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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 8, 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. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:35 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber, I'd like to draw your attention to the public gallery and the presence of a former Member, a former Speaker of this House, Mr. Sam Gargan, who is with us.

---Applause

Also, colleagues, the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy, has been away from the House recently. Last week Mr. Abernethy travelled to Calgary to undergo an emergency medical procedure. I am pleased to advise the House that this procedure was a success.

---Applause

Mr. Abernethy will be returning to Yellowknife tonight, but will require some time to recover. On behalf of all Members, I want to wish him well and a speedy recovery. I know he is very anxious to get back to work and will do so as soon as he gets the green light from his health care professionals.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 57-16(4):
REFERRING THE QUESTIONS OF AUTHORITY
TO REGULATE CARIBOU HARVESTING

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the government is concerned about the long-term health of the Bathurst caribou herd; so concerned, in fact, that my colleague the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources enacted an outright hunting ban in an area covering the herd's wintering grounds.

Mr. Speaker, it is the view of our government that the authority to make such regulations is clearly held by the Government of the Northwest Territories; without that conviction, we could not have acted, it is also clear that the Dene Nation and some aboriginal governments do not believe that to be true. We have even heard some Members of

this Assembly express doubts about the legislative base of the government they are part of.

Mr. Speaker, even when the people do not agree with their government all the time, it is important that they should trust that their government acts in their interest and within its powers. This matter before us, the long-term health of the barren-ground caribou is critical and requires immediate action. In taking action, it is also important that we ensure the people of the Northwest Territories have the same clear understanding of which government holds the necessary authority to protect barren-ground caribou.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, with the support of Cabinet, I will be referring a question to the NWT Supreme Court and the Legal Questions Act, asking it to rule on the Government of the Northwest Territories' legislative authority to regulate aboriginal hunting of barren-ground caribou.

The question that I will refer to the court is about the authority the Government of the Northwest Territories holds to regulate hunting by aboriginal people of barren-ground caribou. This is about clarifying for the public and for aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories, which order of government holds the authority to act, to ensure the long-term health of the barren-ground caribou herds in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, at a later date, I will provide information for Members about the process that will be followed in addressing this question. While I cannot speak for how the court will act, or when, I believe the process will be inclusive and produce a timely result. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 58-16(4):
YOUTH SMOKING IN THE NWT: DESCRIPTIVE
SUMMARY FOR SMOKING BEHAVIOUR
AMONG GRADES 5 TO 9 STUDENTS

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I will table the Youth Smoking in the NWT: Descriptive Summary for Smoking Behaviour Among Grades 5 to 9 Students report. This is a summary of findings from the NWT School

Tobacco Survey, The first survey was conducted in 1982 and is carried out every four to five years. The purpose of the report is to monitor youth smoking behaviour and related issues.

Mr. Speaker, Youth Smoking in the NWT: Descriptive Summary for Smoking Behaviour Among Grades 5 to 9 Students reflects Health and Social Services ongoing efforts to curb smoking initiation rates at a young age.

The NWT School Tobacco Survey was made possible with assistance from the students in grades 5 to 9, their teachers, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the regional education authorities.

Mr. Speaker, the report shows a number of positive results, The prevalence of youth smoking declined considerably from 1982 to 2006. The downward trend could be attributed to changing attitudes towards smoking as a result of our anti-smoking programs such as the Don't be a Butthead campaign.

Some highlights of the reports include:

- Over the past 25 years, fewer youth have tried smoking or currently smoke.
- The overall prevalence of smoking among 10 to 14 year olds is declining: a 19 percent decrease in the prevalence of youth smoking over the past seven years.
- Tobacco awareness programs are undertaken on a school-wide basis to educate all students about the adverse affects of tobacco use, Ninety-six percent of students in the NWT reported receiving some type of smoking-related education during the past school year.

Mr. Speaker, wellness is a basic goal identified in our Foundation for Change strategic document. Tobacco use is a common predisposition to many chronic diseases which diminishes one's quality of life over time. Tobacco reduction is a personal responsibility. Health and Social Services supports quitting through education efforts. Tobacco use is addictive, it is easier to avoid use at the beginning than trying to quit in the end.

We encourage communities, families and individuals to make healthy choices. When residents choose to never start smoking, they are meeting this goal.

Mr. Speaker, this Youth Smoking in the NWT: Descriptive Summary of Smoking Behaviour Among Grades 5 to 9 Students is available in printed format from the Department of Health and Social Services and is posted on their website, I would like to invite everyone to take a look, Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 59-16(4):
OUTSTANDING PRINCIPAL AND
VICE-PRINCIPAL

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, across the Northwest Territories there are many school administrators who are leaders in their communities and who work hard to ensure that teachers, students and school staff have the resources they need to be successful, They all deserve our gratitude, and today I have the opportunity to highlight the work of two such leaders.

I am very proud of the fact that two administrators from Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik are being honoured with national awards for their leadership. This year Janette Vlanich is being recognized as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals by the Learning Partnership for the difference she makes in the lives of students and the community of Inuvik. While there are many reasons to celebrate Janette, of particular importance is her work helping to develop a successful literacy program and supporting aboriginal languages and culture in the community, Her membership in this year's select group of 32 outstanding educational leaders serves as an inspiration to her peers not only across the Northwest Territories, but across Canada.

Even as Janette is being recognized as one of the outstanding principals, Jason Dayman, vice-principal of Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, is being honoured by the Canadian Association of Principals with the National Herff Jones Vice-Principal of the Year Award. Jason is driven by a strong belief that culturally relevant programming helps students achieve success in school. While at Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, he's committed himself to developing a permanent culture camp for students and fostering strong relationships with community elders, creating opportunities for them to share their knowledge with students, He has also worked in partnership with Parks Canada and the Department of Fisheries developing on-the-land programs for students. With his big boat and skidoos, he has facilitated many rich learning opportunities for these young people.

I want to thank Janette and Jason for their leadership and commitment to excellence and congratulate them to the honours they are receiving. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 60-16(4):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Bob McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend promotional events related to the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver, Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I opened the News/North today and this may not be the first time this ad has run, Mr. Speaker, but I was struck by this full page ad which says -- if I can just read it, it's very brief -- "Empty Stomachs Make Empty Brains. Your kids cannot concentrate with growling stomachs. Everyone needs a healthy breakfast to start the day. Sponsored by the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment."

Mr. Speaker, I find this ad offensive and I would suggest that if it's run for very many times, it's very expensive. Mr. Speaker, this government has way too much money to spend if they can take out full pages in the local newspaper for an ad like that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we need many, many things in our education system and one of them is children who are healthy and fed and ready to learn. But, Mr. Speaker, we have Mr. Jacobson standing up here talking about the fact that we have no funding for a teacher in Sachs Harbour; we have other Members standing up and talking about the many, many needs in our community. I find it amazing and, as I said, this government has way too much money if they have money to spend on something like this.

This message means nothing to anyone who will read it. As a matter of fact, saying that if your stomach is empty, so is your brain, is an offense to somebody who doesn't have enough to eat, as far as I'm concerned. I think people who are hungry can still think.

Mr. Speaker, if there are parents who don't know that their children should not go to school hungry, this is a rather cold way of sending a message to them. Maybe ECE would be better to talk to their counterparts and figure out a way to sponsor a milk subsidy program so that children in communities where milk is an expensive commodity could have their diets supplemented with something that is nutritious. I find this ad, as I said, Mr. Speaker, not a very good use and expenditure of government

money. Later today, I would like to ask the Minister of ECE who came up with this campaign, who designed this campaign, who created that wording, how much did this cost the government. This kind of thing has got to stop. We have more pressing issues. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FRUSTRATIONS REGARDING HOUSING
CORPORATION PROGRAM DELIVERY

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

Today I would like to talk, once again, about the frustrations that many of my constituents have with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, many of these constituents are elders, single mothers, young couples trying to make ends meet to raise a family and many of them rely on income support. It's a tough situation that they are in. As their MLA, I have seen firsthand the conditions of many of these units and when I meet with them in their homes, Mr. Speaker, I hear desperation in their voices.

I, too, have become frustrated with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation because it seems that I am not making any progress with the issues that I bring forward. Mr. Speaker, I feel that the NWT Housing Corporation continues to neglect an important element when delivering housing programs and that is taking into account full consideration and factors of individual situations.

This means incorporating creativity and flexibility needed to effectively work with desperate clients, Mr. Speaker. As it is now, for many of my constituents in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e the policies are flawed, Mr. Speaker, it continues to be almost a daily practice if I am not following up on housing issues already in the system, then I'm bringing forth new housing issues. From there, it's fairly predictable what happens. I get back a response that says they are unable to help. They owe money or they don't own the land that their house has been sitting on for several years, many years, in some cases since the '80s.

Mr. Speaker, by the time I am able to make some headway on some of these issues, the construction season has passed. The domestic situation for our clients has changed, which means a whole application process and, unfortunately, in a few cases the constituents actually pass away before their issues can be brought before the Housing Corporation or before the Housing Corporation is able to assist them.

Mr. Speaker, there needs to be a change in attitude of the Housing Corporation, and in many of my

communities the Housing Corporation is seen as out of touch with the people's needs.

When you live in a good home, make a good income in a regional centre or Yellowknife, there is a different attitude towards housing in places like Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. BEAULIEU: I thought the NWT Housing Corporation was there to help people, but so far it appears that that is not the case. I will have questions for the Minister of the Housing Corporation later on today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANGILALUK SCHOOL EXPANSION

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is on the school extension at Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk. Recently Don Kindt Consulting conducted and completed, released a report identifying serious deficiencies and inadequacies with Mangilaluk School in the community of Tuktoyaktuk. I wish to thank the Minister and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for funding the evaluation.

The concerns identified in the report cover a wide range of problems but mainly focus on the lack of physical space, which, according to the community's high school principal, is negatively impacting the successful learning environment. The report highlights the fact that so many areas, from the size of the gymnasium, the size of the library, lack of space for students to congregate, are far below territorial standards. Our Nunakput students are less deserving. Why do the students in small, remote communities always have to do with less than others?

The government once promised that all students across the Northwest Territories will receive equal quality education. This government is losing and the commitment is not being fulfilled.

The vice-principal, program teacher and classroom assistant all use a small office space out of the library. To make matters worse, they share with the students because they have nowhere to congregate or study.

Mangilaluk School desperately needs an extension to accommodate the growing needs of the community. School supplies are being stored in a donated C-can from NTCL. Teachers have to eat their lunch in the hallway. Mangilaluk School is a poster school of the government's failure to provide equal quality education.

Community schools are supposed to be a focal point in the community where activities and gatherings and, most importantly, learning takes place. When the school lacks the most basic standards, the whole community suffers. Students should be able to go to school and enjoy it. They should feel comfortable that education is not only books, tests and buildings, they are environments, teachers and the community.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. JACOBSON: One of the government's pledges is to provide good, equal education for all residents of the Northwest Territories, but when smaller communities are so far below larger centres such as Yellowknife, I wonder if this government will put their money where their mouth is. We have to commit to put improvements needed and identified in the Don Kindt Consulting report on Mangilaluk School. I will have questions for the Minister of ECE at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL EXPANSION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to speak to the urgent need to expand the incredibly stressed facilities at Stanton Territorial Hospital. There is a significant capacity issue and overall care may be at risk, especially in areas such as emergency, intensive care and medical daycare. These are some of the most critical services our hospital provides. The overall volume and workload has grown substantially over the years.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has recently toured the hospital and saw for ourselves the desperate overcrowding and lack of facilities to deliver existing services. Offices have medical record files piled to the ceilings. The hallways are full of freight. There isn't room for one more sardine in that can.

The planning and design for the hospital are about 25 years old and needs have drastically changed in that time. Recent facelifts are tweaking and do not reflect the degree of changes needed. Now we're at the point where a major investment, such as major reorganization and a new wing, is urgent and this is not getting the attention it deserves.

Providing quality health care for the entire Territory depends upon having modern, adequate hospital facilities. Savings in southern care costs, immediate service, and range of services here in the Territory are obvious benefits that an effective territorial facility can address.

We need to fully understand what our needs are, but some needs are obvious and demand action now. Our hospital is already bursting at the seams. We need to expedite the complex and specific capital planning for what will obviously be a multi-year, phased-in program that necessarily distributes costs over several fiscal years allowing for the fine-tuning as detailed needs are set.

Hospital design and construction are very specific and complex, but we need to fast-track the planning to get those dollars lined up for the work that's needed. This situation reflects the need to look at our priorities more clearly.

Mr. Speaker, we're spending close to \$200 million on a bridge. It's nice that it will be easier to drive to Edmonton for medical treatment, but we need to look closer to how we spend our capital priorities. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARIBOU CONSERVATION ISSUE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've yet to speak about the caribou issue, as some have been calling it, and so I will do so today.

Even though I haven't spoken yet, I have been considering all aspects of it every day for the last week and more, listening to my colleagues on both sides of the House, listening to elders and other residents as they speak to us in person and via the media. I've been trying to reconcile the arguments, the concerns, the differences of opinions and the different positions. It has been difficult to do.

At the core of this issue is the need for conservation of the caribou, the need to ensure their survival for as many years into the future as the number of years that have passed already. That should be the basis for any discussions on this matter. But of paramount importance, as well, is the right of aboriginal people to hunt as they have done since time immemorial. The temporary ban has led to an impasse, a difference of opinions, a lack of agreement on how things should proceed and how things should have been done. I believe, in the science that has been presented to me, that the Bathurst caribou herd is in great distress; that without some intervention, the herd will become extinct. I believe in the right of aboriginal people to hunt. I also believe that there is a solution out there waiting to be found.

I am, by nature, a person who uses negotiation before confrontation. I strongly advocate that the parties to this dispute respect each other and negotiate a solution to this problem. The differences can be worked out if all parties keep an open mind, have the right attitude and treat each other fairly.

There is a right way forward and any actions should not be politicized or personalized. The preservation of the caribou is a much bigger issue than the need for people to save face and come out winners. There can be no human winners here, just the caribou.

Mr. Speaker, I know a middle ground can be found, that there is a solution acceptable to all parties. I urge our leaders in every area to continue the dialogue, reflect on what is best for the caribou and find the consensus we need to put this disagreement to bed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STUDENT ABSENCES TO PARTICIPATE IN ARCTIC WINTER GAMES TRIALS

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I believe last week the Minister of Education made a statement in the House in regard to student absences and the problem that we're seeing across the Territories. Mr. Speaker, it amazes me that Sport North, who are going to be hosting the dog mushing trials in Fort Smith, that people from the Mackenzie Delta who are going to take part in these trials have to drive from Mackenzie Delta to Fort Smith. Mr. Speaker, the students that are taking part in these trials will have to take three weeks of school off because of the way the trials have been set up.

Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable to allow our students to miss three weeks of school, yet we have a Minister who's basically stating the importance of keeping the students in school. Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Education, along with Sport North and the Department of MACA must find a solution to this problem to accommodate our students to ensure that they do not miss three weeks of school simply because of where they're located.

Mr. Speaker, the trials will take place in Fort Smith and if you qualify for the Arctic Winter Games, you will have to stay there until the games are being held in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Again, Mr. Speaker, from there you have to basically drive back to the Mackenzie Delta, which will take you somewhere around five or six days. I think, Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable.

The Department of Education talks about establishing the policies and making sure we keep our students in school. I think you should inform government departments and agencies that they should also do their part to ensure that these students are able to access their education and make sure that they don't miss any of their studies.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of Education questions on this matter. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEW HOME WARRANTY PROGRAMS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about insurance for what is usually the most expensive item that an individual or even a family will ever purchase and that is the family home. For many people who are out there buying new homes, they'll find that they're either very limited or there is no warranty at all for their new home purchase.

Mr. Speaker, that's certainly not right, because if you go down today to Canadian Tire to buy a lawnmower and it doesn't work, you can take it back because it has a warranty.

Mr. Speaker, if you go down to YK Chrysler and buy a new car, it comes with a warranty too, but shame on the fact that a home does not carry one and we don't have legislation in place to protect the new homeowner.

Mr. Speaker, in Alberta, new home warranty programs have been operating since the 1970s. It offers protection to home purchasers who buy a home constructed by a builder who is a member of their program. Mr. Speaker, B.C. has even thought this out and their contractors must be licensed as well. I am not suggesting that we create a whole new Crown corporation and bureaucracy to oversee this homeowner legislation, but, Mr. Speaker, what I see is a huge gap about clear responsibility to protect the new home buyer and the difference between the contractor and who will be left holding the bag if something goes wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is facing significant shortages in affordable housing. Mr. Speaker, it was not more than a week ago that the Minister of Finance was talking about our 18 percent vacancy. Mr. Speaker, the real problem comes down to this, it is difficult to attract people when there are no new homes for people to move into. Mr. Speaker, with rapid development potentially on the horizon with things like the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline, what will happen here is potentially unqualified people will call themselves builders and they will be out building houses as quick as possible to make their quick sale. But who will be left holding the bag? That new purchaser of that home.

Mr. Speaker, the solution is quite simple. We need legislation to help protect people to ensure that if deficiencies arise, the contractor leaves town or goes bankrupt, the new homeowner isn't left holding the bag. Mr. Speaker, land titles in this territorial government has an insurance fund that protects people if the land transaction has

problems. Mr. Speaker, where does a family go when they put everything that they have had into the deposit, into their dreams, into their opportunities of life with great hopes, and everything is sunk quickly because something goes bad? Mr. Speaker, they are the ones left holding the bag. Mr. Speaker, later today I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to talk about the need for legislation to protect new home buyers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF
RECENTLY DECEASED SAHTU ELDERS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to use my Member's statement to give my condolence to the Doctor family, Horassi family in Tulita. Over the weekend, we lost a community elder and member in Tulita. On Sunday morning I got a phone call from my brother, saying that a gentleman passed away in Tulita. Another one has left us in their community. I was thinking about the amount of elders that we have lost in the Sahtu region. Mr. Speaker, people like my uncle Adrian Menacho, an older gentleman in Deline that passed away last year, and an older man in Colville Lake Joe Martin Oudzi also passed away. Several people in Fort Good Hope have also passed away.

Mr. Speaker, when we come here to represent our people, these people, when they ask us to work for them or speak for them, when we go out we seek their support on Election Day to put an X beside our name so we can go and talk to these people that have faith in us to say what needs to be said. These elderly people gave us advice. They give us direction. They tell us how to work together. They tell us if you don't work together, you create a lot of hardship. They tell us, too, this is how they view life. This is how they grew up. These are the values and beliefs. Sometimes they don't quite coincide with the modern day living in terms of how we see life. We go back to our communities. These elders are from the land. This is how they see things. Sometimes these elders give us strong words to speak on their behalf, how they see the world. Sometimes it has a conflict with the way they go out today. Sometimes we are in that state of which way do we decide on. But I also heard from one of the elders. You always side with the people. You will never go wrong in your decisions. I heard people say to remember what the elders have taught you and what have they told you. This is why I want to say to the families in Tulita and in the Sahtu that these elders are very valuable to us. I offer my prayers and condolence to the families in Tulita.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize today Chief Edward Sangris and Grand Chief Bill Erasmus of the Dene Nation. Also many of the people and councillors, some of the people I see are Bertha Mackenzie, Ernie Abel, Sarah Plotner, Angela Charlo, John Carter, Kelly Cumming, Leanne Erasmus, and others from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Lee Mandeville I see is here. Colin Crozier, Dave Kellett, and many people interested in the important issues before us.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome everybody in the audience here for today. I'd like to recognize some people from my community. First of all, the grand chief of Deh Cho, Sam Gargan, former Speaker and MLA. Welcome. Also Victor Constant from Fort Providence is here with us. Welcome, Victor.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to recognize Murray McMahon. He's here in the gallery and is a constituent of Yellowknife Centre, as well as Margaret Petersen, who is with him.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to welcome James Williams and Noah Cockney. Both will be going to the Olympics representing Arctic sports for the next two weeks. Have a good trip and showcase our Arctic sports. Also I'd like to welcome Mr. Greg Hopf of the Aboriginal Sport Circle.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague MLA Hawkins recognized Mr. McMahon and Ms. Margaret Petersen, but sitting with them is Amanda Petersen from Petersen's Outfitters.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Greg and Sharon Hopf, a family originally from Fort Resolution.

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

MR. KRUTKO: I'd like to recognize a former sparring partner of mine during the Dene-Metis claims days, Dan Murphy, who was the federal negotiator. Also I'd like to recognize former Chief Fred Sangris. Also someone from Fort McPherson, Maria Itsi from Fort McPherson. With that I would like to thank and recognize former Speaker of the House Sam Gargan.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 264-16(4): DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't like to be critical, of course, and I certainly don't like to be unkind to our Minister of ECE, but when I saw this ad today, I'm sorry, but this is the kind of thing that gets me upset. We have a school board in the South Slave that's running a deficit, and I know you can say it's all different pockets of money, but really it's all one department. I have always said I have no problem spending money, I have no problem investing money, I have a problem wasting money. I consider this ad campaign to be a major waste of money on top of the fact that it is a little offensive: a picture of a brain that says "Empty stomachs make empty brains."

I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about this today. I'd like to ask him who is the target audience of this advertising campaign.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The target audience, of course, is the youth. It was the youth that gave us the direction and also the feedback on what should be advertised in the newspaper. A lot of the youth are spending a lot of their quality time, free time, in front of the TV. That's a clear message that we're getting from the youth to say do a different advertisement in the newspaper, on TV commercials, so it's targeting the youth. It may not make much sense for us as adults, but it came from the youth to focus on what their intentions are. This is focused on the youth.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Well, that makes it even more curious, because if it's youth that are developing this, I'm quite certain they're probably old enough to go to the fridge and have a breakfast for themselves before they go to school so they don't have an empty brain. And I don't even believe that's... I think that's an offence to say empty stomachs make empty brains.

Anyhow, my question is this ad campaign, which is being paid for by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, I'd like to know what the price tag is on it.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I did request the information and it is coming to our department through the communications department that we've initiated this with an outside source. So as soon as I get that information I will certainly share that with the Member.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: However much it is, it's too much. Because I don't think you can buy a full-page ad in the News/North for much less than about \$2,000 a hit. So I would, if I could suggest, think it would have been better if you were trying to instill in young people the idea of having a healthy breakfast to help them do better in school, maybe a poster contest or something where the kids could get involved in expressing their ideas as opposed to something like this.

Under what initiative does this eating breakfast so that you can think better in school, under what initiative of the GNWT and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment does this program come?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This is under the direction of the youth, the feedback of the youth. It's under the education plan, part of the educational plan of going forward and promoting students to stay in school, the healthiness of our students. Promoting more of that into the communities, Members have alluded to where maybe other work with other departments, whether it be the recreational program or other promotional programs. We are currently doing that as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We are working with Municipal and Community Affairs and other health departments, as well, to promote even more of that. We have all these different role models that we've highlighted through our posters campaign, so we'll continue to promote that.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I was wondering if the department did any research on the readership of the News/North. Not to offend News/North, but I would suggest that the majority of school kids are not reading News/North. Perhaps \$2,000 a week might have been better spent on samples of

nutritious breakfasts that could have been taken into the schools and handed out for free. Does the Minister agree?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I do agree that students with full stomachs learn better in school. So we'll continue to support in that respect.

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

QUESTION 265-16(4):
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL
EXPANSION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on my Member's statement and ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, given that we were lined up for major capital work on Stanton Hospital but have now let that opportunity slide, how long will the planning, budgeting and construction process take, in her estimation, to get what is needed in place, major redevelopment? When will that be actually in place?

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated in the House previously, we anticipate that it will take at least two years to finish the Master Development Plan for Stanton.

MR. BROMLEY: Perhaps I'm not speaking clearly. I asked how long the Minister estimates it will take for planning, budgeting and construction to take so that facility is where we need it. How long? When can we expect that to be in place?

HON. SANDY LEE: The Member is familiar with our capital planning process in this House. A capital infrastructure like that would go through a master development planning process, which would be used to get into the planning process. It's the planning process that would determine where that capital ask would fit in. Once it's approved it will depend on what the building requirements are and depending on how big of a capital project it will be, it will take multi years.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is being quite modest in her estimates. I would say, at the rate we're going, the pace the Minister is setting, we will be talking a decade or longer. This is totally unacceptable for this territorial facility, which is brimming over and desperately crying out for action. Everyone knows the territorial facility is overdue. Given that the Minister recognizes this need, what effort is she putting in to pushing to get this process shortened in an exception to the normal planning process? Everybody in this room, in this House, understands this is needed. Will the Minister push to get this done in a much more timely way?

HON. SANDY LEE: Since the Member and the committee have toured the Stanton Territorial Hospital, perhaps next they could do a tour of the Norman Wells Health Centre or Hay River hospital. My point being, Stanton Hospital is a very important piece of infrastructure for us and it provides very important territorial health care programs and services, but it is not one of the most aged buildings we have. It does require a midterm retrofit. It's about 25 years old, but the Norman Wells facility is 40 years plus. The Hay River facility that we are working on right now, I believe it was built in 1966, plus the renovations. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the Member and the House that a lot of work is being done to redesign the programs and services at Stanton.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are no doctors in those facilities. The doctors are at Stanton Territorial facility. It's there where people are sent from all over the Northwest Territories. This Minister is completely ignoring that fact and the desperate need here. Those other facilities are not brimming over. This facility is facing, really, a critical situation -- a quick tour behind the scenes and even her own staff will tell her that -- even comparing to other facilities that we have. So I ask again, Mr. Speaker, what effort is the Minister taking to actually get some work on the ground and recognize the need that's there, the desperate need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member knows that we are here to work for the entire Territories and, for his information, the Hay River hospital has seven doctor positions. They have 50 doctor locums that come and go. Fort Smith and Norman Wells have doctors' offices.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the need to make sure that the Stanton Territorial Hospital is renovated and, more importantly, that the master development is done. I've explained before, the master development plan is more than just a footprint and square footage. It's about what services will be provided at Stanton for years to come. With the opening of the territorial dementia centre, the consolidated clinic and other facilities, we are looking at a territorial plan that would fit into Stanton Territorial plan. We are doing a lot of work and I'm optimistic that we will have the plan in place and planning money that will have Stanton Territorial Hospital become bigger and better than it is now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 266-16(4):
MANGILALUK SCHOOL EXPANSION

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my Member's statement was on Mangilaluk School. Recently, Don Kindt Consulting conducted, completed and released a report identifying serious deficiencies and inadequacies with the Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk. Will this government commit to implementing the improvements to all of the problems identified in this report? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report that the Member is referring to we received just recently. My department is going through the overall review. The recommendations were brought to our attention and, clearly, we need to work with the community; we need to work with the Member on a going-forward basis. This could be part of the business planning cycle for next time around. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we did receive a letter from the Member's constituent school asking about the education planning regarding their school and, certainly, we are committed to working on that. There is also an invitation to the Minister and also Assembly Members. So I would commit going to the Member's riding. Mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: I wanted a commitment from him to build the extension, not for a visit, but I'll take that too. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Speaker, you know, about a year ago I put a motion on the floor of the House that was passed. With so many reports that we go through in the government, Mr. Speaker, I need commitment from the Minister in regard to, like he said, a go-forward on getting this...enough reports and getting some action done on the building of the extension in Tuktoyaktuk, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this is all preliminary. We just received the recommendations. They are recommendations for us to consider. We may not cover every aspect of the recommendations that are brought forward, but the most critical need we'll certainly consider that into our business planning cycle.

Mr. Speaker, we may not be able to have the upgrades as we speak today, but certainly that's a going-forward basis for the next business planning cycle. I am committing to looking into this further with the Member and with the school board education council to develop an action plan. Mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, considering that the government once promised all students across the Northwest Territories would receive equal, quality education, this government should finally

develop an aggressive strategy to address all inadequacies and implement recommendations to make the real improvements on that report.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I totally agree that we must meet all the students' educational standards across the Northwest Territories. In fact, our main targets should be far-reaching to try and be ahead of the other jurisdictions such as the southern jurisdictions. We are developing the plans and implementing those areas and we will continue to improve in those areas.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for committing to come to the community; well, actually, the tour of Nunakput, to see all the inadequacies we have in the school system in all of the communities that I represent. Mr. Speaker, we have to action this sooner than later. The school system has to be really looked at in a way that, like from the South. You said the south is different than... We're no different than the South, Mr. Speaker. We just want the Minister to commit to making sure that the quality of education is brought to Nunakput. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I may not be bringing a hammer and saw with me when I go to the communities, but certainly that is a starting point. The next phase will be the business planning cycle. I assure the Member that ongoing discussion and an in-depth discussion will take place and we'll start planning for next year. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 267-16(4):

STUDENT ABSENCES TO PARTICIPATE IN
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES TRIALS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education. It's in regard to my Member's statement and the Minister's statement he made here in the House about the number of absences we're seeing in our schools and yet, Mr. Speaker, the Sport North organization is having to take a student out of school for some three weeks just to make the trials and also to take part in the trials and then, from there, wait until they have to go to the Arctic Winter Games because of the location where the trials are being held. But yet, Mr. Speaker, other sporting events have taken place over the weekend. They got the students to those events. They flew them back home. They are going to fly them to the Arctic Winter Games where they are not missing any school. I would like to ask the Minister of Education

why is it that you are making statements in this House, but yet government agencies aren't following those statements from this government to ensure the students are being able to sustain as many school hours as they can and not miss three weeks of school. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Member referred to our statements in the House. They are important statements. Having an organization, whether they be NGOs or territorial government organizations, promoting more sporting programs, whether it be Arctic Winter Games trials or Canada Games trials, Winter Games trials, we fully support students participating in those events, Mr. Speaker. At the same time, we are not ignoring the fact that they are missing school or being absent from school on a number of occasions but they go with their homework. They go with their guidelines of what needs to be done. They have a tutor system. They work closely with the teachers. Every opportunity they get in the community, they attend the schools as much as they can in their home riding or wherever they are travelling to. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but teachers are always on standby. They are available for these students at any given time. Even though they may be absent from school, the work has been done. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I understand if you miss four days of school you are basically not allowed back into the school. I think this government has to, if someone is missing three weeks of school and is a high school student, basically it will affect their grades and possibly have them rejected from that class. As a Minister who is responsible for ensuring that attendance there and working with other government agencies to ensure that we do not see students out of the classroom for more than a couple of days and to find out it is three weeks, I would be concerned too. Would the Minister consider talking to Sport North or the department responsible to ensure we find a solution to this problem and students don't have to be away from school for three weeks?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, such as the Arctic Winter Games, the decision is made way in advance. Sport North, if we continue to work with them through MACA but the dates aren't even set. We are given opportunity to have our northern athletes. We do have true talented northern athletes that we want to be represented at this national level. At the same time, yes, we continue to work with NGOs or territorial organizations for the territorial government to meet the standards of students' education factor. While they are out doing trials, they are still educating themselves. Mr.

Speaker, we must assure that in this House we continue to make those successful recreational programs and at the same time education factor is part of the overall play. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping through the Minister I would be able to find a way to work around the situation with the students. They don't have to be out of school for three weeks. They can have the sporting event over a weekend. They can fly them to the event, take part in the event, fly them home and then basically, if they qualify for the games, fly them to the games after the qualifications, but don't keep them in the South Slave for two weeks because the event is happening in Grande Prairie. That is what I am asking of the Minister. Would he seriously consider talking to these organizations to try to find a way that those students could go back home and also be able to complete their studies in their home community in regards to their schooling and not have to stay in the South Slave for over three weeks? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I would follow through with that with organizations. At the same time, we do have representatives here as well. The Aboriginal Sport Circle and also the sports organizations are clearly listening to us as we speak. So, with that mindset, we will certainly collaborate together and move forward. But this is a great opportunity for our representatives to be at the national stages, so we will support them, as well, through our educational system. Mahsi.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I believe the organization that he should be talking to is Sport North. They are the ones that are basically responsible for the trials for the Arctic Winter Games. I would like to ask the Minister if he can try to resolve this problem as soon as possible, because a lot of the parents are concerned that their children are going to be missing a lot of school and that they don't want to see them pulled out of schools because of the amount of time that they are going to be away. Again, I ask the Minister to sit down with Sport North to find a solution to this problem so that the students don't have to miss as much school. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, indeed, we are always looking for solutions. If there is a challenge on our hands such as we are maybe facing today, but at the same time we can certainly correct those areas. I am glad the Member is raising those issues, so we will certainly follow through with it. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 268-16(4):

NEW HOME WARRANTY PROGRAMS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the issue of lack of legislation to protect new homeowners. If their home is built and there are problems, in essence the new potential homeowner is the one left holding the bag and that risk. Mr. Speaker, with some thorough research, I was unable to find any policies that exist in our government that helps protect these types of people from these risks. I am going to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, because he is also the Minister who would be in charge of consumer protection services so I think that should rightly fall under his purview. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of any little known or dark policy that has never been invoked to help protect new homeowners if one of their houses goes up and fails and turns into quite a costly adventure because the builder walks away or builds a poor house? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of any policies that are out there, but there are some policies within the Housing Corporation where a one-year warranty usually comes for those that are constructing units for the corporation. The best advice that I can give is if the homeowner is entering into a contract with a builder, first of all make sure they are a legitimate builder and do the research on that and always make sure that you have a warranty built into the contract. If they refuse to put one in, then I would have to seriously consider signing on with that particular builder. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that CMHC actually has the clause built in about protecting the loan. Mr. Speaker, as I cited today, back in the '70s Alberta instituted protection for home buyers to make sure that their home had a warranty if something happened. We don't have to look very far here in the recent past with Bayview Estates when the builder ran into problems and the project came to its knees and a grinding halt. That put those potential homeowners at significant risk. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister look into the issue of potentially creating legislation that could provide this type of protection to people who want to buy new homes, and so when they put an enormous amount of risk, as money is concerned, they are protected? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the folks of Alberta and B.C. are covered under CMHC. The number of people that they capture is in the hundreds of thousands and we are a very small jurisdiction. It would be quite an expensive process to enact legislation to bring it forward. Do

we have the resources to do that right now? There is obviously a demand for the resources, so we would have to seriously consider that before we proceed to go ahead for such a small jurisdiction. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, people building houses in some particular cases do not require trade certification. So, in other words, the homeowner, or I should say potential homeowner, could be put at significant risk trying to fulfill part of their family's dream of owning their own house. This government shows little interest in doing this. Mr. Speaker, it is the cost of taking a serious look at legislation that already exists. It is the cost of printing it on paper, which really isn't that expensive. Mr. Speaker, it is not a big cost. Would the Minister commit to this House that he would investigate the realities of could this be something that this government could consider in its life? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, if it is a matter of printing someone else's legislation onto our paper and our letterhead, it is something that we try to stay away from, because we always say, and we have said in the past, that we need legislation that is built in the North, for the North. To go and copy other jurisdictions' legislation, that's something we wouldn't look at. But I could commit to the Member that we can do some research and see if there's a demand for this particular type of legislation.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for that commitment there. I think that's an excellent solve for this particular issue, I'd be willing to help the Minister with some of the research I've done to show that perhaps it maybe isn't that complicated to bring forward this idea. If the Minister would be willing to see what is out there, would he be willing to potentially take this on as a legislative initiative if we can do it this time around or certainly set it up so it's a consideration for the next government in 14 or 16 months from now?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Like I said, we will do the research and see if it is feasible to enact this particular type of legislation. We have to understand that there is going to be a cost factor to this and do we have the money for that right now with all the other demands on the budget. I have committed to the Member that we will do some research and see if this is a particular piece of legislation is being called for in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 269-16(4):
DELIVERY OF HOUSING CORPORATION
PROGRAMS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I talked about a desperate situation that many of my constituents have in their housing needs. I have questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

Many constituents in Tu Nedhe want to know how the Housing Corporation is supposed to keep building brand new houses for \$250,000 and then leave them vacant for years while families are in need. Can the Minister tell me if the Housing Corporation is looking at other options to help meet housing needs in the communities?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're always looking for ways to improve the delivery of houses and especially in the communities, because that is where the greatest demand is that we've seen from the needs survey that was just completed on some of the demands in some of the communities. We're always working to meet the need there. We also have concerns, as the Member has pointed out, with the number of units that are built and left vacant. We're taking steps to address that. We are working with the communities, who are coming up with some good solutions as to how best we can use those units. We're continually working on ways to improve the delivery of houses into the communities.

MR. BEAULIEU: Can the Minister tell me if there is a time limit in which the NWT Housing Corporation will allow units to sit empty in a community?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Offhand, I'm not quite sure about a time limit. I could follow up on that and get back to the Member. I do know that when a unit is sitting vacant in a community for too long or what the community feels is too long, then the community or the Members will usually let us know that there are some vacant units in the community that haven't been filled and then we'll take steps to try and address that and come up with the way we can fill these units.

MR. BEAULIEU: Can the Minister tell me if the NWT Housing Corporation has developed plans for what's going to happen in the communities? Of course, I'm specifically interested in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e for this construction season. If he's able to tell me what is going to happen in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We're always developing plans on how we're going to deliver houses into the community. I think part of that plan is the process that we're going through right now

with the budget process. The Housing Corporation's infrastructure is still a part of this particular budget, so once we review that, we'll be able to see some of the investments that we're making into the communities and which communities they are going into. As well, we have a table of all the money that we have through federal money that is going to the communities through major MNIs and improving the public housing stock. We have all that information that I'd be more than willing to share with the Member so that he can see firsthand the amount of money that's going into his riding.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. With the new needs survey just completed, which I haven't seen yet, I know that there's definitely some needs for the seniors living in their own homes in Tu Nedhe. Can the Minister tell me if the Housing Corporation is going to be establishing anything insofar as repairs go that is specific to helping the seniors that are homeowners in our small communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Housing Corporation goes a long way into assisting homeownership clients through repairs and trying to get people into homes. We have some challenges that we face. There is a gap of people that we're looking to try and capture. I've given instructions to the corporation to see if we can start capturing a lot of those people who are quite capable of looking after homes, but for one reason or another are not qualifying at the moment. There are a lot of programs designed for the seniors through the preventative maintenance, where they go in every fall to do the maintenance in their units. There are home repairs for seniors that I know for a fact a lot of seniors are taking the corporation up on. When they do qualify, they get some work done to the house. As I said, we're always looking for ways to improve the delivery of houses and repairs into the communities, and with input from Regular Members on a regular basis, we continue to do that.

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

QUESTION 270-16(4):
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of ENR regarding consultation on the issue of the caribou. I wanted to ask the Minister, the Minister provided me and some other Members with a list of meetings that happened over this issue here. I wanted to ask what his department means in terms of meaningful consultation with the users of the caribou.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the issue of the Interim Emergency Measures, it was a very compressed time frame and efforts were made -- every effort, I would suggest -- to try to make sure we consulted with the aboriginal governments, both Tlicho and the Yellowknives as well as the folks around the lake that were users of the herd.

MR. YAKELEYA: Within the compressed time frame that the Minister has indicated to his definition of consultation with aboriginal governments, I want to ask the Minister what his definition is of a meaningful consultation.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: All the consultation we do, and have done, and will continue to do, is considered meaningful. In this particular instance there was a compressed time frame. The circumstances were such that we did the consultation that we were able to in the circumstances and had to proceed with a decision, because it was considered to be an emergency conservation issue.

MR. YAKELEYA: So in terms of nation-to-nation building with the governments here that we in our own, I say in our own definition within this government here in terms of the circumstances, the compressed time, that we will ultimately make a decision no matter what the governments will say in terms of their feedback. That we will make decisions in terms of the definition that I'm getting from the Minister on meaningful consultation. I would ask the Minister if he is coming out with a policy in terms of this type of definition with the government.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We should be clear: there is a distinct difference. The compressed circumstances arising around this emergency situation. But over the normal course of events we have a full consultation process as a government, as ENR. I would just point all the way up north and work our way down the valley with the Inuvialuit, with the Gwich'in, with the Sahtu, the Tlicho process is underway. We have spent millions when it comes to consulting and involving all the aboriginal governments with water, with the Species at Risk Act. We're doing the same with the Wildlife Act. On a regular, ongoing basis, with all the different herds, we have a full consultation process. We're part of the same process to have the common end of doing what's best for the caribou. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with millions of dollars this government

couldn't get right in terms of consultation with the aboriginal governments and the affected caribou hunters in this specific area. I ask the Minister, in terms of his consultation with even, for example, the YK Dene, they haven't even come close to a deal. Can the Minister indicate to me if this deal is close to a resolution with this issue with the YK Dene?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We did get it right. We made, I believe, the necessary decision to protect the Bathurst caribou herd during this time when they are in great need of our support. They need to be able to recover and we need to come up with a longer term plan. So we did come up and make the right decision. We are committed to continuing to work with the Yellowknives on accommodation and that process is still underway. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 271-16(4):

CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are addressed to the Minister of ENR as well. I have some questions for him with regard to my Member's statement and the situation in regard to the ban on hunting caribou. I have to say, at the outset, I need to admire the Minister's dress today. It's a very flashy vest.

I know that we've discussed last week, and the Minister answered many questions, about consultation and consultation ongoing, and plans to come to an agreement and so on. I don't believe I heard an answer in his answer to Mr. Yakeleya. I'd like to ask the Minister for an update on the process that he is using, the department is using, to solve the disagreement with the Yellowknives on the caribou ban. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have offered some suggestions and alternatives to the Yellowknives. We've also taken the liberty of doing a survey through the Chief Drygeese territory to see what animals, what caribou may be available outside of the no-hunting zone. That work has been done. We are committed, when they get to us, to see where we can go and try to find that common ground. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. He's talking about getting back and getting together again. I wonder if I could get some indication of the time frame. When will the parties next meet and when do they think they might maybe come to an agreement and a solution? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Tonight, at the rise of the House, I think at seven o'clock, there's a big public meeting over at the Explorer in the Katimavik Room, sponsored by the Dene Nation. That will be our next event as it relates to caribou. We have our folks on the lines with the Yellowknives or trying to get hold of the Yellowknives to see what their thoughts are on the offers that are on the table. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Unfortunately, I didn't catch the end of that answer. I know that the Minister recognizes that any aboriginal has the right to hunt, and I know that he also feels that the ban that was put in place is justified, but I'd like to ask what he and the department are doing to provide opportunities for hunters within the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board area to get the caribou that they need for their communities. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: With the Tlicho, my understanding is that they've had at least two, if not more, successful community hunts already outside the no-hunting zone. We've worked with the communities. We've gone out. They've harvested caribou. We've assisted them. They've brought the caribou back to the communities to be passed out to all the members and it's been a very successful, cooperative process. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I have to ask the Minister, if it's a very successful and popular process, I would suggest that's probably not the case for the residents of the Yellowknives in Dettah and Ndilo. So could I ask the Minister for clarification: do we have residents within the Yellowknife area who are happy with the process and happy with the outcome? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Our offer has been there from the start to assist the Yellowknives to ensure that they have an opportunity to exercise their right to harvest in areas outside the zone so that we can continue to protect the Bathurst herd during this very critical year. There is other work underway. We're waiting to have some feedback from them, but we are committed to trying to resolve that issue with the Yellowknives. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 272-16(4):

CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources regarding the steps and process put into place regarding this caribou issue. Mr. Speaker, I have constituents of

First Nations background who say to me that some of their people are going hungry. I have constituents who own outfitting lodges that now they can't bring in people to hunt these caribou and they say they're going to go hungry. Mr. Speaker, the reality is if you depend on this, people are put at risk. I'm curious as to what steps the Minister has put into place to demonstrate gradual steps as opposed to just cutting everyone off and saying no caribou. Did the Minister set up a self-management, independent step where groups could monitor themselves and manage themselves at a lower incremental rate to still protect the caribou? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges for this part of the country is there is no harvest management plan for the Bathurst herd. We know that back in 2006, when the numbers were about 100,000 to 120,000, the red flags were raised. Three years later, we're down to around 30,000 animals. We are now in what I would call the red zone. There is a requirement for constructive action, which we have taken. We recognize the need to accommodate that. We have done that. We recognize there's an impact on businesses. ITI is working with that. There are funds in the budget to help offset and then look at other measures to look at work that may be different and not tied to the caribou. There should be no reason for anyone to go hungry. The opportunity is there. It's working in the Tlicho. We can sort something out with the Yellowknives. The key is to protect the Bathurst herd to ensure that future generations, in fact, do have a resource that they can continue to harvest. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, if this was on the radar for so long, why didn't the Department of ENR manage what I would define as a sustainable hunt? And I would balance it equally between the local, traditional people who need to hunt this for food as well as, of course, the business type of people such as the outfitters who depend on this, who hire local people, and that meat goes to food. Mr. Speaker, we have two large impacted groups that if this was in the red zone continually, why wasn't early on a number identified so these groups could work together and find a manageable balance? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There were some clear signals given when the outfitters' tags were initially reduced. The signals got worse as the census information came in. Once again, I'll point out the complexities and challenges in this part of the Northwest Territories where you have the Tlicho Government with their Wekeezhii process and

unsettled claims areas sharing and harvesting from the same herd along with other stakeholders from the south. There was no clear consensus and plan. We're now past the point of being able to take a long, thoughtful look at this. There was a requirement for action to protect the herd and we've taken that measure. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, quite simply put: when did the Minister go out to, whether it's an aboriginal hunting organization, if I may define them in that way, such as the chiefs or the bands, and certainly with the outfitters of saying what could be your bare minimum that could get you through the winter until we can get these types of boards such as the Wekeezhii board to make that decision? When was that type of discussion going to take place or when did that discussion take place by empowering them to make the decisions for themselves as opposed to government flying in and saying you're done? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, late September we had a press conference over here in the meeting room when we had the results that came in from all the work that has been going on doing the herd census. At that point we indicated at the table with the grand chief of the Tlicho as well as the national chief for the Dene Nation, the Tlicho chiefs, and we raised the issue and put the numbers on the table, that this herd was in critical condition, that by the end of December 31st, we had to come up with some clear measures that we are going to protect the herd to allow them to survive. The plan was to have the Wekeezhii process meet that need. Unfortunately, that process is still underway and will not be concluded until sometime in April or May. In the meantime, the required action, which is why we used -- after great thought and careful consideration -- the authority that we have to respond to emergency measures when it comes to conservation issues like this. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I try not to impress upon anyone that I am an environmental scientist in the area of caribou study in no way or no matter, but the reality is I am sure that there could have been an identifiable number said that we can find a minimum. That is what I am talking about; about making sure that people can eat and people can fulfill some of their traditional lifestyles without the government impeding on that type of philosophy. Mr. Speaker, is it too late for this government to find a balance to work out with the First Nations people of this area as well as finding a way for outfitters to survive through this crisis? Everyone is going to be left miserable in this process. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, everything I have seen indicates to me that there is no amount of sustainable harvest on the Bathurst

that will allow the herd to survive at this point. We have made other arrangements. We have had and do have offers to help hunt outside the no-hunting zone. There are a couple of herds that, for this year at least, can sustain some extra harvest, the Bluenose-East and the Ahiak. Our hierarchy is set up. When there are restrictions, we start with removing the commercial harvest, the outfitters, the resident tags, and we work very hard and long to protect the aboriginal harvest. That is what we are doing in this case. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 273-16(4):
DEPARTMENTAL POLICY ON WEIGHT LOSS
PROCEDURES AND REFERRALS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Edmonton at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, there is a weight loss clinic. From time to time medical professionals have referred Northerners to those services at that clinic. There is a very accurate unit, I believe. It is for people who have weight issues that affect their health and their well-being. Mr. Speaker, I have heard from two constituents and also had spoken to Mr. Hawkins, I believe, who has heard from a couple of constituents as well, that the GNWT Department of Health and Social Services is no longer funding the provision of services to these constituents at the weight loss clinic. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if this was a deliberate policy change by her department. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a change of policy, but it is about adhering to the policy. Weight loss procedure is not an insured service. It is not something that is covered anywhere in the country. Under our health care coverage, we pay for hospital and doctor services. Most of the situations we know of are not being done at a hospital setting. Mr. Speaker, our policy does allow for exceptions. It would have to go through a doctor's coverage. We are working with the doctors to have a very clear clinical guideline on that. As well, in the interim, we are looking to see how we could come up with our own program to assist those who are extremely obese, and obese in a way that affects their health status, and the department is working on coming up with a program on that. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, so the Minister indicates that there has not been a change in the policy, that in fact in adherence to the policy that did exist. When my constituents began to receive services through a referral to the weight

loss clinic at the Royal Alexandra Hospital and are now being told this is no longer, was it an error that they were referred there for surgery and medical attention in the first place? Was that referral made by someone who didn't know what our policy was? Why now, in mid-treatment, is there a change in the support they received? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, those procedures should not have been approved. I cannot go into the details of the individual files, but we have at least half a dozen cases we know of. If we look into the details, we will find that the services that these clients were going to were not in a hospital or in a medical facility but in a private program like YWCA in Edmonton and such. We have to follow the Canada Health Act. Our health care covers hospital and doctor services. I know that there are lots of other services that people would like us to pay for, but we need to follow our policy and pay for what is covered under the Canada Health Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, so it sounds like some people managed to be referred and receive that support from the Northwest Territories, but now this error, I suppose, in policy has been caught. I am going to ask the Minister if it is possible that, since it would be difficult for these constituents, then, to carry on and complete the service that they were receiving through this Edmonton facility and I have to assume from what the Minister is saying that this may be a private clinic at the Royal Alexandra Hospital and not a hospital itself, is there a way that these few cases could be grandfathered and carry on receiving their service to the conclusion? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the department, along with the medical community, is reviewing this program to come up with a plan that could assist its patients. I would recommend the Member and any Members in the House to have names of constituents that they would like us to consider in this review. I would be happy to receive them and get back to the Member separately. Obviously, this is not something I can talk about here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister: what would get obesity to the point, as she says -- I suppose they call it morbid obesity -- where it affects the well-being of the person? What would set that apart in the department's policy guidelines from any other illness that someone could have? I don't understand why this thing would be treated any differently than any other disease people have. Maybe some people are overweight because they are addicted to food, but if we were going to start telling people they couldn't receive services

because they had an addiction, that we wouldn't be providing service, people with substance addictions or tobacco. There is no end where it would end. Does the Minister concur that obesity can be a medical condition that should be covered by this government? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps one day we can have a big debate on that.

Mr. Speaker, wellness includes a lot of things. It includes healthy eating, healthy lifestyle. Our program does not... Canada Health Act, for example, does not support alternative medication, herb medication, acupuncture. I think there are a whole slew of things that our people would like us to cover, because definitely it would include their wellness, also probably their medical condition. The fact is, weight loss reduction services are not part of our Canadian health insurance system. It is not covered anywhere or in any part of the country. Obviously there is an exception that can be made. It could be established that it is life threatening. That is why there is always that exception in the rule. So we are reviewing that. I will get back to the Member on that, because we are hard pressed to cover those programs that are covered under the Canada Health Act where the programs are delivered by hospitals and doctors. We can't continue to add without putting guidelines and some programs here first. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 274-16(4):
GNWT RESPONSE TO DENE NATION
MOTIONS ON CARIBOU MANAGEMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Roland. In terms of meaningful consultation and with the very important government that we have with the aboriginal governments, in terms of this issue going forward and a nation-to-nation-to-nation trust building relationship, from October 19th to 23rd there was a Dene leadership meeting here in Dettah. A motion was moved by Chief Edward Sangris of the Yellowknives Dene and seconded by the grand chief, Joe Rabesca, of the Tlicho Government, talked about the importance of this issue of the caribou here. They talked about having the discussions on the government-to-government basis with our government here in terms of looking at this herd and how to deal with it. I want to ask the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in terms of this type of serious motion that was passed by the chief in terms of raising the issue to a government-to-government relationship, did the Minister act on this motion from the Dene Nation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal

Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process that we use at Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations when we become aware of these motions is we work with the appropriate departments to see their responses and how they would respond and work with the First Nations government or the Metis or the Inuvialuit, for example. There's a process that is involved that we bring forward and work with them to try and work with the groups when it comes to the motion. In fact, in this particular case the Wekeezhii process is in place. Part of the Tlicho Self-Government Agreement that we work with and, as the Minister has pointed out, is a process that we undertake, as well as meetings we would have one-on-one with the affected groups and governments.

MR. YAKELEYA: Again I would ask the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in regard to the Dene Nation leadership motion that was passed, did the Minister act on this motion as the leadership wanted some work to be done in regard to the caribou?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As a result of the motion and motions prior to that, in fact as early as 2007, the importance of caribou was raised that we as a government from those motions worked with the First Nations aboriginal governments to come up with, number one, the accounts that were in dispute initially. We worked with them to get that information together using traditional knowledge and modern science and supported them with resources to help do the accounts. As well, that then set in place the initiatives that were undertaken by governments by reducing some of the earliest, when it came to tags or else those that qualified for resident harvesting, right up to the point where the last group affected were the aboriginal harvesters and we're doing work to accommodate. So, yes, we have worked with those motions.

MR. YAKELEYA: The motion speaks to a long-term plan with the GNWT on a government-to-government basis in terms of the basis to recognize the inherent right to hunt and the authority in terms of this issue here. Has this government here sat down with the Dene Nation leadership and talked about this issue as the motion dictated in terms of our saying this is what they wanted to do? Has this government done this in terms of answering to this motion that was passed on October 19th to 23rd, 2009?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The motions that are passed, whether it is by the Dene Nation or the regional leadership or the specific regional government that brings forward initiatives that we sit down and respond to those motions. We have agreements in place. For example, through the co-management boards, through the settled areas,

whether it's the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, and through the self-government process of the Tlicho. In the unsettled areas there was a number of discussions held. There were meetings, as well, around this issue as well as at the larger meetings at the Dene Nation itself talking about the importance. I believe the Minister of ENR has provided a list of meetings that were held around caribou, around their importance and the need to take some action around conversation. So, yes, I would say we have acted on those and continue to do so as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Time for question period has expired, but I will allow the Member a final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on the government's list in terms of consultation, he listed off a bunch of meetings. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has certainly done a lot of meetings. He's shown me a very impressive list in terms of meetings. However, I believe that, Mr. Speaker, this will not stand up in the Supreme Court of Canada in terms of meaningful consultation. There is one process of doing meaningful consultation. The others tell him this is what we're going to do and leave it at that. So, again, I ask the Minister in terms of building a relationship with the aboriginal governments on bigger issues that the Northwest Territories has to face, how is this going to ensure that the aboriginal governments should trust this government because of its own interest? How can we assure the aboriginal governments that we have their best interest at heart in terms of their rights and their culture and their way of life?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, it's our responsibility as a government to make sure we work with the partners in the Northwest Territories. In fact, the list of meetings the Member has shows our commitment to work with the aboriginal membership across the Northwest Territories, whether it is around water, land, caribou, the many examples that we've worked in partnership developing either legislation or implementation plans about how we can serve and regulate the use of wildlife in the Northwest Territories. So we continue to do that.

As for seeking my opinion about what would qualify as satisfactory engagement in front of the Supreme Court, I'm not a lawyer, but I know with what we have and the practice we've put in place as the 16th Assembly, we do engage, we do consult and we work to accommodate. In fact, Minister Miltenberger talked about the accommodation factor with the Tlicho, and that's been presented to the Akaitcho about harvesting outside this zone. So initiatives have been undertaken to try to make sure that we can serve and have caribou for the future generations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland, Item 8, written questions, 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 66-16(4):
YOUTH SMOKING IN THE NWT: DESCRIPTIVE
SUMMARY OF SMOKING BEHAVIOUR
AMONG GRADES 5 TO 9 STUDENTS

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document titled Youth Smoking in the NWT: Descriptive Summary of Smoking Behaviour Among Grade 5 to 9 Students. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 16, notices of motion, The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 11-16(4):
DEVELOPMENT OF AN
ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, February 10, 2010, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the government develop an anti-poverty strategy for the Northwest Territories; and further, that the Premier initiate discussions towards this strategy in partnership with business, organizations and those living in poverty; and further, that the government and partners start by developing a definition of poverty; and further, that the anti-poverty strategy identify specific, measureable targets, with clear, cross-departmental mechanisms for coordination and integration of actions; and furthermore, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro, Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills, Item 18, motions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Motions

MOTION 10-16(4):
RESOLUTION OF CARIBOU
HARVESTING ISSUE,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS caribou have been a source of food and a means of survival for aboriginal people of the NWT since time immemorial;

AND WHEREAS caribou herds migrate across jurisdictions and across international boundaries;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories has scientific studies that show a decline in caribou herds and deem it an emergency measure under the conservation process to ban all hunting of the Bathurst caribou herd within a specified geographical area;

AND WHEREAS Dene Nation Resolutions #10/11-003 and #09/010-014 propose a means by which all parties can get back on track and be respectful of aboriginal culture and all Northerners by recognizing:

“the Dene will enter discussions and develop a long-term plan with the GNWT on a government-to-government basis to recognize both the inherent rights of the Dene to hunt and their inherent authority to design and implement solutions that will protect, preserve and ensure the survival of caribou for future generations.”;

AND WHEREAS aboriginal people have deemed the GNWT's recent actions in this regard to be an infringement on their aboriginal rights and treaty rights to hunt for survival and ceremonial purposes;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Government of the NWT set a place and date to have an emergency meeting with the aboriginal people of the NWT to consider their consultative process and come to an agreement regarding the caribou;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the NWT look at alternative measures to resolve the issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. There's a motion on the floor, The motion is in order, To the motion, The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I raise this issue due to the number of people I've been talking to in my region around this area here in terms of the importance of aboriginal people having access to their food such as caribou.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked to many people who know why it's very important for us to have this food for our survival. People have said that we've been surviving for thousands and thousands of years. Mr.

Speaker, actually, I read in a book called “The Alpine Hunters.” There was an ice patch study done in the Mackenzie Mountains that showed evidence from our elders and from scientific data, that there were hunters hunting caribou 5,000 years ago in the Mackenzie Mountains. There was evidence that came back through the scientific analysis of what was found in these ice patches.

Mr. Speaker, I say that the aboriginal people have always hunted for caribou. It's in our blood. It's in our life. As one of the elders in Colville Lake said, if you take the caribou away, you are destroying our way of life. You are destroying our life, he said. So, he said, you should not let this happen. We should be working on this issue how we can work together on this important animal here, Mr. Speaker.

Caribou don't know which jurisdiction is which jurisdiction. They migrate. People in Colville Lake locate themselves right on the migration route of their caribou. So one of the questions I ask is how do we know if this is the Bathurst, Bluenose-East or Bluenose-West? When did we start labelling the caribou? We don't know, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that I wanted to say in terms of this motion here is I think we need to really strengthen the consultation process; meaningful consultation. This is why a lot of people are angry. A decision was done in the middle of some good discussions. I am not too sure if a meaningful consultation process was carried out.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, is the labelling of our herds. When did we start classifying this is the Bluenose-East and this is the Bluenose-West? How do you know if it's Ahik, Bathurst, Beverly, Porcupine? We start labelling different caribou.

Mr. Speaker, this is not only about the Dene in this area. There are over 1,000 Inuit in Yellowknife. There are Metis in Yellowknife. This is an assault on the culture, on a way of life, on people. There are lots of aboriginal people in Yellowknife, lots in the Sahtu, in Yellowknife. That's down the region here. This animal was brought up with us. It's part of our life. It's in our blood. Traditionally, elders have talked about this animal. There's no argument from this side here to say yes, we need to look at it, because it shows that we need help.

I haven't yet seen evidence in terms of the mining, what they have done to this herd. The calving ground is north of the mines. There are big diamond mines up there, three of them that pour billions and billions of dollars. Thousands and thousands of trucks that go up there to those diamond mines, six minutes apart at one time. That's incredible that we have, in the name of the big dollar to support our economy. That is incredible. I wonder what those poor, poor animals are thinking. How they can survive up there with all that blasting, blowing up the rock, the ground, the vibrations that go across this land. It scares them.

What happened to all those herds in those years? One year they're up to 1,000; next four or five years they're down to a few hundred. So should we trust the government in terms it's in their best interest?

Mr. Speaker, there were motions on this in terms of this issue here. The last point I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that, yes, we do like food. Caribou has given itself to us. Elders teach us how to use it. But, really, the issue for me is about our culture, our way of life, our values and beliefs that caribou has given us. That's what the issue is. It brings a lot of unresolved issues when you tell a nation of people you cannot do this, you cannot do that, we want you to do this. We have heard this for so many years in our communities. And all that they say is: how can they tell us we can't hunt caribou? That's what they're telling us. They're crazy to tell us we can't hunt caribou. We should be working out a process.

Mr. Speaker, I bring this motion because the bigger picture is no matter who wins on this issue here, how are we going to continue building a relationship with our most important partner, the true people of this land, the aboriginal governments who own this land? How are we going to go forward on some big issues like devolution and resource revenue sharing? I think we're going to have to restart. With this motion I hope it gives an opportunity for the government to look at this again, look at this issue again and look at the consultation process that was rolled out. I'm happy this motion is on the floor. I'll allow other Members to speak on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. I'll go to the seconder of the motion, the honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, of course, support this motion. I believe that we didn't have to be here today. I still stand firm in the belief that had our leadership, our Premier, our Minister of ENR, attended the Dene national leadership meeting in Fort Simpson, we would have come a long way to resolving this issue. But because of the attention, or by the inattention of our government, we have to give it attention, Mr. Speaker.

For me it has always been critical, the fact that aboriginal people are not allowed to hunt. I respect the need for preservation and conservation, but, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, aboriginal people have the inherent right to hunt for food. In fact, our NWT Act says it loud and clear that nothing in the NWT Act, the ordinances, can be made to restrict and prohibit Indians and Inuit from hunting for food, Mr. Speaker. This is the case that we are here today. I believe that the Minister could have... There was a need for a ban. There was a need for a no-hunting zone, but there was no need to restrict aboriginal people from hunting.

I think the government and I think the Minister is wrong in this case. We've got precedents all across our great land of Canada, even with depleted species. Aboriginal people go to court and they win all the time, Mr. Speaker. It's not because they want a wholesale slaughter and make animals extinct, Mr. Speaker, but there is an allowable harvest level that can be achieved for most herds or most species.

I believe that the Minister acted in haste. I don't think he made the case to myself or to the aboriginal leadership that this is a case where this herd is extinct. In fact, thinking out loud, for myself, for some of the chiefs, I think that 25 caribou per community was something that even that bare minimum is something that the communities were looking at. That's subsistence hunting, and that's all the people asked for, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I do not believe that our GNWT had the power to restrict or prohibit aboriginal people from hunting for food. However, it's done. But I believe it can be undone, Mr. Speaker, to salvage whatever's left of the winter hunting season. It's not lifting the ban, but to allow aboriginal peoples to hunt there, Mr. Speaker. I think the fact that the media, our North has a lot of attention on this issue and the reason why my colleagues have been speaking about this issue over the past couple of weeks is because it's a very dangerous precedent what the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources has done. It's something I cannot support. I said it right off at the start and I think that this decision has to be reversed when it comes to First Nations people. The ban should stay. The no-hunting zone should stay. But what should not stay is the right to restrict aboriginal people from subsistence harvesting, Mr. Speaker.

The motion calls for us sitting down, coming to... With willingness we can work towards a solution. But I'm still upset, Mr. Speaker, that we didn't have to be here today. It could have been done a couple weeks ago. At the same time, I really appreciate Mr. Yakeleya for moving the motion forward. I stand firmly behind that and I've got no problems seconding it. I'm really happy about the support that we're getting from our colleagues for this motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of caribou, this issue about the Bathurst herd is a very tough issue. I heard from people in Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. I recognize that the inability for them to go in and harvest within the Wekeezhii area has had a really significant impact. However, what impacts them is the right to do so. You have to balance, I guess, an issue of rights and whether or not that is going to be fought in this type

of arena, or an issue of declining herd that, according to science, tell us is a potential for extinction.

The way I view this is there is a need for consultation. I think there is a need for consultation of all aboriginal persons that are impacted by hunting if it is one person that comes down from the Beaufort-Delta and chooses to hunt this herd, then the fact that they are moving their rights to go into that area and hunt it has some impact.

I agree with the motion that a consultation should occur. I have had an opportunity to speak to some of the people that have been involved in the decision; some of the Tlicho citizens. The Tlicho citizens, it appears to me, have a mixed reaction to the ban. The reaction seems to be that the Tlicho people are saying we want to go get caribou for food. Some are saying this is the Minister within the GNWT that is trampling on their rights of aboriginal people to be able to harvest food for themselves which, because the barren-ground caribou are not endangered, therefore, at this point they are not endangered. That is because we don't have our own legislation. At this point, they are not endangered. So there is an issue of their rights and the hunting. Also, the Tlicho people are actually saying this is our area. This is what we choose to do. We worked with the Minister of ENR to impose a ban in this area because we want to protect the caribou. That camp is saying that if we continue to hunt and harvest the caribou, then the caribou will be extinct and then this won't be a topic of discussion in the future because there will be no caribou.

I believe that there should be a consultation. I believe that is what this motion indicates, that there is a need for consultation with all the stakeholders and not just people that are opposed to the ban but also for the people who are seeing this as a way to conserve the caribou herd. I support this motion for the fact that it is asking the GNWT, Environment and Natural Resources, to go back and sit down with aboriginal people and come up with a solution that allows maybe some subsistence hunting that is necessary. I don't know how that is going to all roll out, because I don't know how you make a case to do subsistence hunting. For example, I am a Treaty Indian. I wouldn't be allowed to hunt under a subsistence law, I suppose, because I could always go to the store and buy meat. However, that discussion has to occur. I guess this motion is one way of giving the government and the aboriginal people who are impacted by this decision an opportunity to sit down and move to the next level and make a decision on whether or not there is going to be some hunting in the Wekeezhii area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the motion. I feel quite strongly that we have to look at alternative measures to come to a solution to this bypass. I think that there are solutions out there. There have been precedents set in other areas, that we talk about managing the herds, the Bluenose herd, for instance, an area where I come from in which there was actually an agreement between the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu to look at bag limits for communities. There again, they did a survey of the caribou. They said they were in crisis. They were down to 5,000 animals. Apparently, 8,000 animals showed up the following year. Again, because we do estimates and not do the long-term survey. I think the same thing applies to the Porcupine caribou herd. There hasn't been a survey done on that herd since 2001. I think it is important to realize that, if we are estimating numbers, there are ways that we can work around, trying to find solutions to these problems.

Mr. Speaker, other aboriginal organizations throughout the Territories have agreed on their own to shoot bulls and not cows so that you can increase the herd. Look at ways of bag limits so every community has 25 tags so that anybody who wants to go out hunting, say, the Bluenose herd, they can go to the band office, get a tag and go hunting. At least it is a controllable system that is in place for harvesting caribou.

Mr. Speaker, I, for one, feel that this government, on one hand you say it is a conservation measure but on the other hand you are saying, well, you consume. Go ahead and hunt the species over there, over there and down here, but you can't hunt from here. You are hunting the species. I think if you are putting pressure in one area, someone is going to take a couple thousand animals in one area. It is the still the same type of herd you are talking about.

In regards to the Bathurst herd, the Bathurst herd at one time were three herds. Now we have something like nine herds that are out there. To me, genetically, they are probably all the same animals. You are talking about the type of animal species we are looking at. I think you have to look at the whole species as a whole and exactly the genetics of what this species acquired to be classified as the Bathurst herd.

Mr. Speaker, in Quebec they had a situation in regards to the George River herds which, in 1950, the herd was down to 5,000 animals. Mr. Speaker, in 1975, some 25 years later, they were up to 700,000 animals. So in 25 years they managed to increase to 700,000 animals from 5,000 animals. That is an example of how these animals are able

to sustain themselves for thousands of years. That is where we look at statistics, drops and balances. A lot of it has to do with the whole environment that we are in, regardless if it is industrial development, bad fire seasons, looking at exactly the migration routes. Do they go to the same calving areas every year? We are finding out that they don't. Again, it is important for us to find a way around this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I believe a solution to this problem is exactly what this motion is suggesting, that the government calls an emergency meeting with all co-management boards. The people are affected by this decision. Have a public meeting by way of a public forum. Try to find and come up with workable solutions so that, at the end of the day, there is still a means of aboriginal people sustaining their needs, allowing them to continue to hunt but also have a management system in place of managing the herd.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that this government take a look at some of the illustrations that I mentioned in regards to how other herds are being managed. This is not unique just to this species. I mentioned that this is something similar to the problem we are seeing with the Bluenose herd in the Western Arctic. I think it is important to find ways to work with all the co-management boards, have a general principle that we can all agree to, because we are all in this together. It doesn't matter where the caribou come from or which species they are. We all depend on the sustainability of this herd, but more importantly, the sustainability of our communities. Without caribou, a lot of our communities will not sustain themselves. They will not be able to maintain that traditional lifestyle that they have in those communities, regardless if it is in regards to the Old Crow in the Yukon or Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories or Wekweeti in the Northwest Territories or right in the centre of all of this.

I was surprised, Mr. Speaker, to watch the news broadcast on Saturday where they were interviewing the chief in Wekweeti, who is clearly not on side with regard to this matter. He stated that he will go hunting. He does not want help from this government. The caribou are right in their community.

If anything, we should have looked at a workable solution to allow everyone the ability to sustain some sort of a needs level but, more importantly, have a system in place that will illustrate how much caribou are being taken by tag limits and making sure they are taking the bulls and having statistics that are acceptable with regard to the scientific traditional community so when we do these estimates, we are close to the ballpark and not estimating what the numbers are.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to sit down with the aboriginal governments, co-management

boards and the people this will affect the greatest, the people in the communities. We have to find a solution to this problem, and going to court is not going to resolve this issue.

I have to make it clear that the land claims agreements, the whole Dene-Metis claims process was to ensure that the aboriginal groups were involved through a co-management system, were involved in the management of the species in the Northwest Territories and not simply leaving it up to a Minister. The Minister gets involved and it's a question of law and a question of ensuring the integrity of the system is there by way of direction from the boards. That's what they did regarding the Bluenose issue in the Beaufort-Delta region. The co-management boards got together from the Sahtu, the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit and came up with a workable solution so they could deal with the Bluenose herd. That number was even lower then with regard to the species.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support the motion on the basis of the direction that it is taking; to find a workable solution out of this problem, get the government to formulate some sort of workshop and have some time to conduct this workshop. We'll sit down with the co-management boards and aboriginal organizations and see how we can resolve this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko, To the motion, The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to say I am going to support this motion. I spoke in my Member's statement about the need for conservation and, in my view, it needs to be the basis of any resolution to this particular disagreement. It should be the only reason that we are discussing this particular issue. The caribou herd, in my view, is in distress and in order to preserve it from extinction there needs to be a solution that considers conservation.

I think we've managed to get to a place where we have groups on two different sides and the sides can't agree. I think we've reached there perhaps unnecessarily, but we're there and we have to deal with the situation we have. I think we're in danger of becoming even more entrenched than we are right now. I think people are digging in their heels, to a certain extent, and I think we need to get our heels out of the dirt and we need to be as open and invite as many new ideas as possible.

Much of the concern, that I see anyway, comes from the consultation processes that took place. I know the department has given us a listing of all the consultations which took place and I appreciate the fact that the department, I think, has worked fairly hard to meet with various groups and to try to get information to them to try to discuss it with them

and to try to reach consensus. But part of the problem, I think, stems from the definition of consultation. Differing people have differing definitions and differing understanding of what consultation is. I think that has created some of our difficulties.

Another problem for me is we have several areas of the NWT who have renewable resource boards. They've been established for quite some time and those boards have been working very hard and have managed to reach agreements on how to manage the herds in their area. Those areas are not really, I don't think, in danger and they are actually doing quite well. They have caribou management in place and they have dealt with the herds. The herds are stabilized and those that are in great danger are actually on the increase, I believe.

Here in the Akaitcho territory, we don't have any renewable resource board and I think it's created a different situation. It's created a difficult situation because we don't have a specific board to deal with the renewable resources in this area. The Wekeezhii board for sure is there, but it doesn't encompass the Yellowknives territory, it makes it a complicated and a difficult process, and I think I said that already.

I believe the consultation took place and I think the department, as I said, did a good effort in trying to do the consultation, but the thing that got missed was the agreement. So consultation took place, but agreement did not take place and I think that's what has brought us to this particular state of the affairs that we're in today.

I spoke in my statement about the need to find middle ground and I firmly believe that there is a middle ground out there. I firmly believe that if parties on both sides are willing, we will find that middle ground. We will find a spot on this disagreement map where both sides can agree.

The motion that's in front of us calls for a meeting and I think that's what is required, we do need a meeting to find that middle ground, but it's only going to work if people come to that meeting with an open mind, with a willingness to consider any and all possible solutions. Whether they be totally out of this world or not, they have to be put on the table and considered, and as a group, those possible solutions need to be considered. If they are discarded, they're discarded, but we will be left with one solution that is going to work.

The motion states further that the GNWT look at alternative measures to resolve the issue. I think for me that's the crux of the issue. That we, again, with an open mind, consider all possibilities. To me, the words "alternative measures" require us to look outside the box and consider what we can.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am in support of the motion. I think it goes to the actions that we need to take to solve this problem and I urge all Members to support it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to the issue of caribou and the conservation and this issue we have before us with our fellow elected leaders here. I have spoken to it numerous times through question period and through Members' statements in this House, so I'm not going to add to the length of this debate of this motion today.

I will be supporting the motion and I also don't want to get into great detail about how this consultation will roll out or pre-empt what the outcome of it may be, just that all parties should enter with an open mind and hopefully resolution will be found. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven't really spoken with regards to this. Today I will support the motion with regard to the caribou, due to lack of consultation to accommodate the aboriginal governments or aboriginal people of this area or the people using the herd, to bring all groups together to allow an open expression of the key issues on conservation and aboriginal rights,

Like Mr. Krutko said earlier, in Nunakput, in some of my communities we have to drive almost 300 kilometres one way to go and hunt caribou in our hunting zones because of the bagging system. We, as Inuvialuit, want to conserve our herds for our youth and our grandchildren.

The biggest thing is the approach that was taken on this was not right, it was sort of like blunt force trauma. We have to have an open-minded approach to get this resolved. The people that are impacted, Mr. Speaker, are not us in here. It's the people in the communities who have to go out and hunt and try to survive. In the communities, not everyone has a government job. We have elders out there and families that rely heavily on the caribou herd. We have to try to take it upon ourselves to try to preserve and not over hunt. That draws another question. What are we going to supplement to the people who can't hunt the caribou? Are we going to get muskox? Are we going to get bison? What are we going to get? That's another question that has to be answered.

Today the conservation of the caribou herd has to be sorted out sooner than later with the GNWT and the aboriginal governments. So, like I said, I will support the motion and look forward to a good

dialogue with aboriginal governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Before we go any further I'd like to draw your attention to the gallery and the presence of former Member Mr. Henry Zoe, who is with us today.

To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go on record as supporting this motion right off the bat here.

Just the other evening I was reading George Blondin's book about Yamoria. There's a chapter in there where he talks about how the elders had to advise the people to not hunt the caribou so strongly, because deep snows and a summer that never happened led to bad condition on the caribou and they were very vulnerable to hunting. The elders got together and said we've got to hold off. In fact, they even fed the caribou to help the caribou to get through that winter.

Now, I don't think we're quite at that state, but looking across Canada and even parts of Alaska, so many of these caribou herds are in decline. There must be a natural element to it and there's also, of course, always a human element and that's where we come in.

We need to respond responsibly. We have quite a bit of science now indicating that we have, indeed, serious concerns with our caribou and that action is needed. Unfortunately, I think we're dealing with a bit of a failed process here, because the rate that the Bathurst caribou has dropped has been incredible. We went out, we measured the caribou. There was 400,000-plus in this herd. We measured them again and they were declining. I think three years ago when we measured them there was a hundred and some thousand. That's an amazing decline. That's like a 70 percent decline already. Then we let it go another three years before we measured this population. By then, of course, they dropped down to 32,000. Now, had we been doing surveys more regularly, everybody would have been together on this and either changing the methods, testing the methods or being convinced and with an opportunity for better information on which to base their decisions and judgments.

That's part of the thing that's behind all this. But, clearly, another is the process for establishing management guidelines, Mr. Speaker. Here, I think we have a good record where we have clearly established management boards across the Northwest Territories, those that have been established and in place long enough to have the experience and maturity and so on of working with each other to work effectively. But we now realize there are places in the NWT, in the Northwest Territories where we don't have those management

boards in place, and the Chief Drygeese territory is a good example of that. In fact, we have the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board adjacent to us here that has authority, but they've really just become established and are faced already with this incredible conservation issue. The measures that WRRB puts in place do not actually apply, as I understand it, to all of the Chief Drygeese territory. That's something still to be ironed out and the Yellowknives need to be brought into that equation to deal with some of this. They are clearly, not having signed a land claim, part of the management process and the authority that should be consulted.

We need to get together to establish a consultation process that will apply in these areas where co-management boards have not been established. This situation, the degree of conflict here speaks to a failure to establish that process and it's probably something that we can anticipate happening in other areas, perhaps with other types of wildlife. Partly, as well, though, the science is out there without agreement of everybody. I don't know what the solution to that is, but certainly getting together and trying to work to all get on one page is part of that. The motion that's called for... I have to thank my colleagues, Mr. Yakeleya and Menicoche, for bringing this motion forward. I think it speaks to a lot of the concerns we've heard over the last two weeks in session here. It calls for an agreed process that is also called for, in fact, in the resolutions that have already been passed, for example, by the Dene Nation. I think that's already been referred to by Mr. Yakeleya. This is a good motion. It really says, perhaps somewhat belatedly, some of the things that had been established by the Dene Nation motions and the Yellowknives Dene.

In summary, really, it can all be brought together by what the elders have repeatedly told us, and that is it's only by working together that we're really going to get there and we can achieve so much. This motion speaks exactly directly to that, as did the Dene Nation motion. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion and I want to highlight the theme, which is working together. This is a huge issue and I think we know from the overlap with other herds and so on that it does bring into play several of the other co-management and established management bodies that we have in the Northwest Territories. So let's get this going. Let's all get together and establish this. This is not something we're going to recover from immediately and we need a process in place where we don't have an established process now. I'll be supporting the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a week ago I talked about this issue -- the

caribou issue, that is -- and I tried to frame it around the fact that this is more than just a legal issue that we're talking about. It's more than a caribou issue that we're talking about. It's also about an issue of trust and relationships. That's where the issue really lies, Mr. Speaker. It's about the rights of aboriginal people being able to hunt caribou. It's about the rights of aboriginal people being part of the decision whether they can hunt caribou or not.

Mr. Speaker, why didn't we start with consultation in the view of how can you be part of the decision as opposed to how we can decide your fate? Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's too late to salvage the discussion here. I think that could start today. I spoke a week ago about having a caribou summit with the leadership I was referring to, not with endless delegates. I was talking about the leadership. This does not need a legal decision, Mr. Speaker. This is a political decision that could be made in consultation with our colleagues who work in the First Nations governments.

Mr. Speaker, if it was an ideal world, the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board would be making the decision, not the territorial government. If it was a perfect world, we wouldn't now have to send this question to our Supreme Court to clarify do we have the right or not to make this type of decision. But as we all know, it is not a perfect world.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources should be working shoulder to shoulder with the chiefs across this Territory to work on a self-ban, if it's necessary; one that limits numbers, one that identifies tags and a realistic harvest level. Mr. Speaker, consultation, in my view, means that they would have been part of the decision; they would have been part of the destiny; they would have been part of the end results. Mr. Speaker, in my view, there has been very little consultation other than our experts, whether they are right or wrong, who have shown up to say that the numbers are fluctuating. In my view, they are probably, to some degree, correct that the numbers have fluctuated. If I understand it correctly, the snapshots of the herd numbers have only been going back 30 years. Where is the 50-year knowledge on this particular issue? Where is the 100-year knowledge on this particular issue? Mr. Speaker, 100,000 caribou or more just do not disappear or fall off the land in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I could be silly here and say maybe they were abducted, but the fact is, things fluctuate in nature. Perhaps the human species has had an impact, but where is the discussion about the wolf cull? Had people thought about the grizzlies that take caribou? I remember last year someone was telling me one wolf takes 40 caribou a year. Recently I read somewhere that the birthing rate of the caribou is very successful, but yet we don't see that paying dividends in the numbers growing.

So, Mr. Speaker, in consultation with the aboriginal people, we have to take a much longer term vision of this problem than just the last couple of years, just the last survey that someone flew over and counted caribou.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the very start, I think this is more than a legal issue. I feel very strongly that this is, yes, more than a caribou issue. We have set back relations with First Nations governments for years with this type of step. This decision, I think, could have been made with the decision in partnership as opposed to the decision of this is the way it's going to go.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. I think it speaks to a much bigger picture about trying to figure out how do we work shoulder to shoulder with First Nations governments, because we're going to have to be here a long time and find newer ways to work better and closer together in a meaningful way, and this certainly was not an example of how we should be doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've heard from Members, we've heard from the leadership across the Northwest Territories, the people, caribou is a way of life for many across the Northwest Territories and our neighbouring territories in the Yukon and Nunavut. It is so important, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that when the issue of the decline in caribou populations across the Northwest Territories arose, the government-of-the-day started investing money into doing a count, and a re-count, and another count. In those senses, the cumulative amount of money we've put on the table as a Government of the Northwest Territories is in the neighbourhood of around \$8 million, to make sure that we've done the counts, to consult with our aboriginal partners across the Northwest Territories, to ensure that we were doing the right work together to ensure the safety of caribou.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to see why we as leaders and aboriginal leaders in this House can become so emotional when it comes to the issue of caribou, because many of us walked the land with our parents and grandparents to hunt to bring the meat home, to feed our families, to share with our other extended family that lost theirs that could supply the meat for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look at those things and we weigh those things very carefully. This is a decision being made from those afar and in Ottawa or in ivory towers in Toronto, about what we can do as people of the Northwest Territories. This is about the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Tlicho, the Dehcho, the Akaitcho, the NWT Metis and residents of the Northwest Territories when it comes to preserving a herd of caribou that could

mean more for our future generations if we take the right steps. That's easy to see, Mr. Speaker, because before the election of this government, the last government, the Government of the Northwest Territories was cost sharing I believe some from the federal government, pulled together a summit, a caribou summit to talk about the serious situation we found our herds in in the Northwest Territories. Almost half a million dollars it cost to hold this summit so that we can talk about the declining herds across the Northwest Territories.

So, Mr. Speaker, consultation has been underway. It has been underway for years. So let's not forget about the past, because there's an issue we have to deal with today. The issue that we have to deal with today is a declining herd. The caribou do not respect boundary lines. They do not respect who has authority. They move along freely on the land as the good Lord put them on to do so. If we want to go back to the good word, there's talk about how we, as people, are supposed to manage the animals that we subsist on, but there's many a wiser person that can do that than me, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I can recall, Mr. Speaker, hunting with my father, travelling across the Delta by boat, having to leave the Inuvik side and go across the Delta to hunt on the Aklavik side, because there was no caribou on our side in the fall time. I can remember packing caribou in the foothills to get back to our boat, because we had to walk a long ways up to get that caribou so we could bring it home in the fall time to help our subsistence. Even further back than that, we've heard Members talk about not just five years, not 10 years, 30 years, 50 years in my father's time, God bless his soul, he's no longer with us, but he was in the day when there was no caribou in the Delta. The fact that the Government of Canada had to step in and bring a reindeer herd across to help us subsist and survive on.

In fact, in today's environment, reindeer are once again starting to fill the gap in the Far North because, overall, the herds are declining. We've got co-management boards that we're a part of, the Government of the Northwest Territories is a part of, that we've put together through the land claim agreements and the self-government agreement with the Tlicho where we work together, we do the science together, we look at the traditional knowledge together and we come up with a plan in moving forward. In fact, I think it's through that work that the fall hunt by the Akaitcho was cancelled, because there was serious concern about the survival of the herd. You don't take that step lightly, but that step was taken this fall. Now, the issue of being at a meeting may have helped us in clarifying the situation, but, simply, as we've heard, the value of the caribou to our people, to our way of life, to our culture is so important that no decision made by

any level of government to try and save a herd would be taken lightly.

You know, we talk about our past and our traditional knowledge, when we had access to hunting caribou. I as a young boy, before the Dempster Highway for example -- and I'll speak of the northern part of the Territory -- before the highway, we used to have to use boats and snowmobiles. Nowadays we have easier access, even in the Akaitcho area by the winter road, access by fast snow machine, access by planes and helicopters to spot where the animals are, easier hunting, quicker access, more powerful guns, more animals being taken. Mr. Speaker, we talk of traditional knowledge and that was very important and helps us today, but today's environment there's GPS, which also deals with how we get and how fast we can get to the caribou. Those things have to be taken into consideration,

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the Bathurst and the one herd, let's not forget about the other herds that are suffering. But through the science and through the knowledge, through travelling out there with our aboriginal partners to look where the animals are, to see that there could be a sustainable harvest on other parts of herds out there, and in fact that initiative has been taken. It's been taken with the Tlicho, it's been offered to the Akaitcho so that people can hunt outside the wintering grounds of the Bathurst because the wintering grounds of the Bathurst are accessible. Let's think about this: it's accessible to almost 30,000 people of the Northwest Territories because of where it's located and the access by highways, by snowmobiles, by planes and helicopters. It is accessible. Yes, we have rules about how we can harvest around planes and helicopters, but it's easy to spot and tell people where they need to go. That's something that we have to take into consideration when we weigh these decisions, that the access is one thing that should weigh on all of us.

We can't allow ourselves to be lost in the real decision. As Members have heard, as I have heard, as people of the Territories have heard, the Dene Nation themselves, the leadership themselves, the aboriginal leadership themselves have taken a stance. They said they wanted the herds to be preserved, that we needed to take immediate steps. That was a motion in 2007: take immediate steps to make sure that we've focused on conservation of the caribou.

Those examples exist for those co-management boards that we are a part of when it comes to the low numbers of caribou. The decision is made by the leaders of the regions to hunt bulls only, to restrict the number of hunts that happen. So those initiatives are being taken by aboriginal leaders across the North. In fact, I would say that this

motion is a good motion, because it allows us to bring some level of discussion to the table. But we also have committed in this House, prior to the motion, that the Minister will, in fact, set up a process working with the Wekeezhii, working with the Akaitcho, working with the NWT Metis when they make their recommendations, because it is not one group that affects the herd. It is a number of groups that affect the herd. There is a commitment to pull them together and come up with a harvest management plan going forward. But in the interim, when you look at the science, the numbers, the amounts being taken on an annual basis, one year of almost 7,000 animals, what that would do to a herd of 30,000. That is a substantial hit on a herd. Let's not ignore that in our political debate. Let's not ignore that while we discuss the fate of the caribou.

Mr. Speaker, we only want to do what is right for our future generations. We want to make sure that our future generations have caribou to harvest, that we won't be having to, for long periods of time, go to the bison or bring further reindeer to offset the caribou that have left because our combined responsibility as leaders in the North to put aside some of those differences, who have power, but to go from the herd first. In fact, we are so concerned about it, that we don't get distracted about who's got authority, that in fact, in speaking to my Cabinet, I said let's set that question forward. Let's deal with that. Let's have someone deal with that question. Because far too often when tough decisions need to be made, it becomes, well, who has the authority.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to deal with that question. But that question alone will not save the herd, will not save caribou for future generations if that herd, in fact, is to disappear. What is going to save that herd is what we, as people in this place we call home, take action on, and that is to ensure that we preserve the herd for our future generations. That is my children, your children, and our grandchildren. So what is it going to be? Is it going to be the people or is it going to be the herd and the future generations? I say the future generations are where we should put our focus. That is where we should be aiming for. That is our responsibility collectively. It is not about who is calling the shots.

Mr. Speaker, who is going to be known as the last one who fired the last shot in the Bathurst herd? Let's not get there. What we are trying to offer is a temporary solution to give an opportunity for the herd to last so that the Wekeezhii, the Akaitcho, the Metis and us can come up with a plan for the future so that we can help the caribou. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a lot of things that I wanted to say on this particular motion, but listening to all the Members talk, I think most of the things that I wanted to say are pretty well covered.

I had heard some comments about survival of our people and destroying a way of life, and talk about a traditional way of life, which is all true. I talked with some of the old-timers and they say we know nothing about the traditional way of life and how they had to go and harvest and how they had to go to look after the caribou. I always remember, in 1998, I was driving the Dempster Highway and ran across a well-respected elder from the Mackenzie Delta from Fort McPherson. He is no longer with us today. I ran into him at the border. The back of his truck was full of caribou guts. I asked him what he was doing. He said, well, I am driving along the highway picking up caribou guts from the side of the road. He said, we tell people that we look after our animals ourselves and we are not setting a very good example. So he was picking them up and he was bringing them to the dump so they are not littering the side of the road. I thought that was so admirable, that somebody didn't want people to think badly of the way we look after the caribou that he is taking it upon himself to pick them up and throw them away.

I read in the paper about certain aboriginal groups that cancelled their fall hunt because they had some concerns with the survival of the herd. I thought that was leadership. That was wisdom. I commended that at this point where we are today.

Back in 2006, I think when I sat as a Regular Member, there was a caribou summit and they talked about 120,000 animals. I hear today we are down to 30,000. That is four years. That is four years we have been talking and doing nothing for four years and the herd continues to decline. We will talk for the next four years and we will talk the herd into extinction. And then what? I never want to get the point to where I have a conversation with my soon-to-be four-year-old grandson and he'll ask me, what about the caribou? I said, well, sorry, grandson; I was exercising my aboriginal right and wasn't concerned about or thinking about you. I wanted to get what I can when I can. I wasn't concerned about you and yours. Let's cook some more pork chops, because we have no more caribou to cook. There are things like that that we need to take all these into consideration.

We talk about consulting. We can consult until we are blue in the face, but I see things very simply. The simple fact of the matter is, there is a serious concern today with the survival of the caribou herd. Is it not our duty as stewards of this land to protect them and not be worried about, as somebody said, who has authority or who is calling the shots. We have a duty to do. I think we should be leaders and

show some wisdom and take it upon ourselves to protect the herds. They can't survive without us. They are at a disadvantage.

You watch TV and I was watching something. I think it was something back east. It was down south somewhere where they were driving along the side of the road. They were blasting at the caribou even though they were told that there wasn't very many of them. They were interviewing a guy from down there. He said, well, it is my aboriginal right. The guy said, well, there's not many left. He said, it is still my aboriginal right. They are driving trucks and they are firing off the side of the road and throwing them in the back of the truck. That is not the aboriginal way. It shouldn't be.

We do have a traditional way of life. Caribou have sustained us for generations. I think it is time that sacrifices we make today will benefit down the road. I think we have to take that very seriously. I look at all those groups that are taking it upon themselves to recognize the fact that herds are in danger and they do need our help. They are taking some steps into doing what they can to preserve the herd. That is wisdom. They will have to live without for a while, but they are willing to do that. I think that is real wisdom.

We can consult, I said, until we are blue in the face, but I think it is time for us to step up too. We can't quit playing politics with the survival of the herd. That is what this is. It is politics. Survival of the herd is the most important thing. I can guarantee you, and from the numbers and from some of the comments I heard, in a few years we will have no more caribou. Like someone said, who wants to shoot the last one? Once we do that, who will we blame? Because we are always blaming somebody. It is always somebody else's fault. But in this particular case, we will have nobody to blame but us, because we had an opportunity to do something about it and we sat on our hands and did nothing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The temporary measures put in place by our government until such time as the Wekeezhii board puts a long-term plan in place has raised a lot of discussion across the Territories, in my communities and with the residents that I represent, because we also harvest from this herd. Most of the communities in my riding, the chief and others, will make an organized hunt and come and harvest from this herd in the Tlicho area, as I did along with other friends for many years. Of course, it is a shock. I mean, it's a shock that I think some of us have recognized for some time, that the herd has depleted down to a mere 32,000 animals. It's also a shock for all of us that we, as aboriginal people, will

not be able to hunt; something that we've done for many, many years.

I think it's time, there's still time and there's still opportunity for us to learn, to educate ourselves on how to save the caribou herds and also to look at other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, because worldwide, caribou has been a conservation mystery to scholars, to hunters, to the scientists and nearly every population of caribou has a volatile and a very storied history and have been prone to endangerment due to wide fluctuations in their populations. Many of the caribou populations around the globe have, to date, run to extinction. The Dawson caribou subspecies, for example, of the Queen Charlotte Islands, became extinct around the time of the signing of the Treaty 11. Speculation of this herd that became extinct includes a number of things including habitat disruption, disease and, of course, over hunting. Habitat was destroyed due to uncontrolled logging practices, many new diseases were introduced to that herd as a result of bringing deer from the mainland and over hunting by the island residents that were in the area. The Peary caribou, a herd a little closer to us, the subspecies in the High Arctic, went from 40,000 animals in 1961 to a low of 700 in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut proposed an intensive Baffin Island study after research in 2008 and 2009 showed that there was only 170 caribou that were counted in the area spanning roughly 80,000 kilometres. With a growing population of 30,000-plus in Nunavut, I would ask how many families can they expect to feed on the low population of caribou in that area. In order to do that, for some families that traditionally hunt caribou, others would have to go without. So who would decide who gets to exercise the right to hunt, and traditionally hunt, and who would also decide who doesn't? It's an impossible question to answer, I would think, since the primary contribution causes of reduced numbers are thought to be over hunting and climate change. I think common sense would dictate that drastic measures have to be taken to ensure that the herd survives.

In Alberta the herd native to the mountains they populate now require protection within the range that they live, or habitat, the Caribou Mountains. In the Caribou Mountains of British Columbia there are very rare sightings, if any at all. It's ironic, because this is an area that was named for the abundance of this animal. Caribou used to inhabit the regions as far south as Washington State, Idaho and even New England, but now they're only represented there in the names of lakes, parks and summer camps.

Around the globe there are a number of factors that have reduced and made extinct caribou populations, mostly in combination with adverse

impacts from over hunting, habitat destruction, overgrazing, disease and starvation. For some of the factors there is no easy solution, such as starvation and disease. There is no means of control. So governments have to choose how they can control factors that are achievable, and that's the behaviour of humans. Most jurisdictions recognize that the humans' right is second to the animals' preservation and conservation and only happens when the animals' existence is ensured and measurable growth is observed.

In another part of the country in recent history, Greenland saw a dramatic drop in caribou herd populations from 40,000 in 1961 to a mere 9,000 in 1993, and suspended hunting for the time from 1993 to 1995. The subsistence users and hunters really had a heated debate over the hunt. What the ban achieved at that time was reduced pressure and also gave the people from that area the ability to do a more focused effort to study the barren land caribou population. In the end, the studies that followed showed the herd to be healthier than they had originally anticipated and the government-of-the-day stated that the ban on hunting could be lifted sooner. But hindsight is 20/20, of course, and when members of the Greenland government looked back in time they always can say that they acted appropriately and responsibly and the best interests of the herd was on their conscience.

Mr. Speaker, desperate times call for desperate measures. Normally, an ethical government shouldn't deprive its citizens of rights they normally enjoy unless the suspension of those rights stand to benefit all of its citizens by protecting the very subject of the very rights that they now enjoy. We need to ask ourselves: do we act on the side of caution and allow this herd to recover unmolested, or forever manage them at the margin of their existence?

There's a lesson to be learned from other resources in Canada that collapsed because of government, because of industry and because citizens failed to act. One can draw a parallel between the caribou and the Atlantic cod fishery. In the early 1990s, Canadians watched as the northern cod fishing stocks collapsed due to a...(inaudible)...of just 1,700 tonnes in a fishery that yielded millions of tonnes of fish every year for centuries. The very people that protested the conservation measures proposed by the government, based on their rights to maintain their livelihood, are now destitute because the government upheld human rights and neglected to protect the resource. Needless to say, the stock has, to this day, not recovered.

Historically, it always has been a government policy to err on the side of caution. Where it hasn't and where caution is thrown to the wind, tragedies ensue. Over its short history and with the assistance of aboriginal people, not to the exclusion

of them, the GNWT has managed several wild resources back from the threshold or at least very near extinction. Among them are wood bison, muskox and polar bear. All of these successes were due to restrictions on hunting. It wasn't the lack of involvement, but the dedicated cooperation of aboriginal and non-aboriginal of the NWT alike that allowed for these success stories to happen. Once more, the Government of the Northwest Territories is asking all its citizens to support and cooperate with these emergency measures to allow for the expeditious recovery of the Bathurst caribou herd. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I might be repeating some of the things that have already been said, but I feel it's important that I add my voice to this important debate.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it's really important for us all to concentrate and be very clear about what this is all about. We are talking about extraordinary measures taken to respond to an extraordinary emergency situation we are faced with. It is important that all leaders in and out of this House understand clearly and act responsibly about the decisions we are making on this issue and how we inform our public about this issue.

Here is what I know, Mr. Speaker, for sure, and what my decisions are based on in my support for the interim emergency measure. This emergency issue before us is about one thing and one thing only. It's about protecting a caribou herd that is so vital to the survival of the culture and livelihood of our aboriginal peoples in the North Slave area. The ban on hunting of this caribou herd was issued by the Minister of ENR in December 2009, supported by the Cabinet, because it was absolutely necessary. The emergency measure was necessary because the barren-ground herd needed protection this winter hunting season. It could not wait any longer.

Let us remember that this ban is an interim emergency measure. It's an interim emergency measure. Interim means this is a temporary, not permanent, measure to deal with the emergency situation. The interim emergency measure is in place only until such time the responsible body, the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board, has a chance to address this issue. Hopefully sooner than later.

The emergency interim measure was necessary because the board was not able to meet in time to address this urgent issue. Emergency means a number of things, it means it's urgent. Urgent means not a lot of time. Emergency also requires a response that is appropriate for the nature of the emergency, No more, no less.

Mr. Speaker, in ordering this emergency interim measure, government has taken mitigation measures to assist aboriginal residents with options of obtaining other sources of meat and other herds of caribou meat.

Mr. Speaker, this interim emergency measure was issued because the herd is deteriorating at an alarming rate and we cannot sit back and watch another hunting season go by without taking action. The job we have in front of us is to do everything we possibly can to save this herd and do it without delay.

Mr. Speaker, our best scientific info tells us the herd has declined from 100,000 in 1996 to 32,000 this year. Who is at fault for this decline in caribou is irrelevant in this emergency. We know there are a number of factors that are probably contributing to the low numbers of caribou. The important fact is that the caribou number is on the verge of extinction. Unless we take action, we may not have any more barren-ground caribou in a few years to even talk about what to do or whose fault it was that the herd is gone. God forbid if it became extinct.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is we save this herd, then they go extinct. If they did go extinct, we would have plenty of time to argue about whose fault it is and if we are able to revive it, I am sure there will be lots of credit to go around as well. Mr. Speaker, if this herd became extinct, the most severely impacted people will be our aboriginal people who rely on this for their sustenance, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is not just ENR and the scientists saying that the herd is on the verge of extinction.

Many aboriginal leaders and leaders have been telling me this personally either at Wal-Mart or Tim Horton's or when I visit their homes and all around the Territories around the leadership tables. Mr. Speaker, many aboriginal people have been telling me for the last number of years that caribou is acting funny, that they are behaving and calving abnormally. Places where there used to be hundreds of thousands of caribou, they don't see them anymore. Mr. Speaker, this is traditional knowledge that we need to rely on.

Mr. Speaker, in a few years, if we were left with lamenting about the barren-ground caribou that no longer exists, I need to know, as a leader of this Legislature, that I did everything within my power to do something about it when we had a chance to do it. Perhaps we are all wrong about the numbers and maybe we're naming the herds all wrong and counting them all wrong -- because plenty of people out there have been telling us we couldn't do anything right about this -- but let me ask you this: what if they're right? What if really there are only 32,000 caribou out of 400,000 strong that there were? Should we allow another 5,000 to 7,000 to be harvested this year knowing that it could be true, that there are only 32,000? Should we allow the

cows and the pregnant cows to be harvested? What does that mean? I don't hunt, but 7,000 saved could mean 20,000 in two years.

Mr. Speaker, in this emergency situation we must give our benefit of doubt in the interest of protecting the caribou herd. Mr. Speaker, I have a difficult time understanding the claim that there has been a lack of consultation. I want to tell you, that unless you have been living under a rock, we have been talking non-stop about the dwindling number of caribou for almost the entire time I have been here for 10 years. Now we have a real possibility that the Bathurst Caribou is almost extinct and, as I said earlier, I have heard many aboriginal leaders discuss this in their leadership meetings. Finally, Mr. Speaker, as someone who spent some time in law school, I know that no rights are absolute, no legal principles are absolute. More often they are about balancing of rights and often these rights are conflicting from one another. Rights and legal principles are about establishing human relationships in an orderly respectful way so that we can survive and prosper as a civil society. What I know for sure, is that the barren land caribou need help from us and they need help now. The interim, temporary, emergency, urgent measure is one action to help them and that is what I am prepared to support. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to touch on some key points that have been addressed here today by the Legislative Assembly Members. One of the highlights is, of course, the decline of the caribou herd. We are facing a crisis here, also preserving our traditional harvesting, saving our caribou herd for the Northwest Territories.

We hear there is more than one herd. Also, thinking about the future, we talk about our younger generation, our great-great-grandchildren, the importance of working together, the GNWT, other governments, other First Nations. We all need to come together on this particular piece of work that's important to us.

Mr. Speaker, this conservation issue has been an ongoing discussion for as long as I know. The discussion, everybody would know, everyone around here, a decision was made down the valley a few years back that we can only go out shooting bulls as opposed to cows because of the decline in caribou. So this is nothing new, Mr. Speaker. We are faced with a crisis. These are also interim measures, a short period that we are currently dealing with until such time as Wekeezhii Renewable Resources deal with the issue at a public level. Mr. Speaker, there is also a co-

management agreement that is before them that they will decide on.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree, as a Tlicho person, I want to conserve my culture and tradition. I will continue to hunt outside the prescribed zone. In my travels through Whati or Gameti, I will continue to hunt with my people to keep the tradition alive, I'm hoping others will follow or I may follow others that were before me.

Our ancestors have always told us to respect wildlife. Once you disrespect it, it will be destroyed. Mr. Speaker, most elders agree but are confused because of the miscommunication or they are misinformed. Whether it be the general public, whether it be in committee meetings, there needs to be more transparency. There needs to be more discussions that need to take place, There are also concerns about the caribou herd, as we speak today. I am sure they are watching us as well, They are depending on us for our next move.

Mr. Speaker, I've also spoken to a young individual from the community of Behchoko. This young individual is also concerned about the future generation, the future caribou herd declining. He even stated that when he's 80 years old he wants to see his grandchildren or great-grandchildren to continue harvesting, to continue to carry the drums that we use, traditional garments that we use. So I feel that those are important pieces of work that are before us to consider. Also to consider having the youth involved in the decision-making. They're the ones we are talking about. Yes, we're here around the table and we probably won't be remembered in the next 30 or 40 years, but it's the youth we're doing it for.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to close off with a small story, a history of the Dene people. Our traditions, our knowledge, our way of doing things is rooted in our oral tradition. The elders tell stories to us about our history and to help guide us with our daily lives today. Mr. Speaker, these stories go a long way back, as far back as when man and all animals were one, one language they spoke. They only became distinct from each other to fulfill their roles, to help each other. They divided into whether it be eagles, bears, and, yes, caribou as well. The story is common throughout the Dene Nation across the Northwest Territories, about the boy who becomes a caribou. He dreams of caribou every night and eventually he was called back to the caribou herd and he became the leader of the caribou. The Dene people are ultimately connected to the caribou. The caribou are part of us, always have been, always will be.

To conserve ourselves, our way of life, we must conserve the caribou. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Northern history stretches back over thousands of years, a rich and full history. Through that history, rich and full as it is, the caribou and the aboriginal people march over time, over the centuries linked together, as my colleague Mr. Lafferty indicated. It is very critical that we recognize that fact. As a government, we are aware of that link, of the need to respect that and we intend to do that, but there has never been a time in the past as there is right now where the pressures on caribou, on this Bathurst herd, are so great. The caribou need our help. We have to be there for them, but we can do this as well as respect the aboriginal right to harvest and we can do both. This is not one without the other, because there is an inextricable link going back for the centuries.

Mr. Speaker, it is simple. We must make the right decisions in the short-term to allow the longer term process to take place with the Wekeezhii, with the Akaitcho and with the Metis, and we are committed to that. We just want to make sure, as all have said, that future generations in fact have caribou to harvest, to tie to their culture, to their spirits.

We have heard, and we are listening very carefully here, to what we've heard today and we are very close. The Tlicho, the Metis, most of the South Slave people agree that this is a necessary step. We are working with the Yellowknives, we are very close, and we must not forget all the good work that's been done up and down the valley by the co-management boards as they've dealt with these very, very difficult issues.

As we get through this hunting season, and I've indicated this before as well, we are going to be engaged in a process and it's going to be very difficult as the Tlicho, the Akaitcho, the Metis and the other stakeholders try to come together to have a Bathurst management plan. That is going to be our challenge going forward past this hunting season.

I thank all of my colleagues for their comments. It's all been very helpful. I think it's very good for the people of the North to hear this. Two things bring out the passion in Northerners I've noticed over the years as an MLA: water and caribou. Today it's caribou. So thank you all very much. I thank the mover of the motion, the seconder and as this is direction to Cabinet, while we've had our say and a chance to provide our feedback to the people and to this House, we will await the direction from the Members and we will be abstaining from the vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will allow the mover of the motion some closing remarks before we go to the vote. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also thank all Members of the House for their thoughts, for their passion, for their analytical

thinking in terms of this issue. It's a very big issue. It's good that the people of the Northwest Territories hear the peoples' government talk about a very important species in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the motion that I've moved in this House is to consult; consult with each other, consult with the aboriginal governments and show respect to the aboriginal peoples and to the aboriginal governments.

Mr. Speaker, the comments about this animal, you know, thinking back when we used to hunt, and we still hunt, the joy of the hunters when they go out and get a caribou, you know that feeling. Mr. Premier talked about that. It reminds me of when I went out with some elders and people, out hunting and you know this animal is going to feed a lot of good people, the animal is teaching you something, the traditional knowledge about this when they skin the animal, how you skin it, how you are supposed to be around it, there's lots of values and beliefs. Most importantly, you know when you take this animal and you bring it back to your family, you can see the joy in the children's faces and the family's when you start cooking it, making meat out of it.

You know, we talk about this animal being here for thousands and thousands of years. We could not survive without them. They can survive without us. However, we have disturbed their way of life. The first thing the elders say to me: why did you put collars on them, that's traumatic for the animal, they are very sensitive, they're very holy and very clean. My elders said that when you put a caribou there and you put a collar on the caribou, it's just like us having a grizzly bear come and attack us. It's not good for them. There's traditional knowledge like that that's in our communities.

We have lived with these caribou for thousands and thousands of years. My people know about conservation measures. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here. This animal would have been extinct a long time ago. We should give weight back to our people in the community. Tell us how to deal with this. Why is the caribou birthing but having calves two weeks late? Something's telling us they're having calves two weeks late, why is that? Like someone said, we should go to the elders and talk about that.

This motion talks about consulting, this motion talks about maybe sitting down with people. We do it right. We do it with the aboriginal governments, as the motion has said from the Dene Nation, passed by Edward Sangris, seconded by Grand Chief Sam Gargan in terms of lifting the ban and looking at how we sit down. Another motion about coming together. Mr. Speaker, we listen to our people. We have to have faith in our people and give weight to the traditional knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about future generations and Mr. Miltenberger is right; this issue here on water, I look forward to the day when we're going to have a

good discussion on water, because all that poison is coming down the river from the Alberta tar sands to the Bennett Dam, coming down. Pretty soon there's not going to be any for us. Maybe we'll be extinct; we can't drink the water. I know he has some strategies and I'll certainly support him, but those things should be called emergency measures in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say there are lots out there. We grew up with the Dene laws. My friend Mr. Bromley talked about Yamoria. His law is signified in Bear Rock, the three beaver skins, two arrows in the Mackenzie River that complements the Bear River and the Mackenzie and the smoke in Tulita. His laws were there passed down to us. Just recently now we started to operate in the court of law, man-made laws to tell us how we should operate and how we should be with these animals. How come we don't listen to our own laws? We do but it is not being taken very seriously. There are laws around handling animals, laws around for handling the meat, for cutting it, for hunting it. It seems like these laws are lost.

Mr. Speaker, now we talk about this motion. We talk about it because it is part of me and, as Mr. Lafferty said, we are connected to it. I can't separate the spiritual part of it. That is who I am. Too bad caribou is in us. It is in my blood, in my heart and in my soul. I can't take it. How can you do this to our people and say you can no longer hunt in this specific area? Yet they have thousands of trucks that go by there every year where the diamond mines are, the three big holes up there for diamonds. That is something that should have been done about destroying our land.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to close off saying that in Section 25 of the Charter of Rights, that certain rights that aboriginal people have that are protected. That is our shield of special provisions that we have protection. Rather than do the courts, the government says, let's go to court and decide. My motion says that we sit down and consult each other and work it out. Let's discuss this as leaders. This government says let's call out the lawyers. Our people say let's call out the hunters. We have rights too. Let's get tied up into the court issue.

Mr. Speaker, this here, this consensus style of government is really taking a hit today, as I see it. At the end of the day, they state it is us against them. At the end of the day, the interim measure says you still are unable to hunt. This motion says let's discuss them and work out our solutions here. In my view, meaningful consultation has been put aside. We talk about relationships, future generations, trust building. We really have to think about those words and how we use them, especially with aboriginal governments, aboriginal nations with this government here. Even thinking about in relationship to the culture of aboriginal

people, they have sacrificed enough for us to be here; tremendous amount of sacrifice.

If we look at just one instance such as the residential school, we would have been extinct. That never happened. So we talk about trust, it's a big issue here. We are talking about a very important animal here in terms of this caribou. I think it's a really good start as to where do we go from here, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank Members here for really talking passionately about something that's important to them. Wherever they're from, whatever knowledge you have about this wonderful animal that has sustained us for thousands and thousands of years. That's what we need in this Assembly here.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, I would like to ask for a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Menicoche, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Bisaro.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please stand, All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: Results of the recorded vote: all those in favour, nine; opposed, zero; abstaining, six. The motion is carried.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go to item 5 on the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted.

The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome one of my staff members, Mr. Garth Wallbridge, and also Mr. Ken Young to the gallery. I would also like to welcome and say to my wife how much I certainly love her and I hope to... It's okay, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome my wife to the gallery.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Moise and Joyce Rabesca. They are in the gallery and also George Mackenzie. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to the gallery my new constituency assistant, Ms. Leah Ipana, Welcome.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome Councillor Bobby Drygeese. I believe I missed him earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Again if we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. Item 19, first reading of bills, Item 20, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation and Safety Commission, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 11: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act to provide for a presumption in respect of certain diseases that occur more frequently among firefighters than any other workers or the general population. These diseases are slow in development and are disabling and often terminal. They appear to arise from exposure of conditions at the scene of fires. This bill identifies those diseases as listed diseases and the presumption that the disease arose out of the firefighter's employment that occurred during the course of the employment is broadened for firefighters.

Regulation making authority is authorized to prescribe the minimum period of employment for the presumption to arise for each specific listed disease. It is also authorized in order to prescribe the minimum period before the disability that the fireman must have been a non-smoker for this presumption to arise.

A further amendment permits the Minister to appoint the chairperson of the Governance Council to a term not exceeding three years and to

reappoint that person as long as the reappointment does not result in a period of consecutive service exceeding six years. The length of service that the appointee previously had as director of the Governance Council does not limit the term of his or her appointment as chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 11 has had second reading and is referred to a committee.

---Carried

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. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'll call Committee of the Whole to order. We have Bills 2, 4, 7, Tabled Document 62-14(6) and Minister's Statement 47-16(4). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the wish of the committee is to at least get the Minister's opening remarks and some general comments for Education, Culture and Employment. I think so far all we've done is the Department of Health, so we need to pick up the pace a bit, so I think we need to use this last 45 minutes of the day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the Minister have any opening comments? Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the 2010-2011 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The government's vision of northern people leading fulfilled lives and contributing to a strong and prosperous society is the driving force for where we are going as a department. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment strategic plan, Building on our Success, along with the government's strategic plan and initiatives provide the direction for our 2010-2011 Main Estimates.

The proposed 2010-2011 Main Estimates for Education, Culture and Employment total \$306.388

million, an increase of 2.4 percent over the previous year's main estimates.

The main estimates incorporate funding for ongoing programs and strategic initiatives for each of the department's key activities. Key department initiatives that fall within government strategic initiatives include the expansion of early childhood development programs and the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative under Building our Future, Department initiatives under Maximizing Opportunities are to increase support for the arts, provide additional supports for apprentices and enhance various Aurora College programs. Initiatives under Refocusing Government are to enhance support for Internet use by the education system, the Early Childhood Small Communities Initiative, and official languages implementation.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Education, Culture and Employment initiatives under Reducing the Cost of Living are to provide small community employment supports and to develop and action an NWT nutritious food plan with our partners.

The 2010-2011 Main Estimates include close to \$9 million for Collective Agreement increases for the staff of the department, education authorities and Aurora College.

The approximate \$9.5 million utilities and maintenance budget transfer from Education, Culture and Employment to Public Works and Services is also reflected in these estimates.

Education and Culture

Early Childhood Development

In 2009-2010, the department reviewed early childhood and family literacy training programs, In 2010-2011, \$600,000 will go to further improve early childhood programs; specifically, the provision of early childhood training, child and family literacy programming and research into models that link early childhood and school programs, Another \$600,000 will go to further expand supports to early childhood programs and to improve the quality of such programs in small and remote communities.

School System

In real terms, the 2010-2011 Main Estimates provide for a 3.5 percent increase in school contributions. An apparent reduction in the 2010-2011 schools budget is, in fact, a reflection of the \$6.7 million school portion of the utility and maintenance funding transfer from ECE to the Department of Public Works and Services.

At the school level, Mr. Chair, the Aboriginal Student Achievement, or ASA, initiative aims to improve aboriginal student achievement across the kindergarten to grade 12 education system, thereby helping to eliminate the achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students, In 2010-2011, the \$1.3 million will ensure implementation of

projects to promote attendance in 49 NWT schools, There will also be a mandatory orientation for all teachers on local culture, the NWT curriculum and more. The department will also launch a promotional campaign to raise parents' awareness of habits that support student success such as regular, timely attendance at school.

In 2010-2011, \$242,000 will go to the Western and Northern Curriculum Protocol, This is for cost-sharing with western Canadian jurisdictions, in the development and acquisition of grade 10, 11 and 12 mathematics resources in English and French. Another \$106,000 will go toward purchasing additional equipment for the college and schools to better manage educational Internet usage and traffic. As part of this initiative, Education, Culture and Employment is working with the Technology Service Centre on a network needs analysis to better understand the traffic flows in order to determine the most cost-effective and efficient routing for all parties. In this way, our education system, including schools in small communities, will benefit from access to an efficient and reliable communications network. This should enable communities to improve access to distance learning, research and on-line studies for education.

In addition, the 2010-2011 Main Estimates include a \$1.1 million increase to fund network usage, software licensing and security provided by the Technology Service Centre.

Culture and Heritage

In 2010-2011, an additional \$200,000 will ensure the department can continue to support individuals, organizations and projects that showcase northern arts and cultures. The additional monies will be used to increase contributions to cultural organizations, heritage centres and new northern arts programs. With the latest proposed additional investment, this government will contribute \$2.2 million in support of the arts and culture community in 2010-2011.

The 2010-2011 culture and heritage budget also reflects a \$224,000 utility funding transfer to the Department of Public Work and Services.

Official Languages

In 2010-2011, \$223,000 will support the launch of an annual Aboriginal Languages Summer Institute as a core activity for aboriginal language revitalization activities. The institute will provide professional development opportunities for language practitioners, Education, Culture and Employment will provide administrative support to the institute and to aboriginal language communities so language communities can be helped to effectively implement their language plans.

The department will also hold an aboriginal languages symposium in spring 2010. This symposium will offer an opportunity to bring together representatives from all northern aboriginal language communities, stakeholders and leaders to discuss how to expand the circle of responsibility for language revitalization. The goal of the symposium is to provide an opportunity for language communities to identify their priorities to revitalize, promote and support the languages.

Advanced Education and Careers

Adult and Post-secondary Education

In 2010-2011, \$650,000 will be allocated to Aurora College for a three-part initiative to improve skills for living and working. First, a student wellness coordinator position is being funded by Thebacha Campus to promote and assist with choosing a healthy student lifestyle and achieving academic success. The coordinator will offer student counselling and other supports to enable a positive transition to residence life. Second, all three college campuses will offer new labour market and industrial training programs linked to employment and designed to address the requirements of industry and other partners. Third, the college will deliver a one-year Office Administration Certificate Program at Thebacha Campus to prepare graduates for employment in aboriginal, government and industry offices.

Another \$100,000 will go to promote and facilitate access to the new NWT Secondary School Diploma for Adults. The diploma is based on an adult recognition model that combines academic course credits with prior learning assessment and recognition credits given for life experience. The department supports northern adults in completing the diploma application process and in documenting prior learning assessment and recognition credits.

A \$427,000 increase in amortization is the result of \$16.1 million in capital assets being put into service, including the Western Arctic Research Centre and community learning centres in Lutselk'e, Hay River Reserve and Tsiigehtchic.

The 2011-2012 adult and post-secondary education budget also reflects a \$2.6 million utility and maintenance funding transfer to the Department of Public Works and Services.

Apprenticeship and Employment Development

In 2010-2011, Education, Culture and Employment is launching a new \$350,000 initiative to provide opportunities for young people in small and remote communities to gain work experience and skills toward longer term employment. Programming supports will be targeted at youth aged 15 to 29 years. A wage subsidy program and associated promotional campaign will help employers offset the cost of hiring summer students and unemployed

out-of-school young people during the remainder of the year.

An additional \$200,000 will be allocated to implement programs, supports and a communication strategy on available supports to encourage more northern residents, women and aboriginal people to pursue careers in the trades and occupations. In total, with this additional \$200,000, \$400,000 will be available in 2010-2011 in this area.

Income Security

The government will transfer the administration of public housing rental subsidies from Education, Culture and Employment to the NWT Housing Corporation for completion in this financial year. Our department will work closely with the Housing Corporation to develop a transition plan to ensure there is a smooth transition in responsibilities for administration of the program

In fiscal year 2010-2011, \$160,000 will go to update the Public Housing Rental Subsidy Cost of Living Rent Reduction. This deduction offsets household cost of living by reducing the rent paid by public housing tenants. Education, Culture and Employment will work with the NWT Housing Corporation to keep tenants and local housing authorities fully informed of any cost of living rent reduction charges in a timely manner. The 2010-2011 Main Estimates also include \$364,000 to allow local housing authorities to pay for the increased cost of employee salaries.

In fiscal 2010-2011, \$400,000 will go to establish and coordinate an NWT Nutritious Food Steering Committee to include other government departments, non-government organizations and other stakeholders. The majority of this funding will be allocated to support food programs which will be delivered by existing agencies, including schools. Education, Culture and Employment will compile an inventory of existing nutrition activities, and work with the steering committee on an action plan to improve program coordination, to build on existing initiatives, and to develop and pilot new supports. By implementing pilot projects, the department will be able to gain information on how best to address the affordability of nutritious foods in the North. This information will constitute an invaluable element in developing the action plan with our partners.

Finally, the main estimates include an increase of \$478,000 to support the approximately 1,400 post-secondary students who receive student financial assistance annually.

Concluding Comments

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the 2010-2011 Main Estimates for Education, Culture and Employment were developed to further both the goals of the Government of the Northwest Territories strategic plan and the objectives of our department strategic

plan. The 2010-2011 Main Estimates do the best job to meet the needs of most people given the resources at our disposal. We ask for your continued support as we move forward to the benefit of all Northerners.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have at this time. Mahsi, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you Mr. Minister. At this time I would like to ask the Minister if he will bring in any witnesses, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

For the record, Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have with me to my immediate right is the deputy minister, Mr. Dan Daniels, and also Mr. Paul Devitt, director of strategic business planning. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you Mr. Minister. Welcome witnesses, General comments, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you Mr. Chairman. You know, Education, Culture and Employment represents 24 percent of our total budget. The Minister said a lot of good things as to what they are providing that will help my communities in Nunakput. The \$1.3 million to improve education for aboriginal students through the literacy programs, after-school programs, which is a big uptake in my home community of Tuktoyaktuk and other communities that I represent, culture orientation for new teachers coming into our riding, aboriginal student achievement coordinator position, that is going to be coming in. I would like to ask the Minister where would that be located and how the coordinator would connect with the small communities in regions where the highest aboriginal populations.

Two hundred thousand dollars for youth programs such as Northern Youth Abroad; \$600,000 to improve our early childhood development programs, which is a really big asset for our kids going to preschool, getting a head start in regards to getting into kindergarten and starting on their education; improved support for arts in the schools, \$200,000; the additional support for apprentices; the enhanced support of Internet use in education. Internet is an important link to the schools in Nunakput communities. I would like to commend the Minister in regards to that going forward. The \$100,000 in funding to promote achievement in

secondary diploma for adults is really needed. We are at the doorstep, hopefully, with our pipeline going forward and the offshore, so staying in school and getting your education is such a big important step in the communities, and providing education for all of the Northwest Territories and those eight students we have in Sachs Harbour, so I am looking forward to making sure that we get the funding for this coming budget year to get a teacher there full time.

Mr. Chairman, the areas for improvement, improved high school education so that young people can achieve success at the outset and not have to come back to upgrade as adults. Making sure you are not social passing and making sure the students are qualified in grade 12 upon graduation. Enhancing training skills for workers and access to trades, that will especially be important with the go ahead of the Mackenzie Gas Project. Recruitment and retention of teaching staff; housing has always been an issue in the communities but we have teachers, like in my home community of Tuktoyaktuk, Miss Anne Marie Cameron, who has been there since she was Grade 4 teacher, so that is going on a long time ago and still I want to thank her to this day about all the good work she has done. She is retiring this year and, if she does, she is going to be sadly missed, but hopefully we can talk her into one more year,

You may also wish specific allocations for our region, the school for Tuktoyaktuk, the extension that is badly needed. My teaching situation in Sachs Harbour; those eight students in the community are having no education right now, sitting in the community and wondering what we are doing for the last two and half months until May, when they are done school, but I am hoping to see if we can get a teacher in there for the last two and half months for them to get some credits. I really hope we can accomplish this with the Minister and on a go-forward basis. He has a lot of good things happening in Nunakput, but in the areas of improvement I would like to get some answers to. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you Mr. Jacobson. Next on the list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have a number of comments. These are not in any particular order, but some are in reference to the budget in general and some are in reference to the Minister's opening remarks.

I would like to start off by talking about there is a statement, I think it is in the business plan, there is a trend to a decreased use of income assistance funds, but I know over the last week or two I have heard the Minister state that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment... Income support is certainly handling more income support claims. So I am a little bit concerned that if the

budget is showing a decrease in income support funding, it leads me to believe that this budget may be underfunded. When we get to that, I will probably ask some questions with regards to that.

We do have an increase, this is working from the business plans and it doesn't actually show in the mains, but the business plans showed an increase in the department's total budget of about \$13 million, which concerns me. I have said in regards to most budgets when they go up, that I am concerned that we are consistently increasing our budgets and I wonder if we are actually, or if there is real value in what we are doing for the increases.

One of the expenses that is in this budget that I particularly disagree with is the \$400,000 that is earmarked for a Nutritious Food Study, and I know in the Minister's opening remarks that apparently has been redesigned, realigned, reprofiled to now say that this funding will be allocated to support food programs delivered by existing agencies, and goes on to describe a couple of other things. I still believe that we have the supports in place right now, we have the information and the background information, the research has been done and I still believe we should be putting an actual program in place; an on-the-ground program that is delivering foods, whether it be meals or milk into the mouths of our babes, and I don't feel that this particular expense is going to do that the way it is described and I will have some questions for the Minister when we get to discuss that item.

I'm concerned about board reform. It hasn't really been mentioned, but I know that there are things going on sort of behind the scenes and I'm a little concerned that there are... Well, I guess I want to know whether or not the department has plans to do any kind of changes within education boards in the next coming year.

I am pleased to see that we have a further increase in money for arts and cultural organizations. It can only stand us in good stead as we go forward. I think we're up to \$2.2 million or something like that at this point and that's great, it's good to see.

I'm a little bit concerned about the vague response of the department to the official languages review. There are a couple of things that are mentioned, but I'm not so sure that... We're starting off with a symposium and, I think, with a language institute and I'm not so sure that those are going to deliver the results that we need in terms of responding to the recommendations from the standing committee in terms of the review of the official languages.

There is an increase in money for early childhood and family literacy, and I think that's a great thing to see. We should be putting an awful lot more money into our early childhood programs, as far as I'm concerned. I'm a little bit concerned that this may be a one-time affair, and I'll speak about that when we get to that particular page.

I'm also concerned that there is a decrease in inclusive schooling funding. It's going down from 19 percent of budgets to 18.5 percent of education authorities' budgets. So I'm concerned about that. I've had an explanation that suggests that it may not be an actual decrease in dollars, but I will speak to that when we get there.

I am pleased to see that the department is branching out in terms of high school, secondary school diplomas and is starting a process to recognize prior learning. The PLAR program, I think, is going to be a good thing. I want to reiterate that I still believe that we need to seriously consider and investigate having two different high school diplomas apart from the PLAR process, but that we need to have an academic and a non-academic high school certificate to make it more clear to students just what programs they're in and what course they're taking and what they will be coming out of high school with as they go on to further education.

Good news, from my perspective, on the increase to minimum wage. I'm really pleased to see that in there. I am disappointed, though, and I know that it's not part of the... This is an O and M budget, it's not a capital budget, but I am disappointed that there's no consideration for Ecole Allain St-Cyr phase II expansion. There's no money in here for planning or anything else, that I can tell.

There's a mention, I don't know where, in the Minister's remarks about apprentice programs and it references two different kinds of programs. I have to say, again -- I think I said this last year -- that I am concerned that we have many different programs for apprenticeships and I think they need to be better coordinated. I think we do the same thing in several different areas, and my question about these two programs are how are they different. So I'll have some questions when we get to that section.

Lastly, I have to take great exception to the undefined other expense, which shows up on page 10-7. We have other expenses of some \$71 million and in that we have another of \$2.419 million. That's a pretty large amount to be undefined. We did get an explanation from the Finance Minister. It tells us that \$2.419 is a bad debts expense. So that also is, like, okay, what is a bad debts expense? What the heck does that mean? So I would like an explanation when we get to discussing that page.

Other than that, Mr. Chair, the budget is pretty much a status quo. There are a lot of good things in here. There are some things which I don't particularly agree with but, in general, I think it's a budget I can live with. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley and then Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There were a number of things in the opening remarks from the Minister that I appreciated. One of them -- no surprise -- is the extra dollars going towards early childhood and family literacy. I think there still seems to be a focus on the kindergarten and up sort of age groups and I'm hoping, ultimately, we will focus that more and more to the earliest years. But that's good to see.

The \$1.3 million towards promoting attendance is a good response, I think, to what has been highlighted as a major concern. I think it's been noted that kids actually miss a couple years of their schooling by the time they've been in school six or eight years. So that's a big hole to plug. And the promotional campaign for parents' awareness is good, but as, I think, my colleague Ms. Bisaro mentioned, a big gap I see is the murkiness and confusion associated with the different diplomas that can be sought in grade 12 and the agony that that leads to when students and their parents realize they cannot go on to university because of the choices they have unknowingly made. So, yes, there does need to be more counselling of the students, but I'd say a big part of that counselling should also be focused on the parents so that they're knowledgeable and aware.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has, for three years now, mentioned the need for some new programs in Aurora College that respond to today's world and some of the government priorities and residential and business priorities we have, and that's sustainable communities management, all the skills that go into managing a sustainable community in a progressive way, and the renewable energy technician. Try and get any kind of a renewable energy installed here and generally you're looking to bring some expertise in from outside. These are a high need, real business opportunities and so on. This has been raised with the Minister many times through the committee and we're still waiting on a response there, and it could extend to greening of the trades programs that are already in place.

I want to comment on the latest expression on the destination of \$400,000 for something to do with nutritious foods. Again, the Social Programs committee has called clearly, with the support of the public, for a milk subsidy program repeatedly and repeatedly. This government has failed to put that in place. Like I say, in the last couple of weeks they've apparently come up with an idea to establish and coordinate an NWT Nutritious Food Steering Committee. Who's going to be on that committee? Government departments? Non-government organizations? Other stakeholders? I can't help but wonder how much that's going to cost of that \$400,000. It would be so beautiful, Mr. Chair, to see those dollars directed into the mouths of babes with good nutritious food, rather than talking

about it and studying it. My gosh, the number of studies we've got. So a big disappointment there. I'll be asking more questions about that.

I think the early childhood programs are a move in the right direction. We also need a lot more child care subsidy programs. This is a big factor in helping us with poverty issues, you know, related to getting an education and so on. I'll be asking some questions about that along the way. That's an opportunity that I see. We should be using... I see a revenue. We'll talk about that in relation to child care as well.

The official languages, again, I haven't seen a comprehensive response to the work done by committee and the strategy in a way that reflects the priorities that I think the people have spoken to. The Aboriginal Languages Summer Institute and the conference, are those priorities that were established in that strategy by the people and were they the highest priorities? Is that where we should be starting out and how does that fit in the plan of the department to put a comprehensive approach in place given our failure on the language issue?

The income security, I also have been very pleased to see the Public Housing Rental Subsidy returned to its home. One thing that I keep hearing from people is the service aspect highlighted the other day in a Member's statement and it's not restricted to the seniors heating subsidy, it's through many aspects of the Income Support Program. So I would like to know how the department is going to be tuning that up. I don't see it in the budget, but hopefully there is much more progressive work and training being done there so we can give good quality assurance to our clients.

I was happy to see the increase to student financial assistance. It seems to be similar, maybe a little bit more than we had for the merit-based programs, which is kind of curious. I'd be interested in more details on that and we'll get to that when we go to detail, Mr. Chair. For now, that will be it and I'll leave my general comments at that. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on the list I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy with most of what was put into the budget. I'm very pleased to see the \$600,000 into the small and rural and remote communities. I'm hoping that money for early childhood development programs goes into daycares in the small communities. I think that we have information from the schools indicating the value of daycare when the kids finally do get to school and kindergarten. A good daycare in the community seems to go a long ways to advancing the kids that do attend daycare and they come into the school system much better prepared. So, Mr. Chairman, I think that's something that the department, if they don't have this money specifically earmarked for specific programs at this

point, even part of the family literacy training can also be something that can be run along with daycare. So I think that's something that's important.

I think the most important thing in the school system right now, I guess because it becomes probably the most detrimental thing to success in school, is absenteeism. I think that putting that much money -- over \$1.3 million -- into ensuring that the department is promoting attendance in all 49 schools across the Northwest Territories I think is something that's very, very positive. I think that is something that comes right down to the community level. I think the communities that I represent are telling me that this could be an area where parent support workers could be put in place to help the parents and at some point the responsibility for absenteeism should be shared, not only the parent and the student, but also maybe even the schools and the boards and the department, that everybody should take responsibility for this. I realize that there are some schools that have very, very, very high attendance rates. I think the schools in Yellowknife easily carry better than 90 percent attendance rate. Unfortunately, in the small communities, that's not the case. As I tried to indicate in a Member's statement I made earlier in the week, the percentage of people below grade level is much, much, much higher the more school you miss. So there is definitely a direct correlation between having good marks and going to school. When you have a high absenteeism rate, then your marks are low and you are functioning at a low grade level when you are essentially going through school, advancing with the rest of the students but at the same time you are not really operating at that grade level. That is evident, as I indicated. That is something that is directly tied into absenteeism, so I feel that this is a tremendous initiative on the part of the department. I wish them all the luck in succeeding with trying to get the attendance levels up in the small communities.

I think that it is an excellent idea to put a three-part initiative into improve skills and living and working into Aurora College. It is \$650,000 to support that. I think that is excellent. I think a lot of times it is difficult to get a job. Sometimes it is difficult to keep a job. I think if you improve your living and working skills and so on, and working with wellness and so on, I think that would be something that will go a long ways. I think we will recoup our investment in this by seeing more successful people across the Territories.

I am obviously pleased to see money budgeted for the community adult learning centre in Lutselk'e and the Hay River Reserve and Tsiigehtchic. I think that is something that is very positive. I am hoping that in Lutselk'e they are able to work with an instructor at the school and so on. Put that in kind of like a learning area in approximately the same

place where that school is now. I am very pleased to see that. I think that putting money in to provide opportunities for young people in small communities and to gain work experience towards long-term employment is something that, again, is excellent. It is a good response from the government. There is a fairly decent amount of money put into that to help.

I think that there is still some money in there for SFA. I think that there have been a few issues with the lack of funding for SFA. I think this addresses that issue. I think that all students, youth, that are out in school going on to post-secondary education should have as much support as this government can possibly give to them. I think that is an investment again in the future. I think that the more we invest in the youth, the more we invest in the students, the greater opportunities that the North is going to have and greater results we are going to have and more in our social spending, other areas such as income support, public housing and so on. I think that this budget here invests well in the youth.

Specifically some of the things that I think that are missing I think is that we need to have industrial arts. We need to have home economics back in the schools. I think that is important. I think all schools should have a library. I know that, of the two schools that I represent, one does not have a library. Although we were fortunate to have one of the schools from Yellowknife give us 25 boxes of library books, it was something that I think is needed. I think that the department has to look at ensuring that there are library services in all of the communities and a good start is going through the schools.

I think that, although this is not for this budget, Mr. Chairman, I think that the department has to look at capital for daycare. I think that it is something that was mentioned during the time we were doing the infrastructure acquisition plan, but now it is specifically down to the department. I think what is missing here is not supposed to be here, but what is missing, I guess overall, is there be spending in daycare but sometimes the daycares are not in the best location or they are not the best daycare as far as the building itself goes. I am looking forward to continuing to work with the department to improve the daycare building in Fort Resolution and perhaps finding a better location or maybe build a daycare onto the school in Lutselk'e. I think that is something that is another matter, but I think the department is putting some money into the early childhood development. It is the first thing I mentioned that is very positive for daycares. I am hoping that we are able to do more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Next on the list is Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments I have is something that the Minister and I have been working on for some time. I am going to ask the Minister: how do we solidify elders into our education system? I know the Minister has been contemplating about the different systems that support this and systems that don't support the elders in our schools. The Minister has been at it for a long time, but I think it is time now that he comes and tells us this is how we are going to do it. We have to have some action here. He held this for almost two years, trying to get elders into our schools. As we continue talking, elders are leaving us and some elders we want them into our schools, but for reasons unknown, they are unable to be in our school system. I am disappointed that this hasn't been done yet. See how we can get the elders into our school. I will be asking the Minister in terms of where do we fit these elders into our school.

I want to tell the Minister that I am very happy to hear that there is going to be a mandatory orientation for all teachers into our culture in the Northwest Territories. It is a long overdue requirement of the education system. I am glad to see this is going to go forward. I look forward with the Minister and, most importantly, the local education authorities and our local education councils in our communities to see what type of input we are going to have to put this into motion. I hope it is not coming down instead of from the bottom up. When teachers are coming into our communities, they are going to have a good orientation, hopefully, on the land, not in the school and in the community. I know they do this in one of the Tlicho communities and other communities where they bring everybody out to the land and teach about our culture. I am looking forward to that, seeing that the community can do this for our teachers. I think that is a significant step in terms of a better education and having teachers understand who we are, Dene or Metis or Inuvialuit people. I think that is really important. I want to congratulate the Minister on that.

That is one thing, but Cabinet's rollout is another thing. I hope you can do it within the life of this government. I want to also say to the Minister that there are dollars going into the smaller remote communities. He has been listening to us in that area. I look forward to seeing through the detail as to how it is going to roll out into our small and remote communities.

I am glad that the Minister is putting a very important symposium, this spring 2010, on our language and I look forward to the rollout of that symposium in the North here, how we are going to work with our communities.

The one point I would like to say is that the Minister is going to put \$100,000 to promote and facilitate

access to Northwest Territories secondary school diplomas for adults. I don't really know what that means, until we get more into details as to these dollars here. I want to let the Minister know that the two gentlemen, the two young guys that went out to school were hoping to do well in school and get some funding and support from this government or the federal government. It is disheartening that they didn't get their support and are back in the community of Tulita and doing nothing. They are all rambunctious, ready to go and want to do these things and now they are in Tulita. It is terrible. We certainly let them down big time. I am going to fight for these guys here. It is just awful. These two young guys had graduated, this one guy had graduated, one grade 12 course diploma and the other guy... Something has got to get done. I have that issue here, it is bugging me.

I want to ask the Minister, after, in terms of the smooth transition from his department to housing in terms of the Public Housing Subsidy. From what I know, there is nothing smooth, it is always rocky. So how are we going to have a seamless transition or a smooth transition to housing? There is nothing smooth, Mr. Chairman. We like to see it on paper but, in reality, you know, it is not that, so I want to work with him on that. I am very happy that the Minister has agreed to do that, listen to the people on this side. I am very happy that the Ministers have decided that this needs to happen. How you get over that side and start it up, it might be just a whole window dressing, rub off the ECE and put on NWT Housing Corporation, the same policies, I don't know.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that the food and nutrition...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, Mr. Yakeleya, the time may have expired but I will allow you to continue on tomorrow as the first one on the list. So with that, I would like to allow the Minister to respond to the questions tomorrow first thing with Committee of the Whole. With that I would like to thank the Ministers' witnesses. At this point, I will rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses out.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011, and would like to report progress. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko, Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Saktu, Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 9, 2010, 1:30 p.m.:

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 9th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

