONE SERVICE
IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today was regarding the phone lines being down in Tuktoyaktuk for six days. Was the Minister of telecommunications notified by NorthwesTel regarding the situation in Tuk?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we have some involvement with

the telecommunications on the regulatory side, in the normal business operating issues we are not normally involved. So, no, I was not aware and I will have to check with the department to see if they received any correspondence of this particular outage that the Member refers to.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Minister. In regard to the phone lines being down, you know it creates a lot of hardship on families just not talking to their loved ones or even your parents. Is the Minister willing to give his support to the community to make a complaint to NorthwesTel regarding their service?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: If the Member would send me enough of the information, I would forward it to the department, through the office of the chief information officer, to see what option we have to, in fact, help them further their concern about filing their concern with NorthwesTel. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd really like to see if the department could also do an investigation in regard to what went wrong and what could be provided for better service, not only for this incident but other problems such as this that could happen in the future. Could we get the commitment from the Minister? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have some information that I can share with the Member that we just got through Public Works and other departments. So we can share that with the Member and we can have the discussion about necessary next steps to try to be able to be more responsive to this issue, if that's possible. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing that information that the Minister has. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is the safety concerns of the people of Tuk and the people of the Northwest Territories in the remote communities if something like this was to happen. I know we can't control the weather, but we had three days prior to the blizzard hitting the community of Tuk and the response to the community for the phone line system. Mr. Speaker, I mean, we have to hold NorthwesTel accountable in regard to their action in the service business. We need to get NorthwesTel to come and meet with the community. Is the Minister willing to help me to ask NorthwesTel to come meet with the leadership of the community of Tuktoyaktuk? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I understand that long distance service has been impacted but local service and cell phone service is still available. But, yes, I would be happy to talk to the Member. We'll make sure he gets this information and we

can help him forward his concerns to NorthwesTel. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 248-16(4):
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that as a government we still don't have a firm consultation policy when it comes to dealing with aboriginal governments in our Territory, considering half the population here, Mr. Speaker, is of aboriginal descent.

Mr. Speaker, we have a duty to be fair. Successful consultation must include a process and a decision. Today across this country, governments are actively engaged with aboriginal peoples. This engagement undoubtedly includes a degree of accommodation and mitigation. Our government cannot continue to downplay the importance of inherent treaty rights. Consultation process needs to be fair, reasonable and transparent. I'd like to ask the Minister of ENR: how does the decision to ban all hunting in the North Slave region accommodate the rights of aboriginal harvesters? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's the short-term need, because of the precipitous drop in numbers, for the ban. The long-term goal, to affect the rights of all aboriginal harvesters especially going forward into the future, is to make the right decisions now to make sure that there are caribou, in fact, available to be harvested and so that aboriginal people can, in fact, exercise that right to harvest. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Other Members have talked about this, but the Sparrow case in British Columbia and the Sparrow test, I wanted to mention this, as well, Mr. Speaker. Is there an existing aboriginal right? Most certainly there is. Under the Sparrow test, does it impose undue hardship? Undoubtedly, it does. Does it prevent the holder of the right from preferred means of exercising that right? Undoubtedly, it does. The Minister's decision, he says that it was made on the basis of conservation. Now, in that Sparrow test, the government has to recognize a priority for First Nations harvesting. I'm wondering how the government has recognized First Nations as being a priority in harvesting, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have a clear priority and we have held to that and we have held to it consistently across the Northwest Territories. There's no more outfitting. There's no

more commercial harvest. There's no resident harvest. The only harvest that's permitted is aboriginal harvest. We've indicated that in this one area there's a need to preserve the herd, but we'll make an accommodation and we'll provide the resources to go access and put to use the right to harvest in a carefully controlled circumstance with the Bluenose-East and the Ahlak.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are very aware of our obligation in everything we do and we can point to example after example of how we fully engage in consultation in the past, now, and we're going to do it in the future. In the case of the caribou, we have done that and we're going to continue to do that. We have support from the Metis, the Tlicho and we're going to continue work to resolve the situation with the Yellowknives. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about groups that are onside, but there are groups that aren't onside, and I know he says we're working on it. I'd like to ask the Minister today, how exactly is he working on bringing other groups onside with the decision to ban hunting in that area. Also, how is he going to accommodate the treaty right for aboriginal people to harvest caribou in that zone? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I want to speak first to the issue of, yes, there are some treaty right implications, but the aboriginal right to harvest, as well, includes those of the Metis, and we are very sensitive to those as well. I met with the Yellowknives last night. We've had discussions this morning. I met with the Tlicho acting grand chief today along with Minister Lafferty. There are discussions happening this afternoon. There is active work with the Yellowknives and with the Tlicho to make sure that we can keep moving forward, keeping in mind the primary function and focus of the ban and the purpose of the ban is conservation so that, in fact, for the coming generations there are, in fact, animals to be harvested so that the traditional right and aboriginal right to harvest can, in fact, be put to use. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were two motions recently passed, one in October of last year and another one late last year, pertaining to caribou by the Dene Nation. I was wondering if the Minister is aware of those two motions that were passed and the fact that they show goodwill on behalf of the aboriginal leaders and governments in this Territory. Why is it that we're in the predicament that we're in today? Why couldn't a solution be found to this situation? The goodwill was out there and now we're left, again, our credibility is suffering because we cannot come up with a solution to this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I think the Member is over-generalizing. That, in fact, if you look, the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu and the Tlicho, the Metis, we have worked through our arrangements with any decisions on wildlife. Where there are settled claims, we have very solid, productive working relationships on very difficult circumstances. In the North Slave, with the Tlicho and the Metis, and we're working on the Akaitcho. I think the Member, this is a case of where I believe our glass is about 80 percent or 90 percent full, and we're working on the final 10 percent with the Yellowknives to come to an accommodation. I think we should be celebrating the success we have working with aboriginal governments in a whole host of areas, including co-management boards. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 249-16(4):
COORDINATION EFFORTS FOR
NWT ENERGY INITIATIVES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask questions again today in regard to an NWT-wide coordinated energy plan. I'm going to direct my questions today to the lead Minister for the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee to see whether I can get some more full answers, perhaps.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance, in answer to my questions, implied that we have a coordinated approach to energy across the NWT. So I would like to ask the Minister for MECC if he can identify for me the one document which outlines all the NWT energy activities for both the government and our residents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I can point out a number of different documents. I can also tell her that the previous two governments created energy strategies that cost about a couple of million dollars apiece both in the 14th Assembly and the 15th Assembly, so we do have a benefit of those documents. We have a number of different departments that have different responsibilities. I guess a good place to start would be the business plans of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister but, again, I have to ask the same question. I am asking for one document. Does this government have one document which talks about all the energy activities that we do? He's mentioned that there are a number of documents. I don't dispute that. There are way too many documents, in my

view. He has also talked about strategies which we paid for many millions of dollars. Where are those? Why aren't we using them? Is there one document which coordinates all our energy activities? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, like a well oiled machine, we have a number of different charts and a number of different connections. We do have a number of different departments that are responsible for a number of different things. We have a number of coordinating committees that ensure that all of the provisions that have been identified and the different strategies are provided for. The Department of ENR deals with energy conservation, energy efficiency. We also have ITI that has the energy planning unit. We have the Executive and the Premier responsible for the Northwest Territories. In our commission, we have the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee. We make sure that all aspects of energy are dealt with. As far as having a separate department that would house all of these different responsibilities, well, that is something that is a decision that is made when you look at the structure of government. Up until this point, it has been seen that it can work very well through Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to take from the Minister's answer... That was a simple yes or no question. I don't think I heard either yes or no in that answer. So I have to assume there is no one document. I didn't ask for a new department. I asked for a document.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has a Greenhouse Gas Strategy. I believe that we have a target within that strategy. It is probably outdated, but I believe that we have one. I would like to know what our government is doing to include our communities and all of our residents as individuals in setting and meeting their own greenhouse gas targets. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague indicated, we do have a Greenhouse Gas Strategy. It is one that needs to be reviewed and updated. Every community in the Northwest Territories has a sustainable energy plan. It has been provided for through different levels of government funding. Like the Minister of Environment has indicated, it is very difficult for us to go on our own. We have to know what the United States is doing with regards to climate change and greenhouse gases. Here in the Northwest Territories, we only provide for a very small part in the whole world in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Although we are the highest per capita as emitters of greenhouse gases, but we do have a process. We do have a Greenhouse Gas Strategy, and we will be updating that strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I guess I just have to say to the Minister that I have a really hard time with the argument that we need to wait for what the U.S. does or we need to align ourselves with the United States. I am sorry, but we are a Territory in and of our own right. We should be doing our own work and setting our own targets. The fact that it is only a small bit in the environment of the world has nothing to do with the fact that we should do it.

I would like to ask the Minister if he can identify, and this is again in terms of energy initiatives, what the GNWT is doing to educate our residents and our staff about energy initiatives that they can, as individuals, take part in to better our environment. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I did say that, although we are only a small part, we are doing a greenhouse gas review. We will have a Greenhouse Gas Strategy where we will be doing more than our share. I agree with the Member; education is very important to anything that we do. We have the Arctic Energy Alliance, which is funded by a number of government departments. This is something that we focus on continually in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. There is a whole conservation education department. This is one of the priorities for this government. Also through the \$60 million of Alternative Energy Initiative, we have identified the need for education and we will make sure that we differentiate between energy efficiency and alternative energy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 250-16(4):
LEGISLATION TO BAN CELL PHONE USE
WHILE DRIVING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise the issue I was discussing in my Member's statement today and it's my concern that there is still no legislation, that I'm aware of, on the legislative agenda coming forward in this Legislature's term.

Mr. Speaker, we have a little more than a year and a half left, and the question keeps getting asked to the Minister of Transportation, where is this legislation, where is the department on this legislation, where is the department on this issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Transportation: does he expect any legislation coming forward in this term to deal with banning cell phones while people are driving? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is starting to sound like a broken record. Every time he doesn't get his way, he's starting to say the Minister doesn't care, the Minister doesn't care. That's a very strong statement to make, given that I take very seriously what the Members raise in this House and outside of this House and what the residents of the North bring forward.

I also have to say where was he when I did make the response on what we were doing with cell phones. Either he doesn't know what I made in my statement, or he doesn't care to know what I made in my statement, or he's totally confused about what I said in my statement. I would certainly be glad to share that statement with him. It would lay out what we're planning to do.

I had indicated, in commitment to this House, that we would be collecting data and that's what we are doing right now. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Apparently, I should say I hurt the Minister's feeling over there. I didn't realize he was all sensitive about this and maybe the job is too big for him...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Awww.

MR. HAWKINS: ...to the issue of being challenged. Mr. Speaker, you know, gathering data is about as useful as collecting a single e-mail on this particular case. What does that actually mean in the real life of bringing forward legislation that reflects a ban for this type of product in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I don't have to point out to the Member that enforcement and penalties are just one portion of what it would take to deal with the issue of distracted driving education. It has to be part of that process. We have started doing the communications. We are talking to the communities. We are talking to the City of Yellowknife. I know he's very much in a hurry and is a very impatient person, but there are certain steps that we have to take. I will remind the Member again, in case he wasn't here for the vote, but we did vote in this House and the vote to bring in legislation on cell phones was defeated. It is my job now to have all the information in place before I go back to the standing committee to present that information so they can see what work is out there, how serious this concern is and then I would take a measure on whether there is enough support to bring it forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I can obviously see there is an excellent jousting match going on today.

I will send one back. The Minister is correct; I am impatient because safety is at risk here. I wish he would realize that too. Mr. Speaker, consultation, we have to talk, we have to talk, we have to talk. We have eight out of 11 regions that are addressing this issue. I am not sure what more studying the Minister needs to do other than the fact that do we need to make a particular type of legislation that reflects northern values but still keeps safety in mind? Mr. Speaker, what signal is the Minister waiting to move forward on this issue? Is he waiting for a private Member's bill by Regular Members to move forward on this issue? Would the Minister support a private Member's bill if it was brought forward by a Regular Member? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Member, I would like to bring information forward when I am totally prepared. We did have a vote in this House. I don't want to bring a piece of legislation forward to the Members of this House and have it defeated. I think there is a lot of work that has to be done. The Members have to see some of the drafts of the legislation that we would be proposing. That is what we are working on right now. We are still consulting. We've heard how serious the issue of consulting with residents of the Northwest Territories is. We plan to do the work necessary. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, that is one of the better answers that I have heard from this Minister in a while. Mr. Speaker, this Minister is wanting a show about working together and doing homework. At present, I have already started working on a private Member's bill on this particular issue. When it gets finalized, I am going to bring it forward to my colleagues to see if they have input. I guess my question to the Minister directly is: would he like to co-author this bill and show some unanimity in this House where that side of the House, the government side works with Regular Members, put our citizens first in a safety process? Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to co-author a private Member's bill? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The Member knows full well that we're always open for advice. The Member seconded a motion in this House that got defeated on this very issue. He knows the challenges that cell phone and distracted driving legislation has, that it needs a lot of attention and a lot of work. We have to have all our facts straight. We need to consult with our colleagues across the floor. We are going to be writing to standing committee to request some time to do so. That's our plan right now.

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

QUESTION 251-16(4):
GNWT RECRUITMENT FOR FOREIGN
WORKERS IN THE NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I found the Minister of Human Resources statement interesting today about eRecruiting and the vacancies in the territorial government. The territorial government isn't the only employer in the Northwest Territories who has issues with recruitment and retention of staff and I believe I can safely say this is an issue in the private sector as well as in the public sector. The Minister indicated that with the new system up and running, that they've had a lot of applications come in. There were 587 applications for 112 government positions. These come from a total of 76 different countries. This effort is all well and good, but I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources what we're going to do when people apply to come to work in the Northwest Territories from other countries and we have a bottleneck at Service Canada with a person who works in that office who is over-opinionated and anti-immigration, from what I know. Just about every constituent that I have talked to that has any dealings with Service Canada has found this particular individual to be a problem. I'd like to ask the Minister what he's going to do with that. It's great to advertise jobs and get applications from all over the world, but what are you going to do when we don't control immigration and we have no control over who sits in that seat?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly have heard from a number of businesses about the concerns with regard to recruitment of employees in certain sectors. I guess the first thing I would do is identify the department and program where the problem is and consult with my colleague, the Minister responsible for employment. I guess then I would have follow-up with the federal department responsible. Failing that, we would approach the federal Minister.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: It's a sad statistic that the Northwest Territories is the only jurisdiction in Canada that saw their population decrease in the last census. We have no control over the ability to bring people to work in the Northwest Territories who come from foreign countries, because that is a federal jurisdiction that we'd have no control over whatsoever. I appreciate the fact that the Minister would use his influence at the FBT or with the federal government to make sure that we, as the NWT employers in the private and public sector,

are not going to be detrimentally affected by this situation. This situation has existed for quite some time now. I have colleagues in this Legislature who can also share stories of their constituents who have had this same experience. How long is this going to be allowed to carry on? We can have all the expensive campaigns to promote coming to live in the Northwest Territories that you want, but when you have one person sitting in a position that's responsible for all immigration applications to the Northwest Territories who's anti-immigration what's the Minister going to do about it and when is he going to do it?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I've already started investigating where the bottlenecks are and we will be contacting the management in that department that the Member is referring to. We'll work from there. Certainly it's a very big concern for our government about the fact that the population of the Northwest Territories has been dropping for about two or three years now. Mind you, not significant, but enough to cause us concern. We will be examining all the different avenues that we can to attract people to the North. We will be launching a number of campaigns.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Like I said, without a single exception, this is the report that I hear back from people who try to work with either advocating or assisting people with immigration issues in the Northwest Territories. This is all handled through a Yellowknife office. Would it be appropriate for me today to say to those people who've had those experiences, to take the effort to communicate with the Minister and share with him their experiences so that he has some solid evidence with which to go to the federal Minister?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: It always helps to have information as to the nature and size of the problem. So any information that I have from the Member or any other businesses that are running into problems may help resolve the problem.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last thing that I will ask the Minister is when he does communicate with federal counterparts or folks in the federal government who are responsible for immigration, would he be kind enough to share that communication and those efforts that he will take on behalf of his department with the Regular Members of this House?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'd be pleased to do that.

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

QUESTION 252-16(4):
 MINISTERIAL ENERGY COORDINATING
 COMMITTEE WORK TO DATE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the lead Minister on energy issues. I would like to follow up on my colleague Ms. Bisaro's questions. I often wonder what this coordinating committee is up to. One of the things that I know we're trying to do is get community energy plans from every community. Is the Minister ensuring that those plans have energy reduction targets, energy efficiency targets, conservation targets, and renewable energy targets or is it just community energy plans that can say yeah, we're going to do our best to do what we can to reduce our energy needs?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The lead Minister of the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee is chaired by myself and it's made up of a number of Ministers that have responsibilities with regard to energy in a number of areas. The committee includes Premier Roland, Minister of ENR, and the Minister of DOT. The issues that we deal with refer to the whole of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Individual Ministers still have the responsibilities that have been assigned to them. As we go along we deal with a myriad of issues and make sure the government is coordinated so that everybody knows what's going on, and then we can facilitate and advance the different initiatives and projects that this government undertakes.

MR. BROMLEY: I assume, from that response, that the Minister doesn't know and so everybody is not in fact in the know about what's happening on energy issues. Perhaps again the Climate Change Committee within the first year of our Assembly looked up the Green Procurement Plan for the government and found that it was a couple of paragraphs that said nothing. We agreed there was a real need for a tune-up. Is the lead Minister on energy aware of what's happening on that front and what role is he playing to ensure that's done?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I should have realized I was talking to the expert on all matters related to energy. Certainly we have a deputy minister group that is coordinating and leading the charge on dealing with greening the government. Certainly with HR we do have a section that's focusing on greening the government. With regard to procurement, this is something that the deputies will be working on.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm always concerned when things get to deputy ministers committee. They often are never heard from again or it's years before we get a response. I'm hoping there's some follow-up on that. The Minister mentioned the

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy and I'm wondering if he's intending to ensure that that strategy will finally adhere to the science-based targets, if he's aware of those, and whether or not he will ensure that those are part of that strategy as we develop it.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'll be working closely with my colleague the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources to ensure that we have a balanced approach when we develop and upgrade our Greenhouse Gas Strategy. I think whatever we do, we want to make sure that we can make real progress in this area, because we all recognize that we are feeling the effects and are having to deal with the effects of climate change.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's comments there. I think we're all with him on that. Finally, I guess just the concern that we want to be sure this energy coordinating committee is doing its work and providing us good value. What would the Minister say the best value has been that that committee has brought? The committee didn't exist before. We've now had it for two and a half years or so. What would you say the biggest gains would be?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I appreciate the Member giving me the opportunity to blow our own horn. I think I feel that the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee has been very successful and allowed us to make progress on a number of fronts where it would otherwise have been difficult to achieve. I think I can probably list three or four items. The most visible has been the \$60 million Alternative Energy Initiative. I think the coordination and facilitation of the electricity reviews, I think that the outcome, I guess the proof will be in the pudding whatever the outcome will be I think would be part of that. I think the facilitation of the Taltson Hydro Project and certainly I think that we have been able to keep the Arctic Energy Alliance going and have programs whereby we're providing initiatives for energy efficiencies. Of course, who can forget the retrofit program for the government?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I seek unanimous consent to go back to orders of the day item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Assembly of First Nations legal counsel, Ken Young, to the House, and also our national vice-chief of the Assembly of First Nations and national chief of the Dene Nation, Bill Erasmus.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the chief from Inuvik, Herb Blake, and also the president of the Gwich'in Development Corporation. Welcome, Herb.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Bill Erasmus, resident and constituent of Weledeh.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. 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. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 63-16(4):
NWT HOSPITAL SATISFACTION REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 64-16(4):
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES
SATISFACTION REPORT

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled NWT Hospital Satisfaction Report and Community Health Services Satisfaction Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 65-16(4):
FEDERAL ORDER-IN-COUNCIL C.R.C., C.1236
REGARDING GAME DECLARED IN DANGER
OF BECOMING EXTINCT

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Order-in-Council which was passed in 1960 by, I think, Prime Minister Diefenbaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 10:
EXEMPTION ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 10, Exemption Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 10, Exemptions Act, has had first reading.

---Carried

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; and Minister's Statement 47-16(4), Transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have before us for consideration today: Bill 2, Bill 4, Bill 7, Tabled Document 62-16(4) and Minister's Statement 47-16(4). What is the wish of committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to continue on with the detail of the Department of Health and Social Services for the operations main estimates and, time permitting, we could go on to Education opening comments. But I think that we would like to probably have a fairly short day today, so that would give us less than two hours to finish Health. So we'll see how it goes. I don't want to get Education officials over here for nothing. So for now, Health. Let's just say Health. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. That was that we continue with the Department of Health, likely just Health and Social Services today. Before we do that, we'll take a break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order and ask if the Minister will be bringing in witnesses.

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, please, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses in. Committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, colleagues. We are continuing, obviously, with the Department of Health and Social Services. I'd like to call on the Minister to introduce her witnesses. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is deputy minister of Health and Social Services, Paddy Meade; and, to my right is director of finance, Mr. Derek Elkin. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. We are now open for comments. We are on page 8-17, activity summary, program delivery support, operations expenditure summary, \$31.936 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the area I want to focus on is on the recruitment and retention programs. As we know, it's been noted that the issue of doctors in the Northwest Territories into our regions is very tough right now in terms of having good doctors coming to our regions and there are vacancies in the health care system. I want to ask in terms of have we seen a slight increase in terms of securing some doctors in our communities and some of the nurses in our health boards. I'm not just speaking for my own region but for the North in general. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, I would like to ask the deputy minister to give some information on where we are with physician recruitment in our authorities, especially in light of the new Collective Agreement and as well as the work that the deputy minister has been doing with the medical forum on this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Deputy Minister Meade.

MS. MEADE: Thank you. The issue of physician recruitment, whether it's full-time physicians or on locum, continues to be a challenge, but this is a challenge internationally. I think, in general, that while we do not have a full quota of physicians in full-time positions, we have been extremely successful, and I believe part of the last agreements were part of the success in ensuring that we have locums and coverage. But this does put a different challenge in how you plan your delivery and how you manage case management. It

creates greater continuum of case management issues and another reason why we have to rely more and more on our Health Net or eHealth system.

There have been in some areas physician recruitment and stability, but in the smaller communities and the ability to have physicians come in either for longer term locums to be willing to move on mobile provider teams or to have any interest in moving continues to be a struggle. So the conversation with the Medical Directors Forum is how we actually look at our physician resources as a territorial resource and look at innovative ways to be able to recruit and maintain a more permanent base, but it will require moving to different delivery systems. So, yes, the agreements have had impact, given the international shortage and continued shortage, and in particular where we need specialists. So hard to recruit areas continues to be internal medicine, psychiatry, areas that support good community delivery. Work in progress, I think one that we have to continue to work with our colleagues at the national level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Meade. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The comment from the deputy minister on looking at the delivery system in the Northwest Territories, because of this issue that we are facing here, would I dare say that are you looking at an overhaul in terms of how we deliver our health care in our communities or our regions in terms of coming to a centralized system of health care delivery as to what the regions and the communities want to see more health care delivery in their communities. I know there are some specialists that come in the regions on a rotation basis, doctors do come in on a certain rotation basis, and we would like to continue with that. However, I'm going to make the speculation that I don't know what to expect from the health care delivery system in the Northwest Territories. I'm not too sure if that's a fair question to ask of the deputy minister in terms of what does she mean by that.

MS. MEADE: So I am certainly not talking about moving away from community focus. In fact, I'm talking about how we better enhance it. But how you enhance it is what will be different.

Traditionally, everybody thought medicine was about seeing a doctor. It's not. It's about seeing a team of providers, and they can be connected many ways. If we look at pooling and using our physician resources centrally -- and that's virtual, by the way, that's not moving them -- they will be able to provide better clinical support to the health care units in the small communities and, I think, deliver better health care. But we have to accept, not just in the Territories but in general, that we are dealing

with a full-time and a very large part-time base, and it means you deliver different and you manage your standards and accountabilities at the medical/clinical/decision level differently. That's the kind of changes we make.

So I think it's an enhanced focus on how we can better support the communities and people to be supported, but it may not be by seeing the whites of the eyes of a physician all the time. So how do you increase the mobile visits, but also how do you get physicians to be able to support through electronic health and through telehealth some of those community decisions. I think it's going to be better care and better handover after somebody's been in the South, to be able to manage their recovery back home better. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I certainly look forward to the day where I could see what the deputy minister is saying in terms of improved health care services in the communities.

In the description here it talks about recruitment and retention programs specifically related to health and social service professionals. I want to ask, in terms of the recruitment of the aboriginal wellness workers, aboriginal health care providers such as the community health representatives, you know, people in the communities that have been working in this field but they're not recognized; some of the elders that we use or we go to for various reasons that could be deemed health issues or social services issues that recruitment of relying on our own people and not always relying on the outside. There are specific times when we need a medical doctor to come in, but there's also recognition of the aboriginal medical, if you could call it that, wellness model, so that we can utilize the traditional knowledge of the elders in our communities.

I think, Mr. Chair, that the Minister, prior to this chapter, did make some mention of the Foundation for Change. I've been looking at this. So that's what I wish to see. That's my vision, that our own people could be at the health centres or they can be going into the different houses in the communities to talk about prevention, to talk about the use of the traditional medicines from the land, medicine they have from the animals, medicine that could be used. People have a choice in terms of their well-being and the prevention of diabetes, prevention of heart disease, prevention of a lot of other things that we haven't yet given precedence to the aboriginal view on how we can work on this. A lot of it we rely on the model of the western concept of illness, and that is something that's good for some reasons but not for everything. So I hope, through the recruitment and on the whole health and social services, that this here looks at a balanced view of how health could be looked at in our communities and regions. Those are more comments to the department here and that's my wish, I guess, to see

how this program should be, could be, and hope to be implemented in this department. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. If I had a billion dollars... Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to advise the Member that much of what he's saying is something that we have been discussing and working with and it's part of the Foundation for Change plan in that we understand that we need to work on the larger framework, like the governance and delivery models but the focus in delivery needs to still be at the community level.

As mentioned earlier by the deputy minister, the recruitment and retention of physicians, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, for example, we have 68-plus positions and we have about 20 vacancies. While we are trying to recruit and retain, we understand that will continue to be a challenge because of the fact that not only are the residents and clients aging, but our health care professionals, by and large, are aging as well. So we are going to see increased demand for service but decreased number of people who could do the job.

This is why, under the Foundation for Change, we need to look at the overall system and do much of what MLA Yakeleya is saying, that is, to look in each community and see what is the team of care providers that we can establish in each community and region. They may not be the conventional health care people. We go to doctors when we need doctors here. We go to nurses and those people when we need them, but there are a lot we can do on prevention, promotion, as well as working with people as they go through their illness or their questions about their health issues or managing their cancer care afterward, because we know that lots of people can live a pretty good life afterwards from cancer treatment as long as they are looked after. So that is short. I will conclude there.

Much of what he is saying is part of our Foundation for Change action plan, understanding, though, it will take a long time for us to go to every community and work it out. So we are looking at first regional dialogue and we are looking, as the fund permits, to bring people together and have a dialogue about how do we take ownership of our own health care and what can we do from the ground up to make this work for us. That is part of the plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to follow up on a question I asked yesterday. It doesn't technically belong in this section. I think it does apply, because I am talking about the provision of physician and clinical services and so on. I asked yesterday about reciprocal billing and what we receive from Nunavut for the services that we

provide to people in Nunavut communities. I understood the answer, but Ms. Meade stated that the agreements and the contract in place are in place verbally and that they are finalizing the language. I am considering it a second time. I thought, oh, my. That is a little alarming that we have a verbal agreement. I am reading it again. I am pleased to hear that we are finalizing the contract, but my issue goes more to what is included in that contract. I wondered if I could get a bit more of an explanation.

When, for instance, we send Nunavut patients out to Edmonton for treatment, they use the services of Larga House, I believe, in Edmonton. They are assisted with their travel. They are assisted to get to their appointments and so on.

Another example is that we have a doctor in the ER generally who is on call and will take calls from nurses in Nunavut communities.

Another example is I gather that we send travelling clinics which go to Nunavut communities, the eye clinic for instance who is one and there are other ones as well who go into communities and do clinic work there.

Those are three examples of things which I don't imagine are covered in our reciprocal billing. Are those sorts of things covered in this contract which is currently verbal and which language is being finalized into a firm contract? Are those sorts of things considered in this contract? Are they in there or are we getting repaid for those kinds of services which are kind of under the radar and somewhat minor but it all adds up in the end? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I will turn to deputy minister Meade for that response.

MS. MEADE: Thank you. The current contract is between Stanton, although it is on behalf of the government, and it covers basically the Stanton and extension, but there is a difference around how the territorial government also gets funding back should there be under FNIHB or under this particular agreement. So there are a couple of pockets of pooling. Not all things are under the reciprocal billing. Basically those are hospitals, drugs, doctors, services under kind of the original Canada Health Act.

One of the things that we are working on with both Yellowknife and the Greys with the physicians, some of it we capture because of the reciprocal billing around physicians and the mobile clinics, but not all. I have to tell you that we aren't the first line of defence for that part of Nunavut. Actually, they are on call. They have a contract for on-call services where their nurse's first call is actually a physician in Manitoba and one of their health authorities and then the call is made to the

physician in the Stanton emergency if, in fact, the decision has been for a medevac and for some kind of treatment. That physician may also... Because some cases fly over us and go directly to Edmonton. I haven't given you enough. I would say we are getting most of it. We have flagged and we want to look at the whole agreement after this one, but better to get this part signed, and so you are quite right. It is a matter of just getting the final ink from Nunavut agreements there, but there is a next round for the next agreement that talks about what are the other services and, quite frankly, do they still make sense for us and where should Nunavut be planning. It is a larger discussion. Some things came out even in H1N1 planning that will now guide some of our discussions. It's on my agenda. We are already working with the CEOs.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chairman, thank you to the deputy minister for that explanation. I guess I am glad to hear that this is an issue that is going to be looked at in further detail. To me it sounds as though this is a logical approach to look at the big picture, figure out what we should be doing and what we shouldn't be doing and then go after the funding for those things that we are doing that aren't now covered. Is it possible for the deputy minister or the Minister to give us some indication of timing on sort of when this work might be completed, when we might be amending the agreement to sort of be able to say we are capturing all of the expenditures that we are incurring on behalf of Nunavut communities and citizens? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, the agreement that has been agreed to has been worked on for quite a while. That contract is closed, basically. The negotiation has been going on and that is done. As the deputy minister had indicated, there are some other things that we want to be able to prove, but that would involve larger discussions between not only the DMs but myself with the Nunavut government. This contract that we are finishing off is basically dealing with a situation where there had not been any solid agreement before and we are closing that part of our relationship with Nunavut. So we will have to engage in a bigger conversation with Nunavut. That could take a while to get there. We are more interested in getting this part done and then to build on the next phase. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, I understand that the one contract, the current contract, is basically finalized. I know a long time is what she has mentioned, but I am talking about the things that are not being captured now. How long do we think it is going to take to get some sort of agreement in place so that we can capture those

things? I appreciate that it is a long process, but what does "a long time" mean? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, I could tell you that this is something that is of interest to us. It does take two parties to negotiate. We will continue to encourage Nunavut to come to the table on this issue. I will be talking to Minister Curley on this issue as the DMs have been working on it for the last while. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess without having any kind of a time frame I need to ask a general question. If we are not currently capturing the costs of providing services, some services to Nunavut patients, communities, et cetera, what sort of liability does that put out there for us? How vulnerable are we to spending money that we're not going to recoup? Is this going to create a situation where we are going to be basically in debt because we're providing services for which we're not being paid? I guess I would like to know how much. But if the Minister can't tell me when we're going to be negotiating a new agreement, that's probably not forthcoming, but to the question of vulnerability and what sorts of costs we are liable to incur. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Deputy Minister Meade.

MS. MEADE: Where the services provided are under the Canada Health Act, one of the positions in the Canada Health Act is portability. So this faces all jurisdictions. We have to provide service. The issue that goes beyond is what is the understanding of the agreement on devolution of what the Territories would provide and that's part of this discussion. Of course, our other problem is health care changes so quickly that what was once service within a hospital is now moved out.

When the Minister says it's a priority, it certainly is. Quite frankly, the issue is not necessarily Nunavut going to the table. We have their attention and while certainly under the portability act, I as a deputy can't say I'm not going to take your client. That probably has come out a few times in the conversation with my colleague in Nunavut, saying you have to pay attention to this.

So the first thing is a long time, because it is a legal agreement and this will be an issue for them as far as affordability and where they may or may not get a better deal, i.e., Manitoba or elsewhere. But also, our own accountabilities as far as what we agree to and what some of our physicians or other clinical people may think they should be providing. The bottom line, there's no liability, there's more of an issue of if we refuse service under the Canada Health Act. The liability here is are they real dollars, are they some assumption, what actually was the agreement and what part of this is an extension of the contract.

So Larga, one thing the Member flagged, I think I'll look into because my understanding is there are multiple agreements and Nunavut also has agreements in Edmonton with lodging. So is that our cost or theirs? It's a bit more complicated, but I'm comfortable and I've said that to the Minister, around liability, but we do have a requirement under the Portability of Canada Health Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Meade. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. Beyond that I would just like to add that we have had a situation of not having a written contract between Stanton and Nunavut and it was important for us to make sure that we conclude that so that we settle the outstanding receivables and we have made some gains on that. So that's why it was important that we conclude this and any newer issues that we need to be bringing to this we will deal with that in the next phase.

Also, I think it's important to note that while Stanton has been experiencing a deficit, it is not correct to think that this is contributing to the deficit to the extent that it might suggest. That was just one part of that. We are doing lots of other work through the Foundation for Change and such, to address that issue.

I think it should also be noted that Stanton has been having capacity issues in their finance section and this budget includes some investment in that area, because it's not clear cut we collecting everything that we need to do with Nunavut. Of course we will do that and we would not be wanting to provide services where we're not getting paid for it, but there are lots of other issues where we needed to put some resources in there so that we catch up on what was falling behind and we are doing that through this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. I'd like now to call on Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one quick question in the area of health and social services authorities, agency administration and there's an increase of about \$760,000. I'm wondering if that's the area that home care comes out of and if that's an increase to home care. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, are we still on 8-17?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): That's correct; page 8-17. Is that correct, Mr. Beaulieu?

MR. BEAULIEU: That's correct, sir.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, the home care service, the money is provided to each authority under our primary care. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Anything further, Mr. Beaulieu?

MR. BEAULIEU: No, no more questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu, and I'd like to turn now to Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to the area of community health nursing, I know you've heard me many, many times talk about the nursing situation in Tsiigehtchic and I think that there's motions passed, like I said, in the Gwich'in assemblies, passed in the Dene assemblies and this issue has always been an issue in regards to the health and the well-being of the community.

Like I stated earlier, if you look at the budgets going back to 1998-99, prior to division, if you look at all the smaller communities, you can see the amounts of dollars that were spent in regard to the different care, from nursing care to social programs. The majority of the smaller communities, in which their population is under 200, had all those services being provided and being expended to those communities based on the funding allocations. I think since then there's been a real decline in regard to actual dollars being expended from physical bodies, service providers since that.

So I'd just like to ask the Minister, I know that there has been an issue about nursing care. I've spoken to the Minister several times on this matter and I was hoping that February 1st there was going to be a nurse in Tsiigehtchic, because that was my understanding. I've raised that issue with the chief and the community and mentioned to them there was going to be nursing care in the community effective February 1st. So I'd like to ask the Minister how soon are you expecting to have a nurse full-time in Tsiigehtchic?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a couple of issues that the Member raised. The first one about how services were better back in the '80s, I do not have information to either accept that or dispute that. I believe, by and large, this government is able to keep records from basically '99-2000, because it's just hard to make comparisons when we're talking about information prior to division. Anecdotally, I used to work as an executive assistant of the Minister of Health and Social Services for the entire NWT and I think there were as many issues back then as there are now.

On the issue of nursing coverage in Tsiigehtchic, Mr. Chairman, I need to say once again that it is not accurate to say that there is no nurse service in

Tsiigehtchic. I understand that the Member is passionate about seeing a permanent nurse there. I have given him the information about the nurse coverage that the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority is providing. For the community of 170 people, last year Tsiigehtchic had 14 weeks between the breakup and freeze-up and another 20 weeks of service I believe. So that's 34 weeks of service, which is a little over half a year. That is what the authority is able to do within the current regime that we have and the Foundation for Change action plan, and some of the strategic work that we are doing is looking at the entire service delivery model as well as the governance and we will be putting focus on concentrating on small communities and how to better work out a team of care providers that MLA Yakeleya has mentioned earlier. So that is the plan and that is the work that we are trying to do.

However, I need to state, once again, that Tsiigehtchic does have nursing services. We service that community in the way the RCMP services are provided in Tsiigehtchic, which is what the MLA had asked me to do. I had committed to do that last February in the spring and summer sessions last year and I am committed to continue to work on that. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: The community of Tsiigehtchic appreciates what the Minister is providing. The community is requesting a full-time nurse in the community. That's what they are requesting: full-time. Not six months, full-time. So that's where I am coming from in regards to providing those services full-time in those communities.

Like I said, the community has done everything they can. They've purchased a housing unit so that they can't use the excuse we don't have housing for nurses in the community. They did that on their own. They've done that through their charter community. They are working to try to find ways to get policing in their communities by allowing them usage of facilities they have in the community which can accommodate the RCMP to stay overnight. The community is trying to do everything they can to attract everything to their communities, but what we need from this government is a commitment that those people that they do get there, they are going to have a care provider that is constant. That you work out that relationship between yourself and the provider, so you know who the elders are, you know who George Naditchie is or you know who these different elders in our communities are.

Again, I request from the Minister, is it possible to have a full-time nurse in Tsiigehtchic in a short time frame, knowing spring is coming forward? We know there will be a nurse there during breakup and freeze-up. I am requesting if that is possible to have a full-time nurse in the community in the immediate future.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way our system is set up, the authorities get the funding to provide services to the communities. They work as one entity and they distribute their resources in the best way possible. I understand and I have heard, and I have met with the community about the desire of the community to have a permanent nurse physically there all year round. The issues are the Beaufort-Delta Health Authority is stretched, not only in terms of dollars, but in terms of available nurses. They have the obligation for all of the Beaufort-Delta communities to spread their nursing resources around.

The second thing is our labour law requires that there needs to be at least two nurses and it would be difficult to have two nurses in a community of 170 people. I'm not talking financially, but just it would not be enough work for two nurses for 170 people unless the 170 people went to the health centre every second day.

I understand health care is very important. Health care includes doctor's service, nursing service, community health rep, wellness worker, people who can take care of the elders, including home care workers, including people who talk to people about how to prevent diabetes, take care of diabetes, see if they have it, cancer prevention. There is a whole basket of health care services that our communities expect. Health care doesn't mean having a physical health care professional necessarily sitting there because we feel healthy if we see a doctor sitting in our office or nurse. Maybe that's how some people feel, but that's not how we can continue to deliver health care services.

Just like the RCMP, we don't have two RCMP stationed in Tsiigehtchic, but the government has made the move to hire extra resources in McPherson so they can increase patrols in Tsiigehtchic, which is a great advance. That's what we are trying to do for the nursing coverage until such time as we have different ways to address that. I don't know how else I can put into this, because nurses need to keep up with their skills as well. They need to be able to do the work that is necessary to do and all of the practice guidelines will say being a full-time nurse in a community of 170 people may not give them the kind of work that's required to keep up with their credentials.

I just want to state again that I am committed to working to enhance health care services in our communities, but they come in different shapes and sizes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up on my last question again. I had asked about the money for home care and the Minister indicated that was under primary care. There's, like, half a million dollar there to do

all the functions under primary care. I just wanted to confirm that home care, along with all those things listed, come out of primary care.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Later on, under tab 8-30, there is a provision there for home care services. For now, the Member asked what we fund out of the primary care and I'd like to ask the director of finance to identify the details. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The primary care division is the headquarters staff who look at policy setting and program evaluation. The program dollars were later on in the main estimates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Mr. Beaulieu. Back to Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this government has tried to take strides in accommodating small communities by implementing health care providers in different areas; mental health position, alcohol and drug position, social worker. Nowhere does it say that you can have people in a community working in similar areas, so that you do have more than one person in the community. That doesn't say you have to have two nurses. You could have a nurse and a mental health worker, a nurse and a social worker working out of the same office or same operation. But I think if you use the argument the Minister is providing, it's just another excuse to do nothing. I think we've tried to find ways of accommodating communities with policing, by trying to find police for 10 communities that don't have it.

A similar arrangement applies to the small communities. Maybe I will just read out for the Minister... This is prior to division. I will just use Tsiigehtchic for an example. It's tracking expenditures that were done back in 1988-89. The Territorial Health Insured Services, \$284,000 was spent in Tsiigehtchic; social assistance, \$205,000 in Tsiigehtchic. It goes on with regard to hospital services outside the Northwest Territories, \$110,000 for Tsiigehtchic. If you just look at those numbers alone, they were spending over \$500,000 in Tsiigehtchic. From the last numbers I got from the Minister, it was \$147,000. So if you tell me that services have gone down since division, I think that because we had a lot of small communities, we were part of Nunavut, there were 51 communities we were serving. We were able to accommodate 51 communities with regard to health care services before division, but it seems like after division, we're at a situation where basically the so-called dollars expended to small communities has

depreciated to a point where that's why you don't have services, because it's being spent in the larger centres to provide at those new hospitals or dementia centres or walk-in clinics or whatever you want to call them. Those things are taking up dollars that should be expended in those small communities.

Mr. Chairman, I will give the Minister a copy of this. Maybe she can get her department to look at the cost breakdown of what we had prior to division and the expenditures we have today, so she can see for herself. I'll give copies to several Members of small communities so we can see how exactly our services have depreciated to the point that they are not expending the same money as they were prior to division.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I did not hear a question there but, Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take the Member's point, but I think it is really hard to get an accurate comparison to take one part out of the government's budget, say from 1986 or something, and compare it to ours unless we used the same indicators. So I just want to say, modern medicine and health care have changed so we need to know what is included there. People in Tsiigehtchic, they are connected to roads which is different than some of the other communities in the Territories who are not connected by the road and they still get fly-in nursing service.

Mr. Chairman, I understand his objective, which is to enhance nursing coverage and other health care coverage, and actually services to a small community like Tsiigehtchic. I understand that. I want to tell him that I am committed to work with him to do that. I am glad that he said that a nursing service doesn't have to be 100 percent nurses, because you understand that a community could need a lot of things. They need a wellness worker, they need a mental health and addictions person, maybe they need a community organizer. We understand that we can't have six, seven, eight, nine, 10, perhaps, people doing all of it separately in a small town, but that is exactly what Foundation for Change is trying to do. We are trying to find efficiencies as a system, because we believe there is a better way to address, a better way in which we spend our health care and social services dollars, so that we could refocus on the communities and do community wellness work and say, okay, what does a community like Fort McPherson or Tsiigehtchic need, and have a dialogue with the community.

If you look at the Foundation for Change plan, that is part of our plan, because we understand more and more that we are going to have less nurses and doctors and other people there to recruit, but that doesn't mean that our people don't need that

service. So we need to find ways to see how we can serve our communities better. That is part of our plan and, in the meantime, we are continuing to work on how to enhance nursing coverage and try to create a team of providers in a community like Tsiigehtchic, and that is our plan. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: It doesn't seem like I am getting anywhere with this Minister, so I might as well just move a motion and get it over with and see where it is at. Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I understand you have a motion to move. Please proceed.

COMMITTEE MOTION 19-16(4):
ESTABLISHMENT OF A FULL-TIME NURSING
POSITION IN TSIIGEHTCHIC,
CARRIED

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee strongly recommend that the Department of Health and Social Services take immediate action to establish a full-time nurse in the charter community of Tsiigehtchic. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is being distributed. Next I will call for those who wish to speak to the motion. Mr. Krutko, would you like to speak to the motion?

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I am making this motion is, like I stated, this issue has come up year after year. It has come up at assemblies, it has come up in this House and I basically feel that this government has an obligation to provide secure services for communities. Among the essential services we depend on is health care and I think that we, as government, have to find ways of ensuring that those services are being provided fully, not part time or basically provided at random because of breakup and freeze-up.

I, for one, feel that this issue is almost touching on the grounds of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and under the Health Act of Canada. The Health Act of Canada makes it clear, you have to provide health care services as a health care provider and that means in communities that basically require that service.

So I would just like to ask my colleagues for support on this motion. I know I've raised this several times, but this government has to do more to find ways of ensuring that those services are there for small communities, like I stated. From the information that I have, I provided to other Members, we are getting expenditures by way of service expenditures in the smaller communities than what we were prior to division. We were better off then than we are today and with less people and more money, you'd think we would be able to do more and ensure those programs and services are being provided.

I believe that we have to ensure that the people, regardless of where they are, have at least some basic functioning service being provided in those communities. Health care is key to the health and well-being of the residents of those communities. I think this government has to do everything it can and we keep using the argument, well, sorry, you don't have the numbers, you don't have the facilities, you don't have this, you don't have that. Well, if we don't start doing it, we'll never have any of that stuff.

So I think it's important to provide these communities full health care services and so if there is a will, there's a way. I know the Minister made a comment that if we are committed to doing what we say to improve the quality of life in communities, let's do it. Don't just say it for the sake of saying it. Let's improve the quality of life in communities by providing services that are adequate to the function of those communities, especially health care being a core program for community health and the residents of Tsiigehtchic. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. Minister Lee. No comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Question is being called.

---Carried

Committee, we are on page 8-17. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 8-18, activity summary, program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions, \$15.039 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, the telehealth coordinators were funded by the authority agencies. I was just doing some checking and I know my regional health centres, all the communities have telehealth technology. In terms of the coordinators and operations of telehealth, it would greatly be appreciated that at these four health centres and health station, Colville Lake, that if this telehealth would be used for the people. Is this something that the coordinators are going to work on? I am not too sure of their job descriptions in terms of ensuring that...if I'm right. I do apologize. They talked about telespeech in 14 sites. I made an error here. I know for sure that Deline has telehealth. I can talk clearly on Deline. Any of the other communities in the Sahtu, I am not aware of them having telehealth services. I want to ensure that this is not delayed any longer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: I'm going to try to tackle this and if there is any technical backup, my DM can jump in.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, telehealth and telespeech, we're not talking about two different projects. It really is a communication machine. It's about delivering health care and related services like speech therapy through a TV screen connected to a service provider, whether it be a speech language therapist or a radiologist or even a physician. It is a distance health care delivery method. I can tell you that, I know for a fact, I saw with my own eyes new machines sitting in Deline, Good Hope, even Colville Lake. Actually, I think they're looking for... It's a beautiful, big, huge flat screen with mobile legs but, you know, the important part of this machine is what's on the screen and how you bring the services together.

We don't envision that this is the kind of thing where you need to have a separate coordinator in every health...(inaudible)...in order to deliver this program. It's about incorporating this new tool into our health centres and health clinics, and how much we deliver through that would depend on the support and training and coordination that would have to go into each of the clinics. So that's the picture of that right now. I'm going to ask the DM to just add one more thing there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Meade.

MS. MEADE: So it is about using technology, but the Minister is correct in what the end application is. In Deline, when I checked this morning, and of course the rollout is being phased in so not all communities are on the same time, and this is why they're using the coordinators across the system. These are not full-time positions in an area. It's around the change management better used. But in Deline, you've used it so far for an OBGYN consult, you've used it for mental health and addictions counselling, there have been some consults with a couple of specialists and there's been group counselling. That's just what I remember from an e-mail this morning when we checked from yesterday. Have we used it fully yet everywhere? No. That's part of the coordinator's job, is not just about the equipment, but to help us with the change management and how we can continue to use all of this technology further and further so the outcome being the best care for patients and more connection with specialists or other providers as they need it. This, again, gets back to enhancing community delivery so people don't have to keep moving to come in to see specialists. They can be supported in their own community this way. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Meade. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would ask the Minister if she could provide to me a summary on the telehealth in terms of where that's going in terms of the operations in the Sahtu. I

know there's telehealth speech in 14 sites and all the five communities in the Sahtu are going to be supported through that. The telehealth coordinators, if these machines are in use and they're going to be used in other communities it will be much appreciated from this MLA in terms of knowing that we certainly can cut down on having our people get on these aircrafts to fly to other locations to be checked in the hospitals. So I want to know if I can get some information from the department in terms of some sort of a status update and plans going forward on the telehealth issue. If she wants to include the telehealth speech, that would be much appreciated, Mr. Chair.

The other one I wanted to ask is in regard to this page here, the primary community service funding for the seniors 1-800 line. They had the seniors advisory council, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities, Senior Games and Rick Hansen Man in Motion. The seniors feel that they certainly need our support and I know that they are doing a lot of good work. I want to ask from this Minister as she's responsible for the seniors also, in terms of recommendations that the Seniors' Society had on the implementation of those recommendations. From my recollection of these recommendations, I'm not too sure if we had a status report as to where this department is in terms of implementing these recommendations that these seniors put together some time ago.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I suspect there would be others interested in the regional updates on the telehealth and telespeech too, but... Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, we launched that in a big way, I believe, last fall. So I would be happy to give an update to all the Members as to where we are on that and looking forward as to where we see going for the next year or so.

With respect to the support for seniors, as the Members are aware, the funding for the Senior Games came out of THAF funding and that funding is expiring. The NWT Seniors' Society has submitted a proposal on how they would like to work with the government on providing support to seniors and creating an opportunity for the seniors to do healthy living. So we're in the process of reviewing that and we will be making an announcement on that. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: My last comment would be directed to the Minister regarding the seniors in terms of future discussions. I know the seniors have been very active in a lot of the business of the GNWT. I make reference to the elders in the Sahtu region and the seniors in terms of their relationship to this government. Has this Minister, in terms of meeting with the seniors as her duties as the

Minister responsible for seniors, had some discussions with the seniors?

Seniors can be elevated almost to another level of authority such as a secretariat for the seniors. Right now they're an advisory council. There is funding all over in different areas for the seniors. MACA has funding. Housing has funding for seniors. Different departments have funding and the Minister tries to draw everything to them and say, okay, this is the responsibility of the seniors. However, has that type of discussion with the NWT seniors been introduced with this Minister in terms of that type level of authority, more establishing a permanent spot in the government with the seniors? That's it for my questions.

HON. SANDY LEE: I can advise you that I have, on a number of occasions, been invited by the NWT Seniors' Society and I have met with them. We share a meal and we, sort of, have a roundtable and they tell me all the things that they want me to work on in terms of seniors' issues. The NWT Seniors' Society has membership. The board of directors has membership from all regions of the Territories. They did bring up the issue of a seniors secretariat and they have told us and, in fact, they have written to us to say that they understand that the resources are limited. They understand that to create an infrastructure, a junior department of seniors, would involve money, and, if they had their choice, they would like those dollars to go to seniors programming rather than a secretariat. They have communicated that to me. So that is their position on that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just following up on the issues raised under the telehealth, understanding that we have 14 of the units out there, could I get some detail as to how many of the units have service operators and what type of training those individual service operators receive? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll call on Deputy Minister Meade.

MS. MEADE: Thank you. Actually, this is pretty basic equipment and once the initial training is done, as far as turning the machinery on and making it available, you don't need to have on-the-ground actual users. They're supported by the department. They're supported both virtually through the connectivity of the system, but also through Help Desk and things that we set up. So it's not about providers, it's about the front-end training and then the ongoing monitoring around how else we can use it. Is there enough uptake? What are the training needs and the changed management needs really so providers are comfortable? It is not about on-the-ground once you have it up and operational on the initial training which we are

providing through the department, I should add, and supported again also nationally through organizations like Infowave funded by the federal government.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, does the Minister know how many of the 14 units are used and how often these 14 telehealth units are used? Furthermore, whom are they used by? Are they used just by Health or are they used by other departments in some conjunction agreement?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, as we indicated before, this is relatively new and it is being used in different ways by different authorities. It all depends on the service requirements, the interest even on the part of the people on the ground. I have visited different centres where, for Inuvik for example, they couldn't say enough about this machine and how much it has helped them. The picture is quite buried all across. It is like any time you introduce a new technology into your service delivery, the uptake and the use is different depending on the regions and the places. I don't have updated information on exactly what the use is on that, but we will obviously be monitoring and evaluate to make sure that device and that tool is used as much as possible. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if the Minister knows which two units have been in use the longest. I am referring to outside the Stanton Territorial Hospital. What type of services have primarily been focused in on and how many hours were they in use? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. Meade.

MS. MEADE: I think, first of all, it would be fair to say that I don't believe that the Health Net that we have so far begun to roll out is used to its maximum. The potential for its use is only just being recognized by our providers and collectively at the CEO table. The providers, in particular some of our physicians, nurse practitioners and community nurses, are very keen on being able to explore this. So the general thing that you see with most telehealth rollouts across Canada are telespeech, some tele-psychiatry where it is done on a consult basis of a case, child welfare case management. Those are the types of things early.

Where you start to move is when you start to do actual treatment. So group therapy, individual therapy, we are starting to explore that in a few areas.

Uses are just beginning. What we do is actually look at uptake. It is quite a drilling down and it is technical spot checks to see. Trying to get the information to be able to make it translated beyond the technology is a bit of a stretch. I think that is fair

to say that we are moving it out as quickly as we can and we are moving to change management, but we think we have only just begun to see how much more we can use this equipment.

My recent discussions with emergency physicians at Stanton, we think that actually the on-call physician and start to do consults to some of our community nurses. This was an application not envisioned when we started to roll this out and how the on-call physician system can be linked.

I think it is better to say this will become more and more a critical component of our future delivery, so I am not answering the Member's questions as far as how many hours so far because we haven't even begun to envision how many hours we actually could start to use this as we get our culture and our providers trained up and understanding the potential.

Where we have locum physicians coming from other jurisdictions that have full eHealth systems, they are very excited and they are actually helping us introduce the other applications that we can use this for. A big one in Hay River where the Minister was there to announce eHealth was right there and then we had the first time where the labs and the X-rays were read with the specialist on one end in Stanton and the consult happening through Edmonton and right back to Hay River. The patient got good, immediate, in time, quality care without any transport. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I didn't really hear much about how they have been used and how many hours they have been used. I would also like to reiterate that question in that context as well as what specific services have we noticed a trend emerging from our usage on this type of product. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, I understand his question. I don't think we can get him that level of detail, in that I don't think that right now we are keeping, okay, how many hours are we using this. The tools are out there. We are trying to provide the support and training so that more people will use it. As I stated earlier, we will be evaluating and monitoring this program and we will give an update and promise that to MLA Yakeleya too. I will give him a profile of where the machines are right now, where we are going to get more out of and what kind of services are being provided through these tools. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I thank the Minister for that answer. Would that also include some updates as to where the status of training of individuals would be on that particular list? In other words, if all 14 units are farmed out, are all regions that have received this equipment that they have someone

trained and qualified in order to be able to run the unit? Furthermore, would information be available to cite that we have people on board to help deal with problems so they can work with our informatics teams to make sure these things are up and running, that type of information? In other words, do we have qualified people to run these things? Would that be part of your information package?

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I can say we have qualified people running this. I will make a commitment to give him more information on how the services are delivered, where they are, what they are being used for and how the training needs are met. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I have next on the list Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I can, I wanted to talk about the orthodontist physician in Inuvik. I am wondering if it is okay to do it under this page or should we go back to page 8-16?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I think it would be appropriate to go back to page 8-17 for that. For that, I will need unanimous consent of committee. Do I have unanimous consent to go back to page 8-17?

---Unanimous consent granted.

So be it, Mr. Krutko. Page 8-17.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, colleagues. An issue that has come to my attention, especially for residents out of Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta region, apparently they won't have an orthodontist in Inuvik. Apparently there are a lot of children who require dental care, braces and whatnot. Without having an orthodontist in the region, a lot of them are having to expend a lot of their own dollars to fly their children to Yellowknife so that they can be seen by an orthodontist here in Yellowknife. As a department which is responsible for primary care, especially in the different regions, especially dental, it is important especially for younger people. I ran into a lady at Wal-Mart, in which her son was with her. Apparently his jaw is locked up because he didn't see an orthodontist for so long that he has problems eating now. When it comes to that situation, I think that we do have to do everything we can to ensure that the orthodontists and those types of providers are provided in those regions so the parents don't have to bear that extra cost of having to go elsewhere. So I'd just like to ask the Minister in regard to the orthodontist position in Inuvik: what's the department doing to try and ensure that they make sure these programs are being delivered, especially when it comes to oral health and dealing with the orthodontist position for Inuvik? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know the Member is good, but I don't know how he got dental care into primary care, but, anyway, I'd be happy to answer him with the information. This dental issue in general comes up everywhere I travel. It is a big issue for our community people, but it's important for people to know that dental care is not a responsibility of the GNWT. It is not an insured service. It is the federal government that provides dental care to our aboriginal peoples. The non-aboriginal people in the Territories, they get dental coverage by their own insurance. Dental care is not part of health care.

Now, the GNWT does provide support to dental services in our regions. The problem we've been having is almost every authority, and that includes Inuvik, have had difficulties getting a contractor to provide dental service in Inuvik and the Member is right that there have been some parents with young children who need orthodontic services and other dental services and they've not been able to get them for the last little bit. I'm happy to note that a new contract has been signed and we do have new dental services being provided in Inuvik. So hopefully the lady that he was talking to at Wal-Mart and some other people that have been contacting us will be able to be processed as soon as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. I think the window we had into this was through the oral health provision under this directorate division. Anything further, Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO: I'd just like to thank the Minister for that and I think that news maybe should go out by way of a press release, because I think there's a lot of other people out there that would like to hear that announcement and know that action is being taken in this area. So maybe you've got a good news story tomorrow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Committee, we started on page 8-17. I find that we're still there. Activity summary, program delivery support, operations expenditure summary, \$31.936 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Page 8-18, activity summary, program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions, \$15.039 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Page 8-19, information item, program delivery support, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Page 8-20 and 8-21, activity summary, health

services programs, operations expenditure summary, \$179.791 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question relative to the numbers on page 8-21. From 2009-10 revised estimates we've got \$185 million give or take and in 2010-11 we go to about \$180 million. So that's a fairly large reduction. If I look on the next page it looks as though the reductions are basically to authorities for the provision of their various services and I just wondered what kind of an impact these reductions are going to have on the ability of the authorities to provide their services and, secondly, is this reduction related to the lack of renewal of THAF funding, which isn't shown in the budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is right; this section has a sunset of THAF of \$3.1 million, but it also has investments of \$10.82 million that goes to various areas that constitutes the biggest amount of the plus and minus of that item. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Committee, page 8-21, activity summary, health services programs, operations expenditure summary, \$179.791 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Krutko, is that page 8-21?

MR. KRUTKO: Yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Go ahead.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to services, you talk about different services, some out-of-territory services and also in-territorial. What about those people that come from the South, use our medical services and then leave back to southern Canada. How is that calculated in regard to expenditures? I mean, it's an unforeseen cost, but there is a lot of transition and migration from workers at the mines, oil and gas, whatever, but there is a cost associated with those people. So in expenditures, is that part of these expenditures that you've put forward, or is there an allocation of a certain amount of money that's allocated for that type of expense where we do have a lot of transient people coming and going at any one time? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is right; we do get people dropping in our health centres and hospitals. Anyone who doesn't have an NWT health card, they would be billed to their host provinces and territories and the billings are determined by national agreements that we

talked about earlier. There's a very set number of dollars that we are allowed to bill each other. So the money is recouped. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Just on that, I know we have had some challenges in collecting from different organizations, territories, in regard to Nunavut, we've had challenges collecting from the federal government. So how successful are we in collecting from those jurisdictions when we submit an invoice in regard to those individuals who come here from other jurisdictions? Have we been paid or are there any outstanding amounts that are out there that we should know of? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: As the deputy minister stated, we have a portability provision. All the provinces and territories know that our people travel to each other's jurisdictions and they have a pretty clear guideline on paying for that. So as long as we bill other jurisdictions, those are paid. Now, obviously we want to make sure we bill for every service we render to anybody who is not from here. Every health centre has that function incorporated into their finance office. That is a course of business. In Inuvik the hospital does that, Stanton does that, and any of the clinics, and the headquarters, through the DM's office, monitors reciprocal billing and collection. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Anything further, Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO: That's okay. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We're on page 8-21, activity summary, health services programs, operations expenditure summary, \$179.791 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 8-22, activity summary, health services programs, grants and contributions, grants, \$40 million; contributions, \$134.771 million. Excuse me, committee. Grants, \$40,000; contributions, \$134.771 million; total grants and contributions, \$134.811 million. Committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Moving on. Page 8-25, activity summary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mentioned in my general comments this area was an extremely highly volatile issue about a year ago and I wanted to know in terms of proposed... Okay, I'll start again. The changes are proposed to be put in place on September 1, 2010, and the Minister has advised, I think, that there is some work going on at this point. I wondered if I could get a bit more information in detail about just exactly what is happening at the moment. There are no consultations certainly that the public can take part in at this point, so I would like some information as

to what work is going on, when consultation with the public will start, et cetera, et cetera. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this issue, I, as Minister, committed to the Standing Committee on Social Programs to seek input from the public, obviously. I have just had a substantive update on that. I am going to be seeking to go to Cabinet for Cabinet input. I will also be seeking to go to the Standing Committee on Social Programs as soon as we can organize that. We are ready to do that now and also we need to have consult with the public working group on that. So we are in the process of communicating that to the standing committee, so we can give the committee members an update and seek their input on where we are because there has been some substantive work on that and will be interested in sharing that with the Member. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that information. I look forward to our briefing. I guess I just would like a bit of confirmation in terms of timing. I get the impression...(inaudible)...

HON. SANDY LEE: ...(inaudible)...busy schedule, but we would like at least an hour or two to give you a briefing on what we have so far and seek your input. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: ...(inaudible)...fast as they can in dealing with this because the sooner it gets to the public, the better it is. There is going to be an awful lot of interest in this and even from the first of May to the first of September is a very short time. So let's get at it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Activity summary, supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$23.074 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 8-26, activity summary, supplementary health programs, grants and contributions, contributions \$12.603 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question. I thought I had heard, I can't quite remember where, in the last few days that the program review office was looking at some of the costs of medical travel. Could I get a confirmation from the Minister that that is so and if there are any findings that she can reveal at this point? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For clarity, we are on page 8-26. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a lot of work being done on this area and I would like to ask the deputy minister to update the Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Deputy Minister Meade.

MS. MEADE: The program office has begun looking at this and we are doing a bit of rescoping, because it is not just about the travel costs but using some of our case management decisions. So we are looking at it both from what they originally were doing and how the department needs to get some of this information around our service delivery. So it is a work in progress. I will add it is a very complicated issue around our access to information and its interpretation but, yes, we are on it. It is a big issue and I think it will give us a lot of information on how to better provide service in case management, not just about managing costs of medical travel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Meade. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We are on page 8-26, activity summary, supplementary health programs, grants and contributions, contributions, \$12.603 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): We are on page 8-29, activity summary, supplementary health programs. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think that these community health programs, especially when it comes to the aging population in the Northwest Territories, which we are realizing, I know, from comments from the Minister, which stipulated that the elders population is almost 50 percent and increased over the last number of years. I can vouch for that on the basis of my home community in which they did a study to see exactly how many elders were from Fort McPherson and they counted 126 elders between the ages of 60 and 97 years old.

I think it shows that we do have a large number of our population in a lot of our communities throughout the Northwest Territories and I think that we, as government, have to find ways of accommodating that population in the Northwest Territories by assisting them by way of some means of providing seniors care, accommodating them through housing and accommodating them through care facilities, long-term care facilities, residential care and also in regards to hospital care.

I think at that point, we do have structures around that; the dementia centre, the hospitals we do have in our regions. I think it is important that we, as government, find a way to deal with this challenge that we are facing. It is not only here, it is across Canada, but I think that we have to find a way to accommodate our aging population. So I would like

to ask the Minister, are there any plans of working with the Housing Corporation or CMHC, or whoever, Health Canada, to find a way to deal with this challenge that we are going to be facing, which is already upon us, and try to accommodate those people, when they basically get on in age and require special attention and care? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is right; this is a crucial and big emerging issue. It is permeating into all of our program areas. It is not just a long-term care issue.

Seniors population right now -- about 3,500 out of 40,000-plus of the Northwest Territories population -- is the fastest growing segment of our population. It has grown by 54 percent over the last 10 years while the general population only grew by 4 percent. I think that speaks to what challenges and opportunities we are dealing with.

The department, in all program areas, looks at how to support the seniors and how to maintain their healthy living. That has to be a big part as well, as well as looking at their continuum of care. Obviously, institutionalization or the facilities are the last resort. I think that we need to also pay attention to providing home care support and other support, because I think that most seniors want to have an independent healthy life as much as possible. And as much as possible, they want to be in their communities and they want to be taken care of by their own people. That has to be front and centre of our strategy.

We know right now, from the demographics we have, we need to have at least 40 beds of long-term care in the next little while. We are making progress by doing a long-term care facilities review in the Territories and also working on a prototype, so that we can have a ready-made long-term care facility that can be placed wherever, depending on how this House makes the decision on where it should go. There are many different areas that we are working on within the department. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Communities do want to try to maintain their loved ones and their elders in their home communities as long as possible and hopefully live out their days in their home communities without having to leave. I think it is important that we do find a way to accommodate our elders and ensure that they are having some sort of special living arrangements and also looking at ways of accommodating them so they do stay in their home communities. So I think it is important that we do find a way to work around it. I know that you mentioned 40 beds. Is there any idea of where this facility may be located?

HON. SANDY LEE: No, Mr. Chairman. The Member knows that is not going to be solely my

decision. What I meant by that is looking at the demographics territorial-wide and looking at how big our senior populations are, and what ages they are, and knowing all of the other indicators that we, as a government, have to prepare for increasing long-term care beds.

MR. KRUTKO: With that, I'd like to move a motion and suggest that they consider Fort McPherson for a permanent long-term care facility, in light of the 120 seniors we have over the age of 60. I can state that there is a definite need. Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is being distributed. You may so move.

COMMITTEE MOTION 20-16(4):
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY
IN FORT MCPHERSON,
CARRIED

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee strongly recommends the Department of Health and Social Services take immediate action to establish a permanent long-term care facility in the Hamlet of Fort McPherson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is being distributed and I will then call for speaking to the motion. Mr. Krutko, would you like to start?

MR. KRUTKO: There's not too much to say. I know the Minister has the information that I mentioned. There is that documentation that I can probably table here in the House, which illustrates the 126 elders in Fort McPherson from the age of 60 to 97. I think, if you're talking demographics, that's definitely showing you that almost 20 percent of the population in Fort McPherson is within that category. I think that is a large number and I think even the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the organization in Inuvik were surprised when they realized the number of seniors that we do have in Fort McPherson. With that, I'd like to move the motion and ask for support from my fellow colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of comments. It is a concern for me that our seniors population is increasing a lot as we all grow older, and I'm included in that bunch, for sure. You don't have to agree quite so noisily, my colleague. I did want to comment, though, that in terms of seniors care, we need to make sure that we have a continuum of care from housing, which allows them to be fully independent to assisted living to long-term care or to slightly assist...whatever. But we

need a continuum of care, and one of the things that struck me in discussing this motion earlier is that I think Yellowknife has managed to get that kind of a continuum of housing and care for seniors through partnership and cooperation with community organizations and the Department of Health and the community. I think that's something that the Minister needs to consider in looking at this motion. I think there's a good opportunity for the Housing Corporation, certainly, to be involved in the development of this kind of a facility, and I think there's also an opportunity for the community of McPherson or the Gwich'in Tribal Council to do some work in assisting the Minister and the Member in getting this kind of a facility set up. It's going to be far more useful, I think, and it's going to happen far sooner if we get more partners involved than just the Department of Health. That would be my urging to the Minister, to use as many people as possible and particularly those in the community to get this accomplished. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do support this motion. I think we need to take a broader look at the whole issue, as Ms. Bisaro said, of the emerging population of seniors and our life expectancy in the Northwest Territories is growing. That's a good thing. People are living longer in the Northwest Territories, but we have to be prepared for that. So I think that I'm going to support Mr. Krutko's motion here right now, because there is a particular need in the community that he represents and they took the initiative to sign a petition, which has been tabled in this House. So I think we need to send a clear message that we hear them and that we need to respond to that. But I think we also need to look at prioritizing a list of other communities, as well, that are in need of specialized, specific housing for seniors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Question is being called.

---Carried

Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I will now rise and report progress. I'd like to excuse the witnesses, Minister, and ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort them from the House. Mahsi.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee considered Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 4, 2010, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Replies to Budget Address (Day 6 of 7)
13. Petitions
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
 - Motion 9-16(4), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 8, 2010
19. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
20. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 10, Exemption Act
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
- Minister's Statement 47-16(4), Transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 4th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.